



PCSK9 Inhibitors for Treatment of High Cholesterol

A Patient Resource Guide

Patient Information

When managing high cholesterol, it's important to learn about all possible treatment options. The information in this guide will give you an overview of the common options for treating high cholesterol.

Work with your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider to understand your choices. They can help you understand:

- How well a medication works
- What its side effects might be
- How newer treatments compare to other available options.

It's also important to know how much you will need to pay for a medication. Call your insurance provider before starting a new medication to find out how much you will have to pay out of pocket. Usually, older medications come in a generic form. This means that they are less expensive. You will likely have to pay very little for it. Newer medications may be more expensive. This may mean you'll need to pay more to fill your prescription.

Treatment Options



For some patients, **diet, exercise, and other lifestyle changes** can lower your LDL cholesterol enough so that you don't need any medication.

Statins are a good first-line medication. Statins have been available for many years and are proven to work well in lowering cholesterol. They are also proven to lower risk of heart attack and stroke.



Statin Intolerance

Some patients may have side effects such as muscle pain when starting statins. These side effects are usually temporary. If side effects do not go away or are severe, ask your doctor about switching to a different statin.

There are many different types of statins available. Most patients can find one that works well for them, but you may have to try a few different options first. Work with your doctor to find a statin that works for you. More information about statins is [available here](#).



If you are taking statins and still have cholesterol levels that are too high, **ezetimibe** may be a good option to add to your statin therapy.

Treatment Options

If you have tried lifestyle changes, statins, and ezetimibe, and still have cholesterol levels that are too high, your doctor may suggest a PCSK9 inhibitor.



What are they? PCSK9 inhibitors are a new type of medication for high cholesterol. They are taken by injection.



Benefits: Early research shows that they can be very effective in lowering LDL cholesterol levels (the bad kind of cholesterol). But, it's not yet clear whether they lower the risk for heart attack and stroke, as statins do.



Risks: The drugs are still new. This means that there has not been a lot of research on their long-term effects and possible risks.



Costs: PCSK9 inhibitors are very expensive. This may mean that your copays will be higher at the pharmacy for your medications. Call your insurance company to ask about your out of pocket costs.



Who: PCSK9 inhibitors may not be the best choice for everyone. For some patients, such as those with a genetic condition known as FH, who still have high cholesterol levels after trying other treatment, they may be a good choice. Talk to your doctor about whether PCSK9 inhibitors are right for you.

Additional Resources

The resources at right provide more information about high cholesterol, as well as tools to use when thinking about your treatment choices.

Managing Cholesterol and Heart Health

Learn Your Lipids	Patient information on lipids from the National Lipid Association.
Cardio Smart	Patient information on heart health from the American College of Cardiology.
Prevention and Treatment of High Cholesterol	Information from the American Heart Association.
Mayo Clinic Information	Information on high cholesterol, and tips for managing your condition with lifestyle changes or medication.
"Option Grid" for Choosing a Management Strategy	An overview of different strategies to manage high cholesterol, including lifestyle changes and medication choices.
Statins: Are there cholesterol-lowering drugs right for you?	An article from the Mayo Clinic on statin use for high cholesterol.
Patient Decision Aid: Taking a statin to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke	Patient information on statins from the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.