

Atorvastatin

Medication Information Leaflet

What is this medication for?

Atorvastatin belongs to the class of medications called Statins (also known as HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors). Statins lower the amount of 'bad cholesterol' (low density lipoprotein or LDL-cholesterol) and 'fat' (triglyceride) in the blood as well as increase the amount of 'good cholesterol' (high density lipoprotein or HDL-cholesterol).

High 'bad cholesterol' levels can cause your blood vessels to clog up and lead to chest pain (angina), heart attack or stroke. Hence, statins may reduce your risk for heart attack and stroke.

How should I take/use this medication?

- Do not stop taking your medication without checking with your healthcare professional. If you stop taking your medication, your 'bad cholesterol' level may rise again.
- You may take this medication with or without food.

What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?

If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only the usual dose. Do not double your dose or use extra medication to make up for the missed dose.

What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this medication or any of the other ingredients of this medication
- You are allergic to any other statins, or to any other medications
- You are pregnant, planning to have a baby or breastfeeding
- You have liver or kidney problems

What are some common side-effects of this medication?

Some side effects may include:

- Mild muscle aches or weakness, or feeling tired
- Stomach disturbances such as stomach pain, constipation, diarrhea
- Headache, joint pain or back pain

Inform your healthcare professional if these side effects do not go away and become bothersome to you.

What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

Very rarely, Statin may cause muscle or liver problems. Stop this medication and see a doctor immediately if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Breakdown of muscles - Unexplained, severe muscle pain that does not go away, muscle weakness or cramps all over your body, or dark brown urine
- Liver injury - Dark brown urine, light coloured stools (pale grey/ clay coloured), nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, yellowing of skin or eyes

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and see your healthcare professional immediately.

What food or medication should I avoid when I take this medication?

Avoid taking grapefruit, or grapefruit juice as they may interact with your medication and increase the risk of side-effects.

Avoid taking a supplement called red yeast rice as this supplement may increase the risk of side-effects.

Avoid or limit drinking alcohol to less than 3 drinks a day. Drinking too much alcohol may raise your chance of liver disease.

Some medications may interact with statins and affect their effectiveness or increase the risk of side-effects. However, these medications may also be important for your treatment. Inform your healthcare professional of the other medications you are currently taking.

Examples include:

- Warfarin, a blood thinning medication
- Medications for bacterial infections (e.g. clarithromycin, erythromycin)
- Medications for fungal infections (e.g. itraconazole, ketoconazole)

Consult your healthcare professional if you are unsure whether your existing medications can be taken together with statin.

How should I store this medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children. Throw away all expired medications.

How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing into the rubbish chute or bin.

Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore.

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