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2. Atorvastatin

Atorvastatin

Generic name: atorvastatin [*a-TOR-vä-stä-tin*]

Brand names: [Atorvaliq](#), [Lipitor](#)

Dosage forms: oral tablet (10 mg; 20 mg; 40 mg; 80 mg), oral suspension (20 mg/5 mL)

Drug class: [Statins](#)

Medically reviewed by [Melisa Puckey, BPharm](#). Last updated on Mar 6, 2024.

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What is atorvastatin?

[Atorvastatin](#) is medication used to lower cholesterol and triglycerides (fats) levels to help prevent prevent heart disease, angina (chest pain), strokes, and heart attacks. [Atorvastatin](#) calcium belongs to a class of medications called HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors (statins). Atorvastatin calcium works by slowing the production of cholesterol in the body to decrease the amount of [cholesterol](#) that may build up on the walls of the arteries and block blood flow to the heart, brain, and other parts of the body.

Atorvastatin is used together with diet, weight loss, and exercise to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke and to decrease the chance that heart surgery will be needed in people who have heart disease or who are at risk of developing heart disease.

Atorvastatin is also used to lower the amount of fatty substances such as low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol ('bad cholesterol') and triglycerides in the blood and to increase the amount of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol ('good cholesterol') in the blood.

Atorvastatin may also be used to decrease the amount of cholesterol and other fatty substances in the blood in children and teenagers 10 to 17 years of age who have familial heterozygous hypercholesterolemia (an inherited condition in which cholesterol cannot be removed from the body normally).

Accumulation of cholesterol and fats along the walls of your arteries (a process known as atherosclerosis) decreases blood flow and, therefore, the oxygen supply to your heart, brain, and other parts of your body. Lowering your blood level of cholesterol and fats with atorvastatin has been shown to prevent heart disease, angina (chest pain), strokes, and heart attacks.

Atorvastatin side effects

Common atorvastatin side effects

Common atorvastatin side effects may include pain in your bones, spine, joints, or muscles, pain and burning when you urinate, painful urination, muscle spasms, [upset stomach](#), trouble sleeping, stuffy nose, runny nose, sore throat,

diarrhea, nausea, or pain in your arms or legs.

Serious atorvastatin side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have signs of an allergic reaction to this medicine (hives, difficult breathing, swelling in your face or throat) or a severe skin reaction (fever, sore throat, burning eyes, skin pain, red or purple skin rash with blistering and peeling).

Atorvastatin calcium can cause the breakdown of muscle tissue, which can lead to kidney failure. Call your doctor right away if you have unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness especially if you also have fever, unusual tiredness, or dark urine.

Muscle problems may be more likely in older adults and those who have kidney problems, thyroid problems, or take certain other medicines.

Also call your doctor at once if you have:

- muscle weakness in your hips, shoulders, neck, and back;
- trouble lifting your arms, trouble climbing or standing;
- liver problems - loss of appetite, stomach pain (upper right side), tiredness, itching, dark urine, clay-colored stools, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes);
- kidney problems - swelling, urinating less, feeling tired or short of breath; or
- high blood sugar - increased thirst, increased urination, dry mouth, fruity breath odor.

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.

 [Atorvastatin side effects](#) (more detail)

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Warnings

You should not take this medicine if you have liver disease or [cirrhosis](#).

this medicine can cause the breakdown of muscle tissue, which can lead to [kidney failure](#). Call your doctor right away if you have unexplained [muscle pain](#), tenderness, or weakness especially if you also have [fever](#), unusual tiredness, or dark urine.

Serious drug interactions can occur when certain medicines are used together with atorvastatin. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all medicines you use now, and any medicine you start or stop using.

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

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.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use this medicine if you are allergic to it, or if you have liver failure or cirrhosis.

To make sure this medicine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- muscle pain or weakness;
- diabetes;
- stroke;
- a thyroid disorder;
- a habit of drinking more than 2 alcoholic beverages per day; or
- kidney disease.

Atorvastatin can cause the breakdown of muscle tissue, which can lead to kidney failure. This happens more often in women, in older adults, or people who have kidney disease or poorly controlled hypothyroidism ([underactive thyroid](#)).

Atorvastatin may harm an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant.

Ask a doctor if it is safe to breastfeed while using this medicine.

How should I take atorvastatin?

Take atorvastatin tablet orally once daily with or without food. Many people ask when to take atorvastatin morning or night? It can be taken any time of the day, but try and take it at the same time each day.

Take the liquid medicine on an empty stomach, at least 1 hour before a meal or 2 hours after a meal. Shake the oral suspension (liquid). Measure a dose with the supplied measuring device (not a kitchen spoon).

Take atorvastatin calcium exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose.

Do not change your dose or stop taking any of your medications without your doctor's advice.

It may take up to 2 weeks before your cholesterol levels improve, and you may need frequent blood tests. Even if you have no symptoms, tests can help your doctor determine if this medicine is effective.

Your treatment may also include diet, exercise, weight control, and blood tests.

Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

Throw away in the trash any unused liquid 60 days after opening the bottle.

 [Atorvastatin patient tips](#) (more detail)

Atorvastatin Dosing Information

Recommended Dosage in Adult Patients The recommended starting dosage of Lipitor is 10 mg to 20 mg once daily. The dosage range is 10 mg to 80 mg once daily. Patients who require a reduction in LDL-C greater than 45% may be started at 40 mg once daily.

Recommended Dosage in Pediatric Patients 10 Years of Age and Older with HeFH The recommended starting dosage of Lipitor is 10 mg once daily. The dosage range is 10 mg to 20 mg once daily.

Recommended Dosage in Pediatric Patients 10 Years of Age and Older with HoFH The recommended starting dosage of Lipitor is 10 mg to 20 mg once daily. The dosage range is 10 mg to 80 mg once daily.

Comments: Assess LDL-C when clinically appropriate, as early as 4 weeks after initiating Lipitor, and adjust the dosage if necessary.

This medicine is available as: atorvastatin 10 mg tablets, atorvastatin 20 mg tablets, atorvastatin 40 mg tablet, 80 mg tablets. The original brand name of atorvastatin was Lipitor, and now it is also available as a generic. Atorvastatin calcium oral suspension is also available as the brand Aorvaliq 20mg/5ml.

For more detailed atorvastatin dose information click the link below.

 [Detailed Atorvastatin dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if you are more than 12 hours late for the dose. Do not take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking atorvastatin?

Avoid eating foods high in fat or cholesterol, or this medicine will not be as effective.

Drinking alcohol may increase your risk of liver damage.

Grapefruit may interact with atorvastatin and cause side effects. Avoid consuming grapefruit products and drinking more than 1.2 liters of [grapefruit juice](#) each day.

What other drugs will affect atorvastatin?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medicines at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you use, which can increase risk of serious muscle problems or make the medicines less effective.

Tell your doctor about all your current medicines. Many drugs can interact with atorvastatin, especially:

- other cholesterol lowering medicine - [gemfibrozil](#), [niacin](#), [fenofibrate](#), [fenofibric acid](#), and others;
- [colchicine](#);
- antibiotic or antifungal medicine - [rifampin](#), [erythromycin](#), [clarithromycin](#), [itraconazole](#), [ketoconazole](#), [posaconazole](#), and [voriconazole](#);
- [birth control pills](#);
- medicine to prevent [organ transplant](#) rejection; or
- antiviral medicine to treat [hepatitis C](#) or HIV.

This list is not complete and many other drugs may interact with atorvastatin. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible drug interactions are listed here.

 [Atorvastatin drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does atorvastatin interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

+

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Popular FAQ

Can you use limes or lime juice while taking statin drugs (i.e. atorvastatin)?



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References

1. [Lipitor Product Label](#)
2. [Atorvaliq Product Label](#)

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Other brands

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Other brands

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Related treatment guides

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Further information

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

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability	
Rx	Prescription only
Pregnancy & Lactation	
	Risk data available
CSA Schedule*	
N/A	Not a controlled drug
Approval History	
	Drug history at FDA

User Reviews & Ratings

4.3 / 10

[298 Reviews](#)

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