

Fibrates (Fibric Acid Derivatives)

What does this medication do?

Fibric acid derivatives, or fibrates, are used to reduce high cholesterol levels a risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

How does it work?

They work by lowering something called your triglyceride levels. Triglycerides are a type of fat that are found in the blood. Lowering your triglyceride levels can increase your levels of HDL or good cholesterol. Fibrates can also reduce LDL (the "bad" cholesterol). Fibrates include gemfibrozil, bezafibrate (Bezalip), and fenofibrate (Lipidil).

How should I take it?

Some of these medications need to be taken with meals, usually your main meal. Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist about how and when to take your medication.

What if I am taking other medicines?

Always tell your doctor about any other medication including prescription, non-prescription, over-the-counter or natural health products (vitamins and minerals, herbal remedies, homeopathic medicines, traditional medicines such as traditional Chinese medicines, probiotics and other products like amino acids and essential fatty acids).

What else should I tell my doctor?

Tell your doctor if you have kidney, liver, or gallbladder problems, if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, or taking other medications, especially blood thinners (Warfarin). Tell your doctor immediately if you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness.

What are some common side effects?

Some common side effects include skin rashes, upset stomach, throwing up, flatulence (gas), stomach pain, headache, dizziness and muscle pain. Tell your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects you experience.

Lifestyle changes

Eating a healthy diet that is lower in fat, especially saturated and trans fats, being smoke free, limiting alcohol use, being physically active and reducing stress are also important in lowering

the risk of heart disease. Talk to your health-care practitioner about how you can achieve these lifestyle changes.

Source: Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario, May 2008