PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Atorvastatin

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Atorvaliq; Lipitor

Brand Names: Canada

ACH-Atorvastatin Calcium; AG-Atorvastatin; APO-Atorvastatin; Atorvastatin-10; Atorvastatin-20; Atorvastatin-40; Atorvastatin-80; Auro-Atorvastatin; BIO-Atorvastatin; DOM-Atorvastatin [DSC]; JAMP-Atorvastatin; Lipitor; M-Atorvastatin; Mar-Atorvastatin; MINT-Atorvastatin; MYLAN-Atorvastatin; NRA-Atorvastatin; PMS-Atorvastatin; PMSC-Atorvastatin; PRO-Atorvastatin; PRZ-Atorvastatin; RIVA-Atorvastatin; SANDOZ Atorvastatin; SPC-Atorvastatin; TEVA-Atorvastatin

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to lower bad cholesterol, lower triglycerides, and raise good cholesterol (HDL).
- It is used in some people to lower the chance of chest pain (angina), heart attack, stroke, and certain heart procedures.
- It is used to slow the progress of heart disease.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have liver disease or raised liver enzymes.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Cyclosporine, gemfibrozil, glecaprevir plus pibrentasvir, letermovir, or tipranavir plus ritonavir.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your blood sugar closely.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Follow the diet and exercise plan that your doctor told you about.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.
- Avoid or limit drinking alcohol to 2 drinks a day. Drinking too much alcohol may raise your chance of liver disease.

- This drug may cause muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness. Sometimes, this may be severe and lead to kidney problems. Rarely, deaths have happened. The risk may be raised if you have thyroid problems, kidney problems, infection, low blood pressure, or seizures. It may also be raised if you take certain other drugs or are dehydrated. People who are 65 or older may have a raised risk. Talk with your doctor if you have questions.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. If you may become pregnant, you must use birth control while taking this drug. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI) like blood in the urine, burning or pain when passing urine, feeling the need to pass urine often or right away, fever, lower stomach pain, or pelvic pain.
- Signs of a very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- A fast heartbeat.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in

balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.

- Not able to pass urine or change in how much urine is passed.
- Call your doctor if you have muscle problems like abnormal muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness (with or without fever). If your doctor tells you to stop this drug but your muscle problems do not go away, call your doctor.
- Severe and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Diarrhea.
- Joint pain.
- Pain in arms or legs.
- Upset stomach.
- Nose or throat irritation.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Trouble sleeping.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- Take this drug at the same time of day.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Tablets:

- Take with or without food.

Suspension:

- Take on an empty stomach. Take 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals.
- Shake well before use.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Tablets:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Suspension:

- Store in the original container at room temperature.
- After opening, throw away any part not used after 60 days.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions,

treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

Last Reviewed Date

2024-04-26

Copyright

© 2026 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Atorvastatin - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center