

Millions of people in the US take statin medication.

The main way statins can reduce your risk of a heart attack or stroke is by lowering your cholesterol levels.

Cholesterol is a fatty substance made by the liver.

There are two major types of cholesterol: good, HDL, and bad, LDL.

Bad cholesterol can leave fatty deposits in your arteries that build up, restricting blood flow and increasing your risk for a heart attack or stroke.

If you are already at high risk for a heart attack or stroke, your health care provider may suggest adding a statin in addition to making healthy lifestyle changes.

Statin help cut the amount of bad cholesterol your body makes.

You'll have a blood test before starting your statin and afterwards, to check if it's lowering your cholesterol.

Statin can reduce the amount of fatty deposits in your arteries and stop any more from building up.

Statin also make existing deposits less likely to break off and cause a blood clot.

A blood clot can cause a heart attack or stroke.

It's important to take your statin medication every day.

You can remember to take your statin by making it part of your daily routine, like brushing your teeth or eating a meal.

Most people don't have side effects from statins, but as with any drug, some people do. Side effects are usually mild.

Muscle pain is a possible, though uncommon, side effect.

Don't stop taking your statin if you think you're having side effects.

Your cholesterol level is likely to go up and this could put you at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

Speak to your doctor or health care team about your concerns.

If needed, they can change your statin to a different one that may work better for you.

A study of more than 135,000 people at risk for a heart attack or stroke found that those who took statins had a 25% lower risk of having a heart attack or stroke compared to those who did not take statins.

Statin are among the safest and most studied medications.

Statin save lives and prevent heart attacks and strokes.

Learn more about lowering your cholesterol at millionhearts.hhs.gov.