

Drug

Lipitor

atorvastatin

Patient Education

Generic Name: atorvastatin

Pronounced: a TOR va sta tin

Brand Name: Lipitor

What is the most important information I should know about atorvastatin?



In rare cases, atorvastatin can cause a condition that results in the breakdown of skeletal muscle tissue. This condition can lead to kidney failure. Call your doctor at once if you have unexplained muscle pain or tenderness, muscle weakness, fever or flu symptoms, and dark colored urine.



This medication can cause birth defects in an unborn baby. *Do not use if you are pregnant.* Use an effective form of birth control, and tell your doctor if you become pregnant during treatment.



Do not take atorvastatin if you are pregnant or breast-feeding, or if you have liver disease.

Before taking atorvastatin, tell your doctor if you have diabetes, underactive thyroid, kidney disease, a muscle disorder, or a history of liver disease.

Avoid eating foods that are high in fat or cholesterol. Atorvastatin will not be as effective in lowering your cholesterol if you do not follow a cholesterol-lowering diet plan.



Avoid drinking alcohol while taking atorvastatin. Alcohol can raise triglyceride levels, and may also damage your liver while you are taking atorvastatin.

There are many other drugs that can interact with atorvastatin. Tell your doctor about all the prescription and over-the-counter medications you use. This includes vitamins, minerals, herbal products, and drugs prescribed by other doctors. Do not start using a new medication without telling your doctor.

What is atorvastatin?

Atorvastatin is a cholesterol-lowering medication that blocks the production of cholesterol (a type of fat) in the body.

Atorvastatin reduces low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and total cholesterol in the blood. Lowering your cholesterol can help prevent heart disease and hardening of the arteries, conditions that can lead to heart attack, stroke, and vascular disease.

Atorvastatin is used to treat high cholesterol. Atorvastatin is also used to lower the risk of stroke, heart attack, or other

heart complications in people with coronary heart disease or type 2 diabetes.

Atorvastatin may also be used for other purposes not listed in this medication guide.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before taking atorvastatin?



Do not use this medication if you are allergic to atorvastatin, if you are pregnant or breast-feeding, or if you have liver disease.

If you have certain conditions, you may need a dose adjustment or special tests to safely take this medication. Before taking atorvastatin, tell your doctor if you have:

diabetes;

underactive thyroid;

kidney disease;

a history of liver disease; or

a muscle disorder.



FDA pregnancy category X. This medication can cause birth defects. *Do not use* atorvastatin if you are pregnant. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant during treatment. Use an effective form of birth control while you are using this medication.



It is not known whether atorvastatin passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. Do not take atorvastatin without telling your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby.



Atorvastatin is not for use in children younger than 10 years of age.

How should I take atorvastatin?

Take this medication exactly as it was prescribed for you. Do not take the medication in larger amounts, or take it for longer than recommended by your doctor. Follow the directions on your prescription label.



Take atorvastatin with a full glass of water. Atorvastatin can be taken with or without food.

Atorvastatin is usually taken once a day. Try to take your dose at the same time each day. Follow your doctor's instructions.

To be sure this medication is helping your condition, your blood will need to be tested on a regular basis. Your liver function may also need to be tested. Do not miss any scheduled appointments.



In rare cases, atorvastatin can cause a condition that results in the breakdown of skeletal muscle tissue. This condition can lead to kidney failure. Call your doctor at once if you have unexplained muscle pain or tenderness, muscle weakness, fever or flu symptoms, and dark colored urine.

Atorvastatin is only part of a complete program of treatment that also includes diet, exercise, and weight control. Follow your diet, medication, and exercise routines very closely.

You may need to take atorvastatin on a long-term basis for the treatment of high cholesterol.



Store atorvastatin at room temperature, protected from moisture, heat, and light.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and take only the next regularly scheduled dose. *Do not* take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?



Seek emergency medical attention if you think you have used too much of this medicine.

An overdose of atorvastatin is not expected to produce life-threatening symptoms.

What should I avoid while taking atorvastatin?

Avoid eating foods that are high in fat or cholesterol. Atorvastatin will not be as effective in lowering your cholesterol if you do not follow a cholesterol-lowering diet plan.



Avoid drinking alcohol while taking atorvastatin. Alcohol can raise triglyceride levels, and may also damage your liver while you are taking atorvastatin.

Grapefruit and grapefruit juice may interact with atorvastatin and lead to potentially dangerous effects. Discuss the use of grapefruit products with your doctor. Do not increase or decrease the amount of grapefruit products in your diet without first talking to your doctor.

What are the possible side effects of atorvastatin?



Get emergency medical help if you have any of these *signs of an allergic reaction*: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.



Stop using atorvastatin and call your doctor at once if you have any of these serious side effects:

muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness with fever or flu symptoms; or

nausea, stomach pain, low fever, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Less serious side effects may include:

mild nausea or stomach pain, stomach upset, heartburn;

constipation, bloating, gas;

stuffy nose; or

itching, skin rash; or

headache.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What other drugs will affect atorvastatin?

Many drugs can interact with atorvastatin. Below is just a partial list. Tell your doctor if you are using:

digoxin (digitalis, Lanoxin, Lanoxicaps);

erythromycin (E-Mycin, E.E.S., Ery-Tab, others) or clarithromycin (Biaxin);

gemfibrozil (Lopid) or fenofibrate (Tricor);

niacin (Nicolar, Nicobid, Slo-Niacin, others);

an antifungal medication such as itraconazole (Sporanox), fluconazole (Diflucan), or ketoconazole (Nizoral);

drugs that weaken your immune system such as cancer medicine or steroids, cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune, Gengraf), sirolimus (Rapamune), tacrolimus (Prograf), and others;

HIV or AIDS medication such as indinavir (Crixivan), nelfinavir (Viracept), ritonavir (Norvir), lopinavir-ritonavir (Kaletra), or saquinavir (Invirase, Fortovase).

This list is not complete and there may be other drugs that can interact with atorvastatin. Tell your doctor about all the prescription and over-the-counter medications you use. This includes vitamins, minerals, herbal products, and drugs prescribed by other doctors. Do not start using a new medication without telling your doctor.

Where can I get more information?

Your pharmacist can provide more information about atorvastatin.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided by Cerner Multum, Inc. ('Multum') is accurate, up-to-date, and complete, but no guarantee is made to that effect. Drug information contained herein may be time sensitive. Multum information has been compiled for use by healthcare practitioners and consumers in the United States and therefore Multum does not warrant that uses outside of the United States are appropriate, unless specifically indicated otherwise.

Multum's drug information does not endorse drugs, diagnose patients or recommend therapy. Multum's drug information is an informational resource designed to assist licensed healthcare practitioners in caring for their patients and/or to serve consumers viewing this service as a supplement to, and not a substitute for, the expertise, skill, knowledge and judgment of healthcare practitioners. The absence of a warning for a given drug or drug combination in no way should be construed to indicate that the drug or drug combination is safe, effective or appropriate for any given patient. Multum does not assume any responsibility for any aspect of healthcare administered with the aid of information Multum provides.

The information contained herein is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, warnings, drug interactions, allergic reactions, or adverse effects. If you have questions about the drugs you are taking, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Substantial effort has been made to ensure that the information provided by Epocrates is accurate and up-to-date, but this information is not intended to cover all possible uses, precautions, or other considerations relating to the therapies covered. Epocrates does not advocate or endorse the use of any drug or other therapy and does not diagnose patients. Healthcare professionals should use their professional judgment in using this information, and this information should not be considered a substitute for the care and professional judgment provided by a licensed healthcare practitioner. This information is provided on an "as is" basis, and Epocrates and its affiliates, agents and licensors assume no responsibility for any aspect of healthcare administered with the aid of this information or any other use of the information.

Copyright © 2010 Epocrates, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Epocrates® Online is a trademark of Epocrates Inc, in the U.S. and elsewhere.