

Does Coenzyme Q10 Relieve Statin-Induced Muscle Pain?

Management of Statin-Associated Muscle Pain

Statin-associated muscle pain (myopathy) typically appears as aching muscle pain, muscle weakness (but not joint pain), usually affecting both sides of the body, and more than one muscle group. Red flags for medical referral include flu-like symptoms, low back and/or proximal muscle pain, and brownish coloured urine, which could signal rhabdomyolysis.

Muscle symptoms typically appear after a few weeks to months of treatment, though they can appear anytime after the first week. [\[8\]](#) Symptoms typically disappear within days to weeks of discontinuing treatment.

When statin muscle pain develops (without evidence of more serious complications) options for management can include: decreasing the dose, stopping therapy for a few weeks, switching to other statins (some data suggests pravastatin and fluvastatin may be better tolerated [\[8\]](#)), alternate day treatment, or completely stopping statin therapy and switching to another type of cholesterol-lowering drug. Given the demonstrated benefits of statin therapy, this is usually the least-desirable option.

Here's where Coenzyme Q10 comes in.

It's been proposed that statins may reduce the amount of Coenzyme Q10 in the body, since it shares a metabolic pathway with cholesterol. Give the supplement, reduce the pain, goes the hypothesis.

Statins and Coenzyme Q10 Levels

People who have high cholesterol may have lower levels of CoQ10 in their bodies, notes the University of Maryland Medical Center, and taking statins may lower these levels even further by interfering with a precursor of CoQ10. Low levels of CoQ10 may interfere with the function of your mitochondria, leading to muscle pain. Taking supplemental CoQ10 can help correct these lower levels of CoQ10 without interfering with the beneficial effects of the statin medication

Statin Side Effects

One of the major but less common side effects of statins is rhabdomyolysis, a type of severe muscle damage that can lead to kidney failure and death if not treated. Statins can also cause liver damage. More common side effects include rashes, diarrhea, upset stomach, constipation, headaches, dizziness and muscle pain.