

Choosing a Statin to Lower Cholesterol

What Are Statins?

Statins are drugs used to lower cholesterol and help prevent heart disease. Cholesterol is a fat in the blood. There is HDL (good) cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol. If you have too much LDL cholesterol, it can build up on the walls of blood vessels. This build-up is called plaque. It clogs the blood vessels and can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Lowering Your Cholesterol

Some people can lower their cholesterol by exercising and eating less saturated fat. Saturated fat is in meat, dairy products, bakery goods, and many snack foods. For other people, exercising and eating a healthier diet is not enough. They need to take a statin.

Before you start a statin, you and your doctor should look at your LDL cholesterol and your other risks for heart disease. These risks include smoking, obesity, lack of exercise, and having diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, or a family history of heart disease.

You could save hundreds of dollars by using generic Best Buy Drugs instead of brand-name statins. For more information, visit our free website, www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org.



Choosing a Statin

The best statin for you depends on your LDL cholesterol and your other risks. Some statins lower LDL cholesterol more than others. And some reduce the risk of heart attack and death from heart disease or stroke more than others.

Some statins cost much more than others.

Generic statins can cost \$12 a month or less. Brand-name statins can cost more than \$500 a month.

Since most people take statins for many years, cost is important.

Higher doses have higher risks.

Most people should take the lowest dose they can. The higher the dose, the greater the risk of serious side effects, including muscle, kidney, and liver problems.

Our advice:

We compared the effectiveness, risks, and cost of different statins. We chose these as *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*:

Generic lovastatin or pravastatin—if you need to lower your LDL cholesterol by less than 30%

Generic simvastatin (20 mg or 40 mg)—if you need to lower your LDL cholesterol by 30% or more

Generic atorvastatin (40 mg or 80 mg)
— if you have had a heart attack, or if you have coronary heart disease with very high LDL cholesterol

Warning: If you are taking a statin and have muscle aches, pain, or weakness, call your doctor right away. This could be a sign of a dangerous breakdown in the muscle tissue.

The Best Statin at the Best Price

Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs are in **blue** and **bold black**. We recommend these drugs because they are effective, generally safe, and cost less. Work with your doctor to choose the best statin and dose for you.

- **If you need to lower your LDL cholesterol less than 30%, look at the drugs listed in blue.**
- **If you need to lower your LDL cholesterol more than 30%, look at the drugs listed in bold black.**

Generic Name and Dose	Brand Name ¹	Average Cost Per Month ²	% of LDL Cholesterol Lowered	Reduces Heart Attack Risk ³
Atorvastatin 10 mg	Generic	\$114	34-38%	Yes
Atorvastatin 20 mg	Generic	\$155	42-46%	Yes
Atorvastatin 40 mg Generic		\$160	47-51%	Yes
Atorvastatin 80 mg Generic		\$164	46-54%	Yes
Atorvastatin 10 mg	Lipitor	\$130	34-38%	Yes
Atorvastatin 20 mg	Lipitor	\$178	42-46%	Yes
Atorvastatin 40 mg	Lipitor	\$191	47-51%	Yes
Atorvastatin 80 mg	Lipitor	\$199	46-54%	Yes
Fluvastatin 20 mg	Lescol	\$135	22%	Likely
Fluvastatin 40 mg	Lescol	\$132	25%	Likely
Fluvastatin sustained release 80 mg	Lescol XL	\$172	35%	Likely
Lovastatin 10 mg Generic		\$12	21%	Yes
Lovastatin 20 mg Generic		\$16	24-27%	Yes
Lovastatin 40 mg Generic		\$51	31%	Yes
Lovastatin 80 mg	Generic	\$103	39-48%	Yes
Lovastatin sustained release 20 mg	Altoprev	\$409	30%	Unknown
Lovastatin sustained release 40 mg	Altoprev	\$515	36%	Yes
Lovastatin sustained release 60 mg	Altoprev	\$490	40%	Yes

Generic Name and Dose	Brand Name ¹	Average Cost Per Month ²	% of LDL Cholesterol Lowered	Reduces Heart Attack Risk ³
Pravastatin 10 mg Generic		\$35	18-25%	Yes
Pravastatin 20 mg Generic		\$32	23-29%	Yes
Pravastatin 40 mg Generic		\$46	26-34%	Yes
Pravastatin 80 mg	Generic	\$71	30-37%	Yes
Pravastatin 20 mg	Pravacol	\$142	23-29%	Yes
Pravastatin 40 mg	Pravacol	\$208	26-34%	Yes
Pravastatin 80 mg	Pravacol	\$199	30-37%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 5 mg	Crestor	\$163	39-46%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 10 mg	Crestor	\$161	43-50%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 20 mg	Crestor	\$163	52-55%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 40 mg	Crestor	\$161	55-60%	Yes
Simvastatin 10 mg	Generic	\$38	26-33%	Yes
Simvastatin 20 mg Generic		\$68	30-40%	Yes
Simvastatin 40 mg Generic		\$68	35-45%	Yes
Simvastatin 80 mg	Generic	\$59	40-50%	Yes
Simvastatin 10 mg	Zocor	\$120	26-33%	Yes
Simvastatin 20 mg	Zocor	\$191	30-40%	Yes
Simvastatin 40 mg	Zocor	\$198	35-45%	Yes
Simvastatin 80 mg	Zocor	\$207	40-50%	Yes

¹ "Generic" indicates a drug sold by generic name.

² Prices reflect nationwide retail average for December 2011, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Pharma Solutions. Wolters Kluwer is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.

³ Nonfatal and fatal heart attack plus deaths attributed to heart disease.