

Cholesterol Medications

There are two kinds of heartache: one is caused by high hopes for love left unanswered, and the other is caused by high cholesterol levels left unattended. New advances in medications can offer assistance for high cholesterol; when it comes to romance, however, you're on your own.

High blood cholesterol is known to be one of the factors of heart disease. If your cholesterol levels are high, your doctor may prescribe cholesterol medications that can keep your levels in check.

Cholesterol medications are designed to lower the level of lipids, or fats, in the blood. These lipids include triglycerides and cholesterol. When a person has too many fats or lipids in the bloodstream, he or she is at greater risk of experiencing a hardening in the arteries. Arteriosclerosis, heart attack and other heart related disorders might also occur. Cholesterol medications help to lower the LDL or "bad" cholesterol level, and increase the level of HDL or "good". Most coronary heart diseases are typically associated with good and bad cholesterol levels.

There are different ways that cholesterol medications can help a person with high cholesterol. Some drugs are designed to remove cholesterol that has built up in the blood vessels. Other cholesterol medications work by lowering the amount of triglycerides or cholesterol that is produced by, or absorbed into, the body. The cholesterol-fighting methods and the potencies vary from drug to drug.

Studies indicate that there are now new forms of cholesterol known as "non-HDL cholesterol". Within this group are VLDLs (very low-density lipoproteins) and IDLs (intermediate-density lipoproteins). Both of these types of cholesterol have been associated with an increased risk angina and non-fatal heart attack in individuals who already experienced heart attacks.

Cholesterol medications may offer benefits of those individuals who suffer from coronary heart disease, as well as those who have an ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator). It is also believed that therapies intended to lower cholesterol levels can also have an anti-arrhythmic effect on the heart. As a result, patients face lower rates of occurrence of ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation. These medications and therapies may also decrease the need for automatic firing of the ICD.

There are five types of medications available to patients with high cholesterol: nicotinic acid, fibrates, bile acid resins, statins and ezetimibe. Nicotinic acid, more commonly known as niacin, is a form of vitamin B3. Even though it is widely available over the counter, patients must be closely monitored due to side effects such as nausea, flushing and severe stomachache. Fibrates are effective in lowering triglyceride levels. Bile acid resins are prescribed by doctors to reduce the LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, while increasing levels of HDL (good) cholesterol.

Most cholesterol medications are available only through a prescription. If you suffer from high cholesterol, or think you may, speak to your doctor about the medication options that are available to you. It's the right choice for your health, and especially your heart.