

# Diabetes Mellitus, Heart Disease, and Statins

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### What is the relationship between Diabetes and Heart Disease?



Heart disease is the **most common cause of death** in people with diabetes.



Even if your cholesterol levels are normal, **diabetes itself is a risk factor for heart disease.**



People with diabetes are **at least twice as likely to have heart disease or stroke** than people without diabetes.



**High cholesterol and high blood sugar levels can increase the risk of these serious health conditions**, such as heart disease, stroke, or peripheral blood vessel disease called atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD).  
*(decreased blood flow to a limb)*

### What can you do to decrease your risk of heart disease?



Work with your healthcare team in controlling blood sugar.



Follow a diet as recommended, and try to optimize your weight and exercise regularly.



Adding a statin to your medications has been shown to reduce your risk of heart disease, even if your blood cholesterol levels are normal.

### What are statins?

- Statins are **cholesterol-lowering medicines that have been widely used over the last 30 years** and work by **reducing the production of cholesterol** in your liver.
- People with diabetes have a **higher risk of ASCVD** even if their LDL cholesterol is normal.
- Statins help **reduce the risk** for heart attack, stroke, and death

### Is a statin recommended for people with diabetes?

- A statin is recommended for adults 40 to 75 years of age with diabetes.
- Discuss the benefits and risks of taking a statin with your healthcare team if you are:
  - Older than 75 years of age with diabetes
  - 20 to 39 years of age with a long duration of diabetes (10 years or more of having type 2 diabetes, or 20 years or more of having type 1 diabetes) or have diabetes complications, such as kidney disease, eye disease, nerve damage, or blood vessel disease.

### What are the side effects of statins?

- Statins are cholesterol-lowering medicines that have been used safely for many years. A few people develop mild side effects including:
  - Muscle aches
  - Liver enzyme elevations
- People with risk factors for diabetes may develop diabetes sooner, but statins do not cause diabetes. If you experience any side effects with a statin, please contact your healthcare team.