

# Statin changes: Q & A

## 1. Why does ConnectiCare require prior authorization on certain cholesterol lowering medications?

The cholesterol lowering medication Zocor (simvastatin) is available in a generic version. The statins, which lower "bad" cholesterol, are the best selling drug class in the world and the addition of generic alternatives presents a unique cost-saving opportunity for employers, consumers, and insurers. ConnectiCare's philosophy is to encourage the use of generic drug alternatives when available and medically appropriate.

## 2. Why should I consider switching medications?

As consumers of medical care, people are not always aware of the various options which are available. Comparative information on medicine choices may not be easy to find or understand. Also, many people feel uncomfortable asking their doctors about alternatives when he or she is writing your prescription. In today's world of equally effective generic medications, consumers should always be asking their doctor about generic alternatives when their doctor "takes out the pen" to write the prescription.

**Efficacy, cost and safety** are the items to consider when choosing a cholesterol medication.

- **Efficacy:** The primary purpose of cholesterol treatment is to reduce your LDL "bad" cholesterol. Simvastatin (Zocor) is a higher potency statin, like Lipitor, and most people will be able to reach their LDL goal with simvastatin (Zocor) For members on Lipitor 10mg or 20mg, simvastatin 20mg or 40mg should meet your LDL goal requirements.
- **Cost:** Simvastatin (Zocor) currently takes the lowest copayment, Tier 1. You can save up to \$300 per year in out of pocket copayment costs if you are currently using a Tier 3 branded agent such as Liptior. (See your benefit summary for your specific copayment amounts and deductible if applicable.)
- **Safety:** Simvastatin (Zocor) and all statins including Crestor and Lipitor are among the most widely prescribed and studied drugs in recent history. If you and your doctor decide to switch medication, your doctor may ask you to have your LDL and liver function tested, which you may already be doing on your current medication.

## 3. I am currently taking Lipitor, Vytorin, Crestor, or Lescol XL. What do I need to do?

- If you are considering a switch to simvastatin (Zocor), you need to talk to your doctor. If you and your doctor determine simvastatin (Zocor) is an appropriate choice, he/she will write you a prescription to start with your next refill.

## 4. I am not currently on cholesterol medication, but my doctor and I have discussed starting one. What should I do?

- At your next visit or at the point you and your doctor determines statin treatment is required, remind your doctor that simvastatin (Zocor), lovastatin (Mevacor) or pravastatin (Pravachol) are the required statins for initial treatment for ConnectiCare members.
- To obtain Lipitor, Vytorin, Crestor, or Lescol/XL your doctor will need to submit a prior authorization request and rationale for use of these drugs.

## 5. I just went to the pharmacy and my new statin prescription (Lipitor, Vytorin, Crestor, etc.) was rejected. What should I do?

- Simvastatin, lovastatin or pravastatin are the required statins for members starting on cholesterol treatment. Please contact your doctor and ask him/her if one of these would be appropriate for you.
- To obtain Lipitor, Vytorin, Crestor, Pravachol, or Lescol/XL your doctor will need to submit a prior authorization request and rationale for use of these drugs.

**6. I spoke to my doctor and he wants me to start on Lipitor, Vytorin, Crestor, or Lescol/XL what should I do?**

- Simvastatin, lovastatin or pravastatin are the required statins for members starting on cholesterol treatment. Please contact your doctor and ask him/her if one of these would be appropriate for you.
- To obtain Lipitor, Vytorin, Crestor, or Lescol/XL your doctor will need to submit a prior authorization request and rationale for use of these drugs.

**7. Can my pharmacist call my doctor to change my prescription?**

- Your pharmacist can call your doctor on your behalf, although some doctors may want to discuss a change in medication with you first. If you have your pharmacist call for you, it would be best to have your pharmacist explain to your doctor that he/she discussed the options with you.

**8. How do the statin choices compare? Can I convert to the same strength of Zocor?**

- Your doctor will make the final decision on the right dose for you. You may also view a Drug List Alternatives Chart on this website. ([View Chart](#))
- Many of the statins come in doses of 10mg, 20mg, 40mg, 80mg, but the milligram strength is not always comparable.
- For example, most members who are on Lipitor 10mg will require simvastatin 20mg, but your doctor should decide on the dose you need.

**9. I am on Lipitor and do not want to switch. What are my options?**

- You may remain on Lipitor at the higher copay (Tier 3), or you may consider discussing simvastatin, lovastatin or pravastatin with your doctor at your next visit to substantially reduce your out-of-pocket costs.
- Generally, patients who are on Lipitor 10mg or 20mg can switch to simvastatin 20mg and 40mg respectively. Talk to your doctor about this option.
- Generally, patients who are on Lipitor 40mg and 80mg can switch to simvastatin 40mg, 80mg, or Crestor 5mg, 10mg, or 20mg. Talk to your doctor about these options.
- Another option for members on Lipitor 20mg and 40mg is the half tab program. Click on the below link for more information on reducing your copay by up to 50%.
- <http://www.connecticare.com/GlobalFiles/PharmacyCentral/resources/HalfAndHalf0128.pdf>

**10. ConnectiCare has a 1/2 tab program, can I use it to save money on my cholesterol prescription? How does this work?**

- Yes, this is a great option to reduce your out-of-pocket expenses.
- See attached web link for program description
- <http://www.connecticare.com/GlobalFiles/PharmacyCentral/resources/HalfAndHalf0128.pdf>

**11. I use mail order and take Lipitor, Vytorin, Crestor or Lescol XL, what should I do?**

- You can remain on your current medication at the higher copay (Tier 3), or if you would like to reduce your out-of-pocket expenses, speak to your doctor about simvastatin, lovastatin or pravastatin.
- If you and your doctor agree simvastatin, lovastatin or pravastatin are right for you, have your doctor write you 2 prescriptions. The first one for 30 tablets of simvastatin, lovastatin or pravastatin with a few refills to fill at a local pharmacy. We do not suggest filling a 90-day supply for your first fill of any new drug. Then if the prescription works fine for you, you fill via mail order.