

Dangers of Statin Drugs

Dr. Mercola



- Sadly, a quarter of the U.S. population over age 45 takes [statin drugs](#), the pharmaceutical industry's Number One money maker, largely due to relentless advertising, which a recent [study](#) found may be driving high cholesterol over diagnosis and over-treatment.

But over [900 studies](#) prove that statin drugs – HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors blocking liver enzymes from making [cholesterol](#) – actually cause muscle problems and even [increased cancer risk](#). Worse, while millions take statins to “protect their heart health,” these drugs are clinically proven to be detrimental.

A 2012 [study](#) in the journal *Atherosclerosis* linked statin use with a 52 percent increase in calcified coronary plaque incidence – the *hallmark* of death via heart disease!

Statins Can Undo the Benefits of Exercise

New [research](#) by the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* reveals that while exercise is one of the best things you can do to maintain healthy [cholesterol](#) levels, statin drugs negate most of the benefits, making people even less fit than before.

The New York Times [reported](#):

“(Statin) drugs routinely are prescribed for those with high cholesterol and other risk factors for heart disease ... those who are sedentary, overweight, middle-aged... are also the people most likely to be put on statins, possibly undoing some of the good of their workouts.”

Trial participants included 37 overweight, sedentary individuals with metabolic problems, divided into two groups: One group was given daily 40-mg doses of simvastatin (Zocor); the other group received no medication. After a supervised 12-week exercise program:

- Unmedicated volunteers improved their aerobic fitness by more than 10 percent. Mitochondrial content activity increased by 13 percent.
- Volunteers taking the statins improved their fitness by an average of 1.5 percent, although some had *reduced* aerobic capacity. Mitochondrial content activity *decreased* by 4.5 percent. Senior study author John P. Thyfault, professor of nutrition and exercise physiology at the University of Missouri, noted:

“Low aerobic fitness is one of the best predictors of premature death. And if statins prevent people from raising their fitness through exercise, then that is a concern.”

How Statins Might Damage Your Heart

The key to understanding this phenomenon lies in understanding what statins do to your mitochondria — the energy chamber of your cells, responsible for all metabolic functions. The primary fuel for your mitochondria, Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), is one of the primary mechanisms of harm from statins, related to [CoQ10](#) depletion.

A 2011 review published in *Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism* observed that exercise induces mitochondrial enzyme changes, which can increase cellular energy production and decrease chronic disease risk.

Researchers stated:

“Increasing evidence now suggests that exercise can induce mitochondrial biogenesis in a wide range of tissues not normally associated with the metabolic demands of exercise. Perturbations [changes] in mitochondrial content and (or) function have been linked to a wide variety of diseases, in multiple tissues, and exercise may serve as a potent approach by which to prevent and (or) treat these pathologies.”

Increasing mitochondrial activity is crucial, because free radicals from toxic exposures to chemicals, pollutants, etc., can overwhelm your body’s defenses, leading to:

- Oxidative cell and tissue damage
- Destroyed cellular proteins, lipids and DNA
- Lowered threshold for physical exercise
- Impaired ability to utilize carbohydrates and fat for energy
- Insulin resistance
- Excessive weight gain
- [Accelerated aging](#)

If You’re on a Statin Drug, You MUST Take CoQ10...

A recent [study](#) in the *European Journal of Pharmacology* showed ubiquinol effectively rescued cells from damage caused by the statin drug simvastatin, thereby protecting muscle cells from myopathies.

If you take a statin drug without CoQ10 supplementation — or ideally, the far more effective reduced form, [Ubiquinol](#) — your health is at serious risk. CoQ10 is used by every cell in your body, but especially your heart cells. Cardiac muscle cells have up to 200 times more mitochondria and therefore 200 times more CoQ10 requirements.

Premature aging, another side effect of statin drugs and too little CoQ10, accelerates DNA damage, leads to fatigue, muscle weakness, soreness and, ultimately, *heart failure*.

A recent study found that, compared to those given a placebo, patients with statin-associated myopathy who took CoQ10 and selenium supplementation experienced significantly less pain, fatigue and muscle weakness.

Beware the Hazards of Statin Drugs!

If you're a woman, listen up: Statins are classified as a "pregnancy Category X medication," meaning, *it causes serious birth defects*, and should NEVER be used if you're pregnant or planning a pregnancy.

Last year, the FDA announced it's considering additional warning labels for statin drugs because of all the potential health risks associated with them. In all, statin drugs have been directly linked to over 300 side effects, including:

- Cognitive loss
- Neuropathy
- Anemia
- Acidosis
- Frequent fevers
- Cataracts
- Sexual dysfunction
- An increase in cancer risk
- Pancreatic dysfunction
- Immune system suppression
- Muscle problems, polyneuropathy (nerve damage in the hands and feet), and rhabdomyolysis, a serious degenerative muscle tissue condition
- Hepatic dysfunction (Due to the potential increase in liver enzymes, patients must be monitored for normal liver function)

How to Optimize Your Cholesterol Levels Naturally

Too little cholesterol increases your risk for cancer, memory loss, Parkinson's disease, hormonal imbalances, stroke, depression, suicide, and violent behavior.

The most effective way to optimize your cholesterol profile and prevent heart disease is *natural* — via diet and exercise. My primary recommendations for cholesterol regulation include:

- Eliminating grains and fructose from your diet. Use my [Nutrition Plan](#) to help determine your ideal diet and eat more of your [food raw](#).

- Start [intermittent fasting](#) to radically improve your ability to burn fat as your primary fuel while improving your insulin and leptin signaling.
- Get plenty of high-quality, [animal-based omega-3 fats](#), such as krill oil, and reduce your consumption of trans fats and vegetable oils.
- Include heart-healthy foods in your diet: olive oil, coconut and coconut oil, organic raw dairy products and eggs, avocados, raw nuts and seeds, and organic grass-fed meats.