

Other Cholesterol Medications



Examples: Zetia

How It Works: Lowers the LDL by decreasing the absorption of cholesterol by the small intestine.

Side Effects: Diarrhea

Examples: Niaspan

How It Works: We are not too sure how niaspan works but it may decrease the release of fatty acids from fat cells. Niaspan is effective in lowering triglycerides and increasing HDL.

Side Effects: Include flushing which can be minimized if you take the medication with food or if you take an aspirin about an hour prior to ingesting the drug.

Examples: Welchol

How It Works: The medication does not get absorbed but goes into the intestine and it binds with bile acids and then the bile acids are excreted. Because bile acids are made from cholesterol, the body theoretically must use up the bad cholesterol to replace the bile acids hence lowering the total amount of bad cholesterol.

Side Effects: Diarrhea – but the good news that you don't have to monitor liver enzymes because it doesn't get absorbed.

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What is a Heart Attack? a Stroke?

A heart attack is an event that marks heart cell death. A stroke is an event that marks brain cell death. The most common cause of a heart attack or stroke is the blockage of a blood vessel that inhibits the opportunity for oxygen to get to the body's cells. Oxygen is absolutely necessary for a cell to live. Most cells can live for several minutes without oxygen but after those minutes have passed, the ability of a cell to maintain its integrity is reduced and the cellular wall breaks down. Once this happens the intracellular enzymes escape. We can actually measure those enzymes and measure the degree of cellular death.

If a large enough area of heart muscle dies, the heart doesn't function well as a pump and the body is further compromised because other organ systems are compromised of oxygen. Similarly, depending upon which area of the brain is deprived of oxygen, a particular brain function is gone. This may result in the inability to think, speak, or move a particular body part.

Clearly, heart attacks and strokes are two of the most severe forms of disease and result in significant dysfunction. This is why their prevention is the center of so much health care discussion and technology.

