

[Home](#)

2. Red yeast rice

Red yeast rice

Generic name: red yeast rice (RED YEAST RICE)**Dosage form:** oral capsule (600 mg)**Drug classes:** [Nutraceutical products](#), [Statins](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on May 8, 2023. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [What to avoid](#) [Interactions](#)

What is red yeast rice?

Red yeast rice is a product that is made by fermenting red rice with a certain type of yeast. Red yeast rice is also known as Cholestin, Hypocol, Xuezhikang, or Zhitai.

Red yeast rice supplements are not the same as red yeast rice that is sold in Chinese grocery stores.

Red yeast rice has been used in alternative medicine as a **likely effective** aid in reducing levels of "bad" cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein, or LDL) and triglycerides in the blood.

Red yeast rice has been used as a **possibly effective** aid in reducing the risk of [heart disease](#), heart attacks, or death in people with a history of [heart attack](#).

Red yeast rice has also been used as a **possibly effective** aid in lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels in people with human [immunodeficiency](#) virus (HIV).

Red yeast rice has been used to treat [high blood pressure](#). However, research has shown that red yeast rice **may not be effective** in treating this condition.

Other uses **not proven with research** have included: lowering cholesterol and blood sugar levels in people with diabetes, improving blood circulation, lowering liver enzymes associated with liver damage, and treating diarrhea, indigestion, or other stomach problems.

It is not certain whether red yeast rice is effective in treating any medical condition. Medicinal use of this product has not been approved by the FDA. Red yeast rice should not be used in place of medication prescribed for you by your doctor.

Red yeast rice is often sold as an herbal supplement. There are no regulated manufacturing standards in place for many herbal compounds and some marketed supplements have been found to be contaminated with toxic metals or other drugs. Herbal/health supplements should be purchased from a reliable source to minimize the risk of contamination.

Red yeast rice may also be used for purposes not listed in this product guide.

Red yeast rice side effects

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

Although not all side effects are known, red yeast rice is thought to be possibly safe when taken as directed for up to 4.5 years.

Stop using red yeast rice and call your healthcare provider at once if you have:

- unexplained [muscle pain](#), tenderness, or weakness;
- fever, unusual tiredness; or
- nausea, upper stomach pain, itching, tiredness, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Common side effects of red yeast rice may include:

- [constipation](#); or
- stomach discomfort.

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.

 [Red yeast rice side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Lipitor

Lipitor is used to treat high cholesterol.
Learn about side effects, interactions
and indications.

Reviews & ratings

4.3 / 10

[102 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Crestor

Crestor (rosuvastatin) is used to treat
high cholesterol and high triglycerides
in the blood ...

Reviews & ratings

5.6 / 10

[138 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

FEATURED

Repatha

Repatha (evolocumab) is a PCSK9 inhibitor used to lower high cholesterol alongside dietary changes ...

Reviews & ratings

5.3 / 10

[685 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Zetia

Zetia (ezetimibe) is used to treat high cholesterol. Includes Zetia side effects, interactions and ...

Reviews & ratings

4.3 / 10

[75 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Zocor

Zocor (simvastatin) reduces low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and total cholesterol in the blood ...

Reviews & ratings

5.0 / 10

[22 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Niacin

Niacin is used to lower cholesterol and triglycerides. Learn about side effects, interactions and ...

Reviews & ratings

7.4 / 10

[117 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Simvastatin

Simvastatin (Zocor) is a cholesterol-lowering medication that blocks the production of cholesterol ...

Reviews & ratings

4.8 / 10

[131 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Ezetimibe

Ezetimibe is used alone or with other medication to treat high cholesterol.

Learn about side ...

Reviews & ratings

3.9 / 10

[172 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Warnings

Follow all directions on the product label and package. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all your medical conditions, allergies, and all medicines you use.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use red yeast rice if you are allergic to it, or:

- if you already take a cholesterol-lowering medication, such as [lovastatin](#), [simvastatin](#), [atorvastatin](#), [rosuvastatin](#), Zocor, Lipitor, Pravachol, Crestor, Vytorin, and many others.

Talk with your healthcare provider before using red yeast rice to lower your cholesterol. **You should not use red yeast rice in place of any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor.**

Ask a doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider if it is safe for you to use this product if you have or have ever had:

- [liver disease](#); or
- kidney disease.

Red yeast rice has caused birth defects in animals and is considered **likely unsafe** to use during pregnancy. **Do not use this product without medical advice if you are pregnant.**

It is not known whether red yeast rice passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. **Do not use this product without medical advice if you are breastfeeding a baby.**

Do not give any herbal/health supplement to a child without medical advice.

How should I take red yeast rice?

Red yeast rice contains an active ingredient called monacolin K, which has the same chemical structure as the active drug in the "statin" cholesterol medicine lovastatin (Advicor, Altoprev, Mevacor). For this reason, **red yeast rice supplements may produce the same side effects and drug interactions as statin cholesterol medications produce and may lower the levels of other products such as coenzyme Q-10.**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers red yeast products that contain more than trace amounts of this statin-identical ingredient to be illegal and unapproved drugs. Red yeast rice products sold within the United States are formulated not to contain high levels of monacolin K. However, red yeast rice with higher levels of monacolin K are still available in other countries.

When considering the use of herbal supplements, seek the advice of your doctor. You may also consider consulting a practitioner who is trained in the use of herbal/health supplements.

If you choose to use red yeast rice, use it as directed on the package or as directed by your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider. Do not use more of this product than is recommended on the label.

Red yeast rice works best if you take it with food.

Do not inhale the powder from a red yeast rice capsule. It may cause an allergic reaction.

Call your doctor if the condition you are treating with red yeast rice does not improve, or if it gets worse while using this product.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Skip the missed dose and use your next dose at the regular time. **Do not** use 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 red yeast rice?

Drinking alcohol may increase your risk of liver damage.

Avoid using red yeast rice together with other herbal/health supplements that can harm your liver, such as androstenedione, chaparral, comfrey, DHEA, germander, kava, niacin, [pennyroyal](#) oil, and others.

Grapefruit may interact with red yeast rice and cause side effects. **Avoid consuming grapefruit products.**

Avoid taking an herbal supplement containing [St. John's wort](#).

What other drugs will affect red yeast rice?

Do not take red yeast rice without medical advice if you are using a medication to treat any of the following conditions:

- any type of infection (viral, bacterial, or fungal), including HIV or [tuberculosis](#);
- arthritis, including gold injections;
- cancer;
- depression or a psychiatric disorder;
- high blood pressure, [high cholesterol](#), or a heart condition;
- pain or headaches, especially if you take an **NSAID (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)** aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), celecoxib, diclofenac, [indomethacin](#), meloxicam, and others);
- prevention of [organ transplant](#) rejection; or
- seizures.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may affect red yeast rice, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and [herbal products](#). Not all possible [drug interactions](#) are listed here.

 [Red yeast rice drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does red yeast rice interact with my other drugs?

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

red yeast rice

+

Enter a drug name

Add

More about red yeast rice

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Reviews \(9\)](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Drug class: nutraceutical products](#)
- [En español](#)

Professional resources

- [Red Yeast Rice product monographs](#)

Related treatment guides

- [High Cholesterol](#)

Further information

- Consult with a licensed healthcare professional before using any herbal/health supplement. Whether you are treated by a medical doctor or a practitioner trained in the use of natural medicines/supplements, make sure all your healthcare providers know about all of your medical conditions and treatments.


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.

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

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

Copyright 1996-2025 Cerner Multum, Inc. Version: 10.01.

DRUG STATUS

| Availability | |
|---|-----------------------|
|  | Rx and/or OTC |
| CSA Schedule* | |
| N/A | Not a controlled drug |



User Reviews & Ratings

7.3 / 10

[9 Reviews](#)

Drugs.com Mobile App

Access drug & treatment information, identify pills, check interactions and set up personal medication records.



About

[About Drugs.com](#)

[Advertising policy](#)

[Attribution & citations](#)

Terms & privacy

[Terms of use](#)

[Editorial policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

Support

[Help center](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Contact us](#)



[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for the latest medication news, new drug approvals and FDA alerts.

Drugs.com provides accurate and independent information on more than 24,000 prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and natural products. This material is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Data sources include Micromedex (updated 7 Apr 2025), Cerner Multum™ (updated 13 Apr 2025), ASHP (updated 10 Apr 2025) and others.



Ad Choices
ADVERTISEMENT



Copyright © 2000-2025 Drugs.com. All rights reserved.