

STATIN TREATMENT PLANNING:

Shared Decision-Making Resource for Providers & Patients

In shared decision-making, healthcare providers and patients work together to make the best possible healthcare decisions. These decisions consider evidence about available options, the clinician's experience, and the patient's values and preferences. There is evidence that shared decision-making contributes to improvements in health. This resource is a guide for healthcare providers and patients to engage in shared decision-making about statin treatment using the SHARED approach.

STEPS OF SHARED DECISION MAKING

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

S

Seek Your Patient's Participation

Why do I need to take a statin?

Statins are medications that lower your risk for a heart attack or stroke. They work by lowering the amount of cholesterol in the blood.

How long do I take it for?



Statins are lifelong therapy. Millions of people in the US take statins because they are safe and effective. What are the benefits of taking a statin for you?

H

Help Your Patient Explore and Compare Treatment Options

It can help me control my high cholesterol.

Yes, statins can help lower your cholesterol. This will lower your risk for heart attack or stroke. What are your concerns about taking a statin?

A

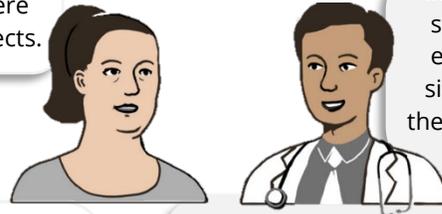
Assess Your Patient's Values and Preferences

I worry that there may be side effects.

Most people who take a statin do not have side effects. But if you have side effects, I can adjust the dose or switch you to a different statin.

R

Reach A Decision with Your Patient



Ok, but can I learn more information before I decide?

Let's discuss the different statins that are available and what may work best for you. After you start on treatment, we will check your blood work to see how well it is working.

E

Evaluate Your Patient's Decision

What resources are available to help me?

Your care team includes me, a lipid (cholesterol) specialist, registered dietitian, and a pharmacist. We can all help you manage your cholesterol.

D

Decide Which Resources Can Support The Patient



Find this resource online at <http://bit.do/shareddecisions>. This guide is intended to support patients new to statin treatment.



Statin Shared Decision-Making Guide



Step 1: Seek Your Patient's Participation

Many patients are unaware that they can and should participate in their health care decision-making. Communicate that a choice exists and invite your patient to participate in the process.

Summarize the health problem:

- "One in 3 people will have a heart attack or stroke in their lifetime. Heart attack or stroke is more likely when a person has high LDL cholesterol."
- "Bringing down your LDL cholesterol can lower the chance of a heart attack or stroke in the future."

Invite your patient to be involved in decisions. Invite your patient to ask questions and discuss options with you.

- "I'd like to discuss treatment for high cholesterol with you. Then, we can decide together what type may be best for you."



Step 2: Help Your Patient Explore and Compare Treatment Options

Discussing options with your patient can help you build a trusting relationship.

Assess what your patient already knows about his or her options.

- "What have you heard about high LDL cholesterol?"

Explain each option clearly, using plain language. Avoid using technical or medical jargon. Point out when there are clear differences between specific options.

- "Adopting a heart-healthy diet and getting regular physical activity are very important steps you can take to prevent or control cholesterol problems and heart disease."
- "Many people with high LDL cholesterol also need to take medicine to lower their cholesterol levels at some point. Statins are medications that lower LDL cholesterol. Taking a statin is one of the most effective ways to lower the risk of a heart attack or stroke."
- "Statins are among the most well-studied and widely prescribed medications. The benefits of taking statins outweigh the risks for most people."

Additional talking points are provided in the accompanying patient handout, **"Help Control Your Cholesterol Levels with Statins"** (pages 5 and 6 of this document).

Discuss the benefits and harms of each option. Clearly communicate the risks and benefits of each statin. Some resources include:

- Foundation of the National Lipid Association About Statin Medication webpage: <https://www.learnyourlipids.com/lipid-lowering-medications/about-statin-medication/>
- American College of Cardiology CardioSmart website: <https://www.cardiosmart.org/topics/high-cholesterol/treatment/statins-what-you-need-to-know>
- Mayo Clinic Statin Choice Decision Aid: <https://statindecisionaid.mayoclinic.org/statin/index>

Statin Shared Decision-Making Guide

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Step 3: Assess Your Patient's Values and Preferences

Encourage your patient to talk about what is important to him or her regarding the options.

Use open-ended questions and listen actively to your patient. Acknowledge the values and preferences that matter to your patient.

- “Which of the options fits best with the treatment goals we’ve discussed?”
- “What are the benefits of taking a statin for you?” “What are the disadvantages of taking a statin?” “Do the benefits outweigh the disadvantages of taking a statin?”
- For patients already on treatment and experiencing symptoms, you can ask, “How important is it to relieve the symptoms you are experiencing?”

Patients can use the University of Michigan Health statin decision-making tool to assess their values and preferences related to taking statins: <https://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/aa44406>.

R

Step 4: Reach a Decision With Your Patient

Ask if he or she is ready to make a decision or if they have any additional questions. Follow up with your patient if they request more time to consider the options.

- “Now that we discussed your treatment options, which treatment do you think is right for you?”
- For patients already on treatment and with symptoms attributed to statin treatment, you can ask, “I recommend that you maintain statin treatment in some form. What is your preference?”
- “Statins should be taken every day in order to lower your risk for a heart attack or stroke. Make taking a statin part of your daily routine, like brushing your teeth.”

The decisions can be documented in the **“Statin Treatment Planning Worksheet” (page 4)**.

E

Step 5: Evaluate Your Patient's Decision

Make plans to review the decision in the future. Remind your patient that decisions may be reviewed and some can be changed if they are not working well for your patient.

- “After starting a statin, we will check your blood work again, including your cholesterol levels, to find out how well the statin is working.”
- “Side effects are uncommon, but if you do have any, we can try a new statin or change the dose (amount) you are taking.”

D

Decide Which Local Resources Will Effectively Support the Patient

Share resources to support patients, including their cardiovascular care team (e.g. lipid (cholesterol) specialist, pharmacist, registered dietitian). Give contact information for each resource.

References

- [The SHARE Approach](#). Content last reviewed October 2020. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD.
- Jacobson TA, Cheeley MK, Jones PH, et al. [The STatin Adverse Treatment Experience Survey: Experience of patients reporting side effects of statin therapy](#). *J Clin Lipidol*. 2019 May-Jun;13(3):415-424.
- Grundy SM, Stone NJ, Bailey AL, et al. [2018 AHA/ACC/AACVPR/AAPA/ABC/ACPM/ADA/AGS/APhA/ASPC/NLA/PCNA Guideline on the Management of Blood Cholesterol: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Clinical Practice Guidelines](#). *Circulation*. 2019 Jun 18;139(25):e1082-e1143.

Statin Treatment Planning Worksheet

Visit date: _____

What treatment goals are achievable for you?



Reason for treatment/Treatment goals		
<input type="checkbox"/> Lower risk of heart attack and stroke	<input type="checkbox"/> Family history of heart disease	
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart disease risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower cholesterol	
Heart-healthy diet goals		Exercise goals
Medication regimen		
Name:	Dose (amount):	Frequency:
Name:	Dose (amount):	Frequency:
Name:	Dose (amount):	Frequency:
Treatment adherence concerns:		Treatment adherence strategies:

Lab Results

Date	Lab Results					Medication Changes
	Total cholesterol	HDL-C	Non-HDL-C	LDL-C	TG	
	<i>Desirable values</i>					

HDL-C= high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; Non-HDL-C = non-high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; LDL-C= low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; TG = triglyceride

My Cardiovascular Care Team

Provider	Contact Info	Provider	Contact Info
Primary care provider		Registered dietitian	
Cholesterol specialist		Pharmacist	
Other specialist		Health insurance plan	

Help Control Your Cholesterol Levels with Statins



How is high cholesterol harmful to health?

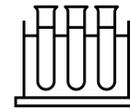
Having high cholesterol in your body can be harmful to health and lead to heart attack and stroke.



There are several types of cholesterol, including LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol. The body needs some cholesterol to work properly. But having high LDL cholesterol can lead to health problems.

High LDL cholesterol can build up in your arteries that supply blood to your heart (think of a clogged pipe). This is known as atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis can lead to heart attack and stroke.

People can lower their LDL cholesterol levels by eating a heart-healthy diet and doing more physical activity. Some people may also need medicine (statins) to lower their cholesterol levels.



High LDL cholesterol



Atherosclerosis



Heart attack and stroke



What medicines lower cholesterol levels?

Statins are medicines that lower the level of LDL cholesterol in the blood.



There are several types of statins that your doctor can prescribe.

Lower-intensity statin therapy:

- Atorvastatin (Lipitor®), lower dose
- Fluvastatin (Lescol®)
- Lovastatin (Mevacor®, Altoprev™)
- Pitavastatin (Livalo, Zypitamag)
- Pravastatin (Pravachol®)
- Rosuvastatin (Crestor®), lower dose
- Simvastatin (Zocor®)

Higher-intensity statin therapy:

- Atorvastatin (Lipitor®), higher dose
- Rosuvastatin (Crestor®), higher dose

Help Control Your Cholesterol Levels with Statins

Who needs statins?



Adults with a history of heart disease* (including stroke)



Adults with LDL levels of greater than 190 mg/dL



Adults with type 2 diabetes



Adults ages 40 to 75 with risk factors for heart disease*

Statins are recommended for people at higher risk for heart attack or stroke.



*caused by atherosclerosis

What are the side effects of statins?



Side effects from statins are not common. Take note of any side effects to discuss with your doctor.



Side effects may include headache, dizziness, and muscle pain. Actions your doctor may recommend to relieve side effects from statins include:

- Switching to another statin.
- Changing your dose.
- Trying other medicines that lower cholesterol.

If you have severe muscle pain or weakness, or dark or decreased urination, stop taking statins and call your clinician right away.

Statins are often part of a lifelong treatment plan for high cholesterol that includes dietary changes and physical activity. If prescribed, statins should be taken every day in order to lower the risk for heart attack or stroke.



Heart-healthy diet



Exercise (150 minutes per week)



Medicine (statin therapy)



Lower LDL cholesterol

Your care team can work with you to design a treatment plan that meets your health goals.