

Antihyperlipidemics - What You Need to Know

What — Antihyperlipidemic drugs are medications used to lower lipid levels and improve a person's cholesterol. Lipid levels that antihyperlipidemic drugs target are low-density lipoprotein (bad cholesterol), high-density lipoprotein (good cholesterol), and triglycerides. These drugs are used to lower LDL and TG levels but increase HDL levels. Medications that are considered antihyperlipidemic drugs include statins, fibrates, bile acid sequestrants, ezetimibe, and niacin.

Why — Increased lipid levels such as high LDL or TGs can increase a person's overall cholesterol in their blood stream which can lead to blockage. Blockage caused by increased lipid levels and high cholesterol can increase the risk for severe cardiovascular events such as heart attack, venous thrombosis, and stroke. Antihyperlipidemic drugs are often prescribed to patients who not only have increased cholesterol, but who also have a history of diabetes, high blood pressure, or cardiovascular disease.

Treatment Options

HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors (Statins) – lowers LDL and TG, increases HDL

Brand	Generic	Intensity
Pravachol	pravastatin	Low-moderate intensity
Lescol	fluvastatin	Low-moderate intensity
Altoprev	lovastatin	Low-moderate intensity
Livalo	pitavastatin	Low-moderate intensity
Zocor	simvastatin	Low-moderate intensity
Lipitor	atorvastatin	Moderate-high intensity
Crestor	rosuvastatin	Moderate-high intensity

Fibrates

Brand	Generic	Activity
Antara, Lofibra, Triglide	fenofibrate	Reduces triglycerides and VLDL
Lopid	gemfibrozil	
Atromid	clofibrate	

Misc.

Drug Class	Brand	Generic
Bile acid sequestrant	Questran	cholestyramine
Cholesterol inhibitor	Zetia	ezetimibe
Antilipemic	Niacor	niacin

Considerations

- HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors (statins) have a **black-box warning** for myopathy (muscle pain/weakness) in individuals. Using a low-intensity statin and then titrating up is a solution to mitigate myopathy from occurring.
- Combining different antihyperlipidemic drugs from different classes will often increase the lowering of cholesterol/lipid levels.
- Medications also work best in addition to lifestyle changes such as increased physical activity and eating a low-fat diet.