

Is It Dangerous to Stop Statins?

by Dr. David Williams

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As most of you already know, I regularly recommend that people avoid taking cholesterol-lowering statins, due to the numerous [negative statin side effects](#) and the ineffectiveness of statin drugs in reducing the risk of death from heart attack and stroke.

Consequently, I'm often asked by those wishing to heed my advice whether it is dangerous to stop taking statin drugs if they are currently on them.

Typically, any time a patient decides to cease taking a drug on his or her own, we hear outcries from physicians that these people are putting their lives in danger.

That's the standard knee-jerk reaction. But what are the real risks when it comes to stopping statins?

Weighing the Statin Risks

First, most statin users have never had a heart attack or stroke. Their doctors prescribed these drugs to prevent such an occurrence. Yet, research shows that statins neither prevent these problems nor save lives, so based on that, discontinuing the use of these drugs wouldn't make any difference.

Second, it's prudent to look at individuals taking statins who actually do have a prior history of heart attack or stroke.

Again, looking at a compilation of the research and combining all the unrealistic, best-case data available, you could say if 1,000 individuals with a history of heart attack or stroke were given statins for five years, it might save 12 from death, 26 from a repeat heart attack, and eight from a stroke.

So, after 1,000 people took the drug for five years, a total of 46 might be helped.

On the downside, research shows that 100 individuals would develop and be harmed by muscle destruction. Additionally, 200 to 300 would develop type 2 diabetes.

And there are more than 300 other known side effects directly associated with statin use. (*Lancet* 05;366(9493):1267–1278) (*N Engl J Med* 08;359(21):2195–2207) (*Arch Intern Med* 06;166(21):2307–2313)

In a nutshell, stopping statins is quite unlikely to trigger a heart attack, stroke, or premature death in anyone. (emphasis mine)