



THE THREE SHIRES MEDICAL PRACTICE

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Statins

This leaflet explains what statins are for and why you may need them.

What are statins?

Statins are a medicine that reduce the level of cholesterol in your blood. They're one of the most prescribed drugs in the UK. Around 7-8 million adults are taking them. Reducing cholesterol helps lower the risk of getting heart and circulatory diseases.



What is high cholesterol and what causes it?

It is when you have too much of a fatty substance called cholesterol in your blood. It's mainly caused by:

- Eating fatty food
- Not exercising enough
- Being overweight
- Smoking
- Drinking alcohol
- It can also run in families

What are the risks of having high cholesterol?

High cholesterol can lead to heart and circulatory disease:

- Heart attacks happen when the blood supply to the heart muscle is blocked
- Angina is chest pain caused by reduced blood flow to the heart muscle
- A stroke can happen when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off
- A short-lived cut in blood supply is called a transient ischaemic attack or TIA (often called a 'mini stroke')

Why do I need statins?

Statins reduce the risk of you getting heart problems for the first time. It also helps symptoms if you already have heart problems so you can live a better life.

Lots of people don't need a strong statin to reduce their cholesterol level. Your doctor or heart doctor will find the right statin for you.

If you feel your statin medicine isn't right for you, speak to your doctor. If you're sensitive to one statin, you might not be sensitive to another. You should have a blood test after any change of statin to see how well the new medicine is working.

You would need to take a statin tablet every day for it to work. You would usually keep taking it long term (for many years). You can stop taking it whenever you want, but the benefits from it would also stop.

What are the possible side effects of statins?

Like all medicines, statins have potential side effects. The most common are muscular aches and pains. Many people experience no side effects.

Speak to your doctor if your side effects change or become worse. Your doctor might suggest you change statin, lower the dose or stop taking it for a while, then starting again to see if it's causing your symptoms.

Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice as they can raise your risk of side effects. Drinking more than 14 units of alcohol per week increases your risk of feeling side effects.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

There are lots of ways you can reduce your risk of heart disease or stroke by making changes to your lifestyle. They might also help you feel healthier. Talk to your healthcare professional about what changes you can make and how you can get help with them.

Things to think about include:

- Stopping smoking
- Being more active
- Eating a healthy diet
- Trying to keep to a healthy weight
- Avoiding drinking too much alcohol.



One You South Gloucestershire has lots of info on where to get started:

<https://oneyou.southglos.gov.uk/for-your-body/>

You can also contact them by calling: 01454 865337

Finally

We hope you have found this information helpful. Please ask us about anything you don't understand.