

Why Statins Side Effects May (literally) Be Killing You

By Aurora Geib, Natural News

Millions of Americans take statins to lower their cholesterol levels. While these highly prescribed drugs may seem like a magical cure-all for high cholesterol, the truth is that statins lead to a multitude of dangerous -- and sometimes fatal -- conditions. Read on to learn why statins' side effects may (literally) be killing you.

The 411 on Statins

Statins work by blocking the body's ability to produce cholesterol. They may also help your body reabsorb built-up cholesterol along the artery walls, thereby preventing further blockages from occurring. While this may sound terrific on paper, it's a simplistic explanation. When statins block the liver's production of the cholesterol-making enzyme hydroxy-methylglutaryl-coenzyme A reductase (HMG-CoA reductase), they also cause a multitude of side effects, including muscle and joint aches, nausea, rash, headaches, constipation and diarrhea.

If these unpleasant complications aren't enough to make you think twice about taking statins, consider these more serious -- and potentially deadly -- side effects.

Liver Damage

The liver, which acts as the body's filtration system, keeps the body running smoothly and free of toxins. Statins can cause increases in liver enzymes, putting users at risk for a variety of complications, such as jaundice, liver transplantation and death from acute liver failure. Not only that, but when a damaged liver is prevented from doing its job, it wreaks havoc on the functionality of the entire body.

Kidney Failure

An extremely serious side effect known as rhabdomyolysis can be caused by statins. This condition involves the degeneration of muscle cells, kidney failure and death. While rhabdomyolysis most commonly occurs when statins react to other drugs, it can also happen on its own.

Type 2 Diabetes

Diabetes contributes to the deaths of more than 230,000 Americans every year due to conditions ranging from heart disease to kidney failure. (1) So why would you take a drug known to lead to the development of this disease? Statins have been connected with increases in fasting serum glucose levels and HbA1c. In fact, the risk is so significant that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has mandated a warning label regarding the connection between statins, increased blood glucose levels and diabetes.

Statins don't just increase your risk of diabetes in one way: they simultaneously increase insulin resistance while raising blood sugar. Alone, these issues are problematic. Together,

they are potentially catastrophic and can result in everything from heart attacks to diseases including cancer, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. (2)

Neurological Diseases

Many patients who take statins report memory loss, confusion, forgetfulness, amnesia and memory impairment, but the neurological damage caused by statins doesn't end there. Some researchers have linked statins to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease, which is known for its poor prognosis and quick progression. (3)

Heart Failure

If statins are supposed to help prevent heart problems, then why do the results of one research study indicate that patients who take statins have weaker heart function than those who do not? It's hard to accept statins as a viable option when scientific research concludes that "statin therapy is associated with decreased myocardial [heart muscle] function." (4)

Stuck With Statins

Although it may be easy to think that you can use statins to control your cholesterol and then simply stop taking them, the truth is that most people need to stay on statins indefinitely once they begin.

The only exception which can prevent a lifelong need for the drug? A commitment to lifestyle changes which naturally help reduce your cholesterol. While quitting smoking, eating well, exercising regularly and managing your stress levels may seem like more trouble than popping a few pills, the truth is that these beneficial habits are vastly preferable to a lifetime hooked on statins.

Earlier this year, *The New York Times* ran an opinion piece in which a Harvard Medical School faculty member decried the use of statins. Imploringly titled "Don't Give Patients More Statins," the article not only cited statin therapy's significant side effects and failure to meaningfully protect against heart disease but also another issue: false assurances which distract patients from the true cure for high cholesterol, poor lifestyle choices. The piece strongly cautioned patients against following any guidelines related to statins, and instead advised them to consider all of the evidence in order to determine the best course of treatment. (5)

While one out of every four Americans over the age of 45 is on statins, shockingly few of them are aware of the extensive range of side effects, let alone the potentially deadly complications. While statins may seem like a quick and easy solution, the potential long-term consequences -- many of which are fatal -- far outweigh any short-term benefits.

Sources:

1) <http://professional.diabetes.org>

2) <http://www.mayoclinic.org>

3) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

4) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

5) <http://www.nytimes.com>