

TALBOT GREEN GROUP PRACTICE

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Please reply to Talbot Green Beddau

Dear Patient,

Letter to patients explaining cholesterol results and 10 year risk

We have written this to help explain what your cholesterol result means for you and to assist you in deciding what you'd like to do next. Having **high cholesterol** over a prolonged period of time **increases your chance** of having a **heart attack or a stroke**. Other factors (called risk factors) also influence this like getting older, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, family history and being overweight.

We used to decide what to do about cholesterol just based on how high the number was and also the amount of “good” cholesterol (HDL cholesterol) and “bad” cholesterol (LDL cholesterol) that there is in your blood.

What we do now is take all these things into account and we use a special type of calculator called a “risk calculator” to give us an idea what your chance of having a heart attack or stroke will be over the next 10 years. This is kind of predicting the future so it's not perfect but it gives us a really helpful idea. The link below explains this “10 year risk”.

<https://patient.info/heart-health/cardiovascular-disease-atheroma/cardiovascular-health-risk-assessment>

For anyone whose risk is above 10% there is really good research and evidence proving that the cholesterol lowering tablets called statins are of benefit. To give you an idea, for every 1 point they drop your “bad” (LDL) cholesterol, your future risk of heart attacks/strokes drops by about 25%. So a 2 point drop would lower your risk by 50%. They give a very good “bang for your buck”.

Some people experience side effects to statins including muscle pain or joint pain (they also don't mix with grapefruit in the diet!) though these are relatively uncommon. Should a person experience this there is the option to try a lower dose or a different statin or even to stop them altogether (although then you would lose the protective effect).

We have written to you because your risk percentage is above 10% and therefore we know the research shows you would benefit from a statin. It is however a personal decision for you (much as it is to decide whether to take blood pressure tablets if your blood pressure is high).

There is more detail and information on these topics available on the internet if you'd like further information:

Statins

<https://patient.info/heart-health/high-cholesterol/statins-and-other-lipid-lowering-medicines>

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We think that between this letter and these extra resources, we will have given you enough information to allow you to make an informed decision about taking statins. If you decide they are for you, we will do a prescription for you and ask for you to have a repeat blood test 3 months later to see how effective they have been. If you decide not to take them, we'd also be grateful if you could let us know as we would record this in your notes.

Many thanks for reading!

Dr R Parfitt (on behalf of all the team at Talbot Green Group Practice)