

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

For high cholesterol, statins are way to go

DEAR DR. ROACH: Last year, I told my doctor that I no longer wanted to take a statin drug. I had read so much about statins and am on meds for cholesterol and high blood pressure. I am 73, and other than having arthritis in my knees, I am not having problems. My doctor put me on fenofibrate. I am due for my yearly checkup in a few months and don't really know yet how this is working on my cholesterol. I was wondering what your feelings are about this drug. - RS ANSWER: I've written a lot about statins, which have been proven to save lives and reduce heart attacks in people with heart disease and also in some people at higher-than-average risk for heart disease. In contrast, although nonstatin medications reduce cholesterol, they have not been proven to do what they are really intended to do, which is to prevent heart disease and death.

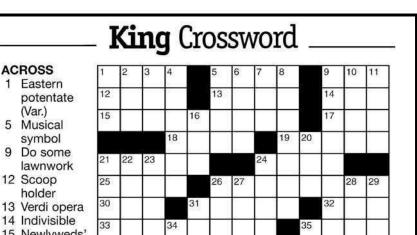
I suspect that medications like fenofibrate do have a small benefit in protecting the heart; however, I would not use them unless the side effects of statins made it impossible to take one. Often, people intolerant of one statin do well on another. For people at high risk, such as those with previous heart attack or known blockages, I would try a different class of medication. For people at lower risk, I would work on a diet proven to reduce heart disease risk, such as the Mediterranean diet, and encourage regular exercise and use medications such as fenofibrate sparingly or not at all. Another medication, ezitimibe (Zetia or Ezetrol), also lowers cholesterol but without convincing proof that it lowers heart disease risk. It may be that the mechanism by which statins reduce heart risk is not just through lowering cholesterol. Learn more about high cholesterol and how to control it in the cholesterol booklet. Readers can order a copy by writing: Dr. Roach

No. 201W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6 Canada with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

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DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 81 years old and in good health. I am 5 feet, 11 inches tall and weigh 168 pounds, the same as in 1950. My blood pressure and cholesterol are good on treatment, and my pulse is 62. I drink an energy drink three or four times a week after the noon meal, when I don't take a nap and need to keep going. I am a farmer, and am active every day. Are these energy drinks harmful to me? -L.M.W. ANSWER: The caffeine in one energy drink is about 160 mg per 16-ounce can, which is the equivalent of somewhere around a cup or two of regular coffee, depending on how strong you make it. That much caffeine doesn't cause problems for most people, especially for those who are used to it. However, it also has 52 grams of sugar - about 14 teaspoons. My advice is to stick with coffee. You will save money and reduce your sugar intake a lot.



SALOME'S STARS

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Personal matters claim a good deal of the Lamb's time in the early part of the week. But by midweek, pragmatic considerations (work, school, jobseeking, etc.) begin to take priority.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The seasonal shift ignites the Bovine's creative aspects. You could do well if you try to combine your penchant for innovation with the more pragmatic demands of the week.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Ideas come easily to you this week. And never mind that some might suggest they're unworkable and/or impractical. It's your vision that counts. Work them out and see what turns up.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Personal matters continue to dominate the early part of the week. By

midweek, more workaday issues once again begin to emerge. Balance your time to give both the attention they need.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A new contact could provide an expanded opportunity. But be sure you get all the facts before you consider signing on. Ask questions, and be wary if you don't get the right answers.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) An unexpected development could cause some supposedly resolved disagreements to reignite. Deal with the situation before it leads to some really serious problems.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A clash of work-linked viewpoints needs to be discussed openly, honestly and calmly by all concerned before it can impede progress on an ongoing project.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) The Scorpion's pragmatic side helps you accept the possibility that a change of plans might be the wise thing to do. Be sure to weigh

all your considerations carefully.

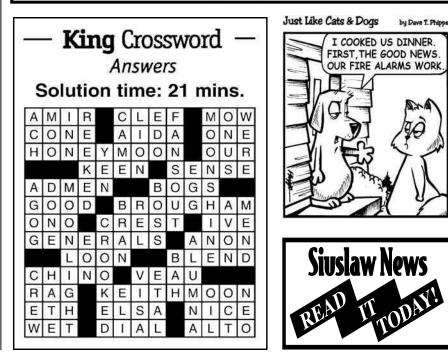
SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Some people might not take no for an answer. Never mind. Keep your resolve if you're sure you don't want to be involved in a potentially sticky situation.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) All other facts and figures aside, it's what you learn about potential colleagues that can be most helpful in assessing any decisions you're likely to make regarding a new project.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) You might want to reconsider some of your outside commitments if they continue to demand more time than you can spare. Be honest with yourself when making a decision.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Pay attention to that inner voice of Piscean wisdom counseling you to remove those rose-colored glasses and take an honest look at any decisions you might face this week.

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