

# Why Do I Need a Cholesterol-Lowering Medication?



**LDL cholesterol** is often called “bad” cholesterol because it can build up in arteries. Over time, this can narrow the arteries and increase the risk for **heart attack** and **stroke**.



## Information needed to guide a medication decision

Eating a heart-healthy diet and getting regular physical activity are important steps you can take to manage your cholesterol.

Sometimes, even with healthy habits, you may need medication to help lower LDL cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.

Before recommending medication as part of your treatment plan, your health care professional may look at different parts of your health to better understand your risk for heart disease and stroke. This can include your cholesterol levels, blood pressure, age and family health history.

Your health care professional may use a new risk estimator called **PREVENT™**. This tool estimates your chances of having a heart event or stroke in the next 10 and 30 years. It helps you and your health care team decide on a treatment plan.



Sometimes, more information is needed to help guide medication decisions. Your health care professional may suggest additional tests.



## Before starting any new medications

Tell your health care professional about all medications and dietary supplements you take. This helps prevent possible interactions or side effects. **Dietary supplements are not recommended to manage cholesterol.** Some may interact with prescription medications.

Always follow your health care professional’s instructions and report any side effects. **Do not stop taking your medication** without talking to them first.



Learn more about the most common **cholesterol-lowering medications**.

## Questions for my health care professional

- What should my LDL goal be based on my risk?  
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- Which lifestyle changes and medications can help lower my LDL and heart disease and stroke risk?  
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- Which side effects should I watch for with this medication?  
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- When should I follow up to check if the medication is working?  
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Learn more at [heart.org/Cholesterol](https://heart.org/Cholesterol).