

## **Cholesterol Treatment**

Diet, exercise smoking cessation and weight loss are the main ways to lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart attack. See guidelines to help lower cholesterol. Genetic factors play a large role in high cholesterol. Humans derive only 25% of their cholesterol from dietary sources. Even with careful diet and exercise, medications may be necessary.

The most common medication is the “statin” drugs. Statins lower the total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and possibly the triglycerides. Side effects include liver enzyme changes and muscle pains.

Niacin works well to lower the small, dense lipoproteins. Niacin is usually combined with statin drugs. Niacin is given in high doses and may cause flushing.

Zetia reduces absorption of cholesterol from the intestine and can be used in combination with a “statin” drug.

Fibrates are commonly used to lower high triglycerides.