

NIH stops study of niacin to prevent heart attacks

May 26 2011, By LAURAN NEERGAARD , AP Medical Writer

(AP) -- Disappointing news: A drug that raises people's so-called good cholesterol didn't go on to prevent heart attacks.

The National Institutes of Health halted a major study of high-dose niacin, a type of B vitamin, on Thursday because the drug wasn't fighting heart disease after all. It was the latest setback in the quest to harness [good cholesterol](#) to fight the bad kind.

LDL cholesterol is the main source of artery clogs. Popular [statin drugs](#), sold under such names as Zocor and Lipitor, are mainstays in lowering LDL. Yet many statin users still suffer heart attacks. So scientists are testing if adding different kinds of drugs to statins would increase HDL - the good kind that helps prevent blocked arteries - enough to protect the heart.

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