

HIV & Statins

A statin a day cuts your heart risk



“Statin should be offered to all people living with HIV over 40 years of age, as part of a holistic effort to reduce cardiovascular risk factors in people living with HIV.”

The Facts

- Cardiovascular disease, or heart disease, is the leading cause of death globally, including for all people living with HIV.
- People living with HIV have [up to two times the risk for cardiovascular disease](#) compared to people without HIV.
- Those of us living with HIV experience an [increased risk of build up of plaques in our arteries sooner](#) compared to people who don't have HIV.
- A large international study called [REPRIEVE](#), showed that the use of a daily statin (pitavastatin) by people living with HIV, substantially reduces our risk of a major adverse cardiovascular event (heart attack or stroke).

What is a statin?

- Statins are a class of low-cost medication that are prescribed to help lower total cholesterol and reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke.
- They work by blocking a substance that your body needs to make cholesterol. This causes your liver to remove cholesterol from your blood.
- While statins are highly effective and safe for most people, they have been linked to muscle pain, digestive problems and mental fuzziness

The REPRIEVE Study

- REPRIEVE was a large global randomised research study.
- The study investigated the use of a daily statin to prevent major adverse cardiovascular events (heart attack or stroke) in people living with HIV.
- REPRIEVE was stopped early when researchers saw participants living with HIV who were taking a statin had a **35% lower incidence of heart attack or stroke** compared to participants who only received a placebo.
- The benefit of a daily statin was clear in almost all participant subgroups across gender, race, ethnicity, CD4 count and geographical area.

Statins and living with HIV

- Having a discussion with your HIV specialist about the REPRIEVE study is an important conversation for all people living with HIV to have as soon as possible.
- It's a good idea to explore the benefits of a statin with your doctor, as well as any potential side effects, along with your diet and lifestyle options to reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.
- Along with starting a statin, it's recommended to include diet and lifestyle changes to support your heart health.
- Lifestyle changes include stopping or reducing smoking; aiming to be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days; and losing weight if you need to or maintaining a healthy weight.
- Diet options include reducing or limiting the saturated and trans fats that are mostly found in processed meats, butter, full-fat dairy products and deep fried foods; reducing or limiting salt and alcohol; as well as ensuring you eat a healthy balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, wholegrain cereals, lean meat, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds, legumes and beans, and low-fat dairy products.

“Lowering LDL cholesterol levels reduces risks for cardiovascular events, like having a heart attack and stroke, but these findings suggest there may be additional effects of statin therapy that lowers residual immune activation and inflammation for people living with HIV.”
– Steven K. Grinspoon, M.D.



For more information phone 02 8357 8386 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or visit www.positivelife.org.au

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The voice of all people living with HIV

Positive Life NSW