

Cholesterol-lowering drugs may help prevent stroke recurrence

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People who take cholesterol-lowering drugs called statins after a stroke may be less likely to have another stroke later, according to research published in the May 26, 2009, print issue of *Neurology*.

Those who take statins after a stroke may also be less likely to die within the next 10 years than those who do not take statins.

"Considering the large burden that stroke carries around the world, these potential benefits of statins are significant," said study author Sotirios Giannopoulos, MD, DSc, of the University of Ioannina School of Medicine in Greece. "Also, second strokes tend to result in more disability and longer time spent in hospitals than first strokes, so anything that can prevent these recurrent strokes is beneficial."

The study involved 794 people who had strokes and had health information available for 10 years after the stroke. Researchers looked back at the records to see what factors affected the risk for having a second stroke or dying within 10 years after the stroke.

During that time, 112 people had a second stroke and 224 people died. Those who took statins were 35 percent less likely to have a second stroke and 57 percent less likely to die within 10 years than those who did not take statins.

About eight percent of those on statins had a second stroke, compared to 16 percent of those not taking statins.

Researchers analyzed other risk factors for stroke, such as high blood pressure, [diabetes](#), smoking, and heart problems, but found that statin use was the only factor tied to a reduced risk of recurrent stroke and death.

"It's possible that effects from the drugs that are separate from their cholesterol-lowering effects are responsible for this result," Giannopoulos said. "[Statins](#) have anti-inflammatory and antioxidative effects and also prevent blood clotting and stabilize [plaque](#) in the [arteries](#), so one of these mechanisms may help to prevent recurrent [stroke](#)."

Source: American Academy of Neurology ([news](#) : [web](#))

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