

# SIMVASTATIN

## ABOUT SIMVASTATIN

This belongs to the group of medicines known as lipid lowering drugs.

If you have a one in five or greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease in the next 10 years, your GP or nurse should offer you treatment with a medicine called simvastatin to help reduce your cholesterol. This, in addition to other factors such as good blood sugar control, good BP management and smoking cessation, will help to reduce your risk of having heart attacks or other heart problems.

High levels of cholesterol do not make people feel ill but can cause problems if left untreated. It is important that you take the medicine to prevent these problems.

Simvastatin is used to lower levels of cholesterol and other lipids (fats) in the blood. Cholesterol is made naturally in the body and is absorbed from the food we eat. If levels of cholesterol are too high in the blood stream, it can stick to the walls of blood vessels. Eventually this leads to a narrowing of the blood vessels and could cause them to become blocked.

## BEFORE TAKING SIMVASTATIN

Before taking simvastatin make sure your doctor knows if you are taking **any** other medicines, including those available to buy without a prescription, herbal and complementary medicines.

## HOW TO TAKE SIMVASTATIN

- Always read the manufacturer's information leaflet, if possible, before beginning treatment.
- Take simvastatin exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not stop without checking with your doctor first.
- Simvastatin is normally taken in the evening or at night-time.
- If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember and continue taking it at the usual times. If it is nearly time for your next dose, leave out the missed dose, never take two doses at the same time to make up.
- Simvastatin is for you. Never give it to others, even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.
- Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else has taken an overdose of simvastatin contact your doctor or go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital **at once**. Always take the container with you, if possible, even if it is empty.

## CAN SIMVASTATIN CAUSE PROBLEMS?

As well as their useful effects all medicines can cause unwanted side effects. Speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if any of the following side effects continue or become troublesome:-

Headache, tummy pain, flatulence (excess wind), diarrhoea or constipation, feeling sick or being sick, thinning of the hair, dizziness, pins and needles, numb or painful extremities (fingers and toes etc.), skin rash, symptoms of anaemia such as tiredness.

**Important:** If you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness or jaundice (yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes) after taking simvastatin contact your doctor **immediately**.

## HOW TO STORE SIMVASTATIN

- Keep out of sight and reach of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct light and heat.
- Never keep out of date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacist who will dispose of them safely for you.

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## GETTING MORE FROM YOUR TREATMENT

- Keep your regular appointments with your doctor. You will have to undergo blood tests, particularly when you first start treatment, to ensure the dose you are taking is right for you.
- Many people are able to help their condition by carefully following their doctor's directions for a healthy diet and exercise.
- Even though you may feel completely well, never stop taking simvastatin without checking with your doctor first. When you stop taking simvastatin, your lipid levels may increase again.

**Do not smoke.** Smoking increases risk of damage to your heart and arteries independently. This risk is further increased with elevated cholesterol.

- **Avoid** drinking too much alcohol while you are being treated with simvastatin. Alcohol can also increase your cholesterol levels.
- **Avoid** drinking grapefruit juice while you are taking this medicine as it can increase the levels of simvastatin in the body.

## GETTING MORE FROM YOUR TREATMENT

- Simvastatin can occasionally cause dizziness. Make sure your reactions are normal before driving, operating machinery or doing any other jobs which could be dangerous if you were to become dizzy.
- Women of childbearing age should not take simvastatin unless they are using an effective contraceptive, which should be continued for at least one month after stopping treatment with simvastatin.

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**PLEASE TAKE YOUR MEDICINES AS  
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