

[IMAGE]

## Statins Weaken Your Bones

By Editorial Staff

Statin medication (brand names: Lipitor, Crestor, Altoprev, Livalo, etc.) is designed to reduce cholesterol by blocking the key enzyme the body uses to make cholesterol, particularly low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol; while also removing (reabsorbing) existing LDL from the bloodstream. Doing so can reduce the risk of heart disease and its often-fatal consequences: a heart attack or stroke.

Unfortunately, as is too often the case with medication, statins help one thing, but harm another – they improve your cholesterol profile at the expense of bone health. Using a mouse model, researchers compared high-dose statins vs. no statins with regard to osteoporosis risk. High-dose, long-term (one year) statin use increased osteoporosis risk significantly compared to non-use of statins.

Osteoporosis, a bone disease characterized by low bone density / strength, increases the risk of bone fractures, particularly of the hip or spine, which can compromise mobility and function. In other words, it's bad news at any age.

This study, published in *Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy*, should make you ask your doctor three questions at your next visit if you have high cholesterol or are at risk for it:

1. *What's my cholesterol profile?* Your total cholesterol score is far less significant from a health perspective than your LDL:HDL (high-density lipoprotein or "good") cholesterol ratio. You don't need statins just because you have high total cholesterol.)
2. *What can I do to lower my LDL cholesterol and/or reduce my risk of high cholesterol without medication?* (Exercise and dietary changes are the big ones.)
3. *If I absolutely need to take a statin, what's the smallest dose and shortest amount of time I need to take it?* The quicker you can get off statins (or any medication), the quicker you reduce your risk of suffering an adverse effect associated with all medications – in the case of statins, increased risk of osteoporosis, among other potential problems.

The bottom line: High cholesterol, particularly high LDL, is a health risk – but so is taking statin medication, something an estimated *200 million* do worldwide according to Johns Hopkins. Talk to your doctor about how to stay healthy and safe *naturally* and avoid the need for statins. Your bones will thank you for it.

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