# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Talking to Your Healthcare Providers**  
  *About the Treatment that’s Right for You*  
  Page 1

- **Why Improving Communication with Your Doctor is Important**  
  Page 2

- **Diet and Exercise**  
  Page 3

- **Cholesterol Medication**  
  Page 7

- **Drug-Drug Interactions**  
  Page 11
Talking to Your Healthcare Providers About the Treatment that’s Right for You

The USAGE Survey Patient Discussion Guide is a downloadable resource based on insights from the USAGE survey (Understanding Statin use in America and Gaps in Education)—the largest known cholesterol survey conducted in the United States—designed to provide information on high cholesterol and help patients best prepare for their next doctor visit. For more information on the USAGE survey, visit www.statinUSAGE.com.

The following discussion guide will help you:

- Speak to your healthcare provider about all the details of your complete treatment plan
- Get the answers you need about the potential benefits and risks of medicine
- Become a partner with your healthcare provider to determine if treatment is appropriate, and if a statin is right for you
- Keep communication lines open with your healthcare providers—from doctors to nurse practitioners and pharmacists—so that you can speak about treatment concerns quickly and stay on your treatment plan

To get the most out of this guide, give yourself enough time to review it thoroughly before your appointment. Make sure you complete all the sections regarding information that your healthcare provider needs to know and bring the copy to your appointment. If you use this guide to prepare, your appointment will likely be more productive, and you’ll walk away feeling informed and in control of decisions about your health.
Why Improving Communication with Your Healthcare Provider is Important

High cholesterol can be managed successfully with diet, exercise, and when needed, with medicine. Many people stop taking their statin medication, even when it’s working, without telling their healthcare provider. This can leave them vulnerable to serious risks of high cholesterol. By communicating better information with your healthcare provider, you can get the information you need to make an informed decision on the right treatment option for you.

Before you begin your treatment discussion, it’s important for you to note your cholesterol levels. This will help you monitor and gauge progress against levels provided to you by your physician.

**HOW MUCH DO I KNOW ABOUT LIPID MY LEVELS?**

Total Cholesterol: Current Level ______ Physician Recommended Level ______

LDL-C: Current Level ______ Physician Recommended Level ______

Triglycerides: Current Level ______ Physician Recommended Level ______

HDL-C: Current Level ______ Physician Recommended Level ______

Here are a few key treatment topics you should consider, as well as specific questions you should ask your healthcare provider.
A healthy low-fat diet and moderate exercise can help lower total cholesterol, reduce low-density lipoprotein cholesterol or LDL-C (“bad” cholesterol) and raise levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol or HDL-C (“good” cholesterol). About half of USAGE survey respondents report that they discuss therapeutic lifestyle changes with their doctor at every visit. But many don’t address these important lifestyle elements regularly, and some can’t recall ever discussing them with their healthcare provider. The following are some recommendations for raising these issues with your healthcare provider and getting the answers you need to develop a suitable diet-and-exercise program that matches your personal needs.

Don’t Leave Details Out!

You’ll need to give your healthcare provider some information about your lifestyle habits early in your conversation so that his or her treatment plan is realistic and addresses your individual needs. Here are a few things to provide:

DIET

- Your eating habits (e.g., healthy meals vs. fast food, light vs. moderate amounts of food, whether you skip meals, etc.)

- If you eat foods with a lot of sugar or drink a lot of sweetened soda or fruit juices
- If you have any food allergies, medical problems or cultural issues that restrict the types of food you can eat

- How many alcoholic beverages you consume weekly

- If you use tobacco products, talk about how much and how frequently

EXERCISE

- How much exercise you currently do and what type

- If you have any pain or other discomfort when you exercise

- Any injuries or illnesses that limit your activity
Questions To Ask Your Healthcare Provider

To have the most success with your lifestyle changes, you will partner with your healthcare provider to make sure that your diet-and-exercise plan is appropriate for your needs. You should establish clear goals and expectations so that you know when you're being successful and can build on your positive momentum. Write down your healthcare provider’s advice so that you can measure your progress.

BE SURE TO ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS DURING YOUR VISIT:

- What are the foods I should (as best as possible):
  Eliminate from my diet?
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________

Reduce my servings of?
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________

Increase my servings of?
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________

Add to my diet?
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________
  __________________________________________
- What types of exercise are best for me considering my age and general health?

- Do any of my medical issues or family history limit my range of exercises?

- How much exercise should I be doing?

Then have a discussion about how you can make your exercise program work best within your schedule.
Cholesterol Medication

For some people, diet and exercise alone don’t reduce their cholesterol to recommended levels. If your lifestyle changes haven’t improved your cholesterol levels, you aren’t alone. Like millions of Americans, you may need medication. Treatments can include statins, resins, cholesterol absorption inhibitors (ezetimibe), fish oils, and niacin-based therapies. The most commonly prescribed drugs for managing cholesterol are called statins. These drugs block a chemical that the liver uses to make cholesterol, and can have a large effect on people whose bodies produce too much cholesterol (LDL-C, or low density lipoprotein cholesterol). Statins offer significant advantages but, like all drugs, sometimes cause side effects or interact with other medications.

Understanding and managing these potential risks can help you stay on your treatment and maximize the benefits of statin therapy. Keep in mind that, at their last doctor’s appointment, former statin users were more likely to be told they were at moderately high, high or very high risk for heart disease, compared with patients who continued on statin therapy.

Side Effects

Side effects are the No. 1 reason USAGE survey participants stopped taking statins, often without telling their healthcare provider. Yet side effects, depending on the nature and severity, can often be managed so that you can stay on statin therapy, even if it requires adjusting the dose or switching to a similar medicine.

The following are the questions and issues you should discuss with your healthcare provider to avoid, identify and/or manage potential side effects:
Don’t Leave Details Out

BEFORE STARTING A STATIN, TELL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER:

- Your medical history and all medications you take, including over-the-counter treatments (OTC) and supplements
- If you suspect – or have ever been told – that you are allergic to statins
- If you are pregnant or nursing
- If you have ever experienced problems with your liver, including:
  - □ Hepatitis
  - □ Abnormal liver enzyme tests
  - □ Liver failure
- How many alcoholic beverages you consume weekly

WHILE TAKING A STATIN, TELL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER:

- Changes in the status of any health issue listed above (see Before Starting a Statin)
- If you have muscle pain, weakness, or tenderness, especially if you also have a fever
- Feel more tired than usual, experience stomach pain, have a loss of appetite, dark-colored urine or see yellowing of your skin or eyes
- Signs of an allergic reaction, including rash, hives or itching
Discomfort due to any of the following:
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Back pain
- Headache

Questions To Ask Your Healthcare Provider

BEFORE STARTING A STATIN

- Why are you recommending this particular statin? Why is it the right choice for me?

- What are the specific goals for lowering my lipids and how will this statin help achieve them?

- What are the common side effects with this particular statin?

- Do you recommend that I have my liver enzymes monitored?

- If I experience any side effects, what should I do and what is your plan for addressing them?

- Will my side effects go away over time if I keep taking my statin?
■ What can I do to avoid side effects?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

IF A SIDE EFFECT OCCURS WHILE TAKING A STATIN

■ Will this side effect go away in time? How long does it usually take?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

■ Will a dose adjustment likely resolve the side effect? How will this likely alter my cholesterol results?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

■ In your experience, do any other statins have a lower incidence of this side effect?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

■ Is this side effect a potential health concern beyond the physical discomfort?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
At some point, you may decide that a particular side effect is no longer tolerable, despite your healthcare provider’s desire to keep you on a particular statin. It is very important that you let your healthcare provider know your feelings. Consider talking to your healthcare provider before you stop taking your statin.

Drug-Drug Interactions

To be sure your healthcare provider can consider potential drug-drug interactions before selecting a statin, you should give your healthcare provider and pharmacist the complete list of medicines and over-the-counter products that you use. This list is especially helpful when communicating with many different healthcare providers, including your primary care provider, specialists (for example, a cardiologist, infectious disease expert, gynecologist or surgeon), nurse or nurse practitioner and pharmacist, and helps to ensure everyone taking care of you knows all of your medicines.

Bring the following medication list with you to guide your discussion. It will help you and your healthcare provider choose the right statin for you and better manage your high-cholesterol treatment.

“I understand that this statin is prescribed to help lower my cholesterol, but I’ve been having this side effect for some time. I wanted to let you know, so we can talk about ways to help manage or avoid this side effect, including talking about other treatments.”
Keeping a master list is especially helpful when communicating with multiple healthcare providers, including your primary care doctor, specialists (for example, a cardiologist, infectious disease expert, gynecologist or surgeon), nurse or nurse practitioner and pharmacist, and helps to ensure everyone in your network is on the same page as to your current medications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prescription/OTC Medication</td>
<td>Dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Prescribed</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where I Fill My Prescription</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The USAGE survey is supported by Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc. and the National Lipid Association.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescription/OTC Medication, Supplement</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Date Prescribed</th>
<th>Pharmacy Where I Fill My Prescription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The USAGE survey is supported by Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc. and the National Lipid Association.