

University of Florida  
College of Medicine  
Department of Surgery  
Division of Vascular Surgery  
& Endovascular Therapy

 SVS  
SOCIETY FOR VASCULAR SURGERY  
**Vascular Quality Initiative**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As you may recall from your most recent appointment with us, we have started you on a new medication called Simvastatin (you may also be familiar with its Brand name, Zocor). Simvastatin is part of a class of medications called statins, which have proven effective in reducing the risk of stroke, heart attack, and death in patients with Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD), carotid artery disease, and aneurysmal disease.<sup>1</sup>

You have two types of cholesterol in your body, HDL, the “good” cholesterol, and LDL, the “bad” cholesterol. Statins work by lowering your LDL cholesterol. When your LDL cholesterol gets too high, it can create build-ups in your blood vessels, called atherosclerotic plaques. Statins help to prevent the formation of these plaques and stabilize the ones that have already formed, so that they are less likely to break apart and cause heart attacks and/or strokes. Thus, even people with PAD who have a normal LDL cholesterol level will benefit from taking a statin.

Simvastatin, like all other medications, may have some side effects. A small number of patients have experienced minor changes in liver function. If at any time during your statin therapy you develop severe muscle aches, unusual fatigue or weakness, loss of appetite, upper belly pain, dark-colored urine, or yellowing of the skin or the whites of the eyes, it is important to notify your surgeon or PCP in a timely fashion as any of these side effects could be a sign of decreased liver function.<sup>2</sup>

Although rare, some patients have reported brain-related side effects including memory loss and confusion, while others have reported increases in blood sugar levels and being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus, a disease that occurs when the body is not able to use sugar as it should. It is important to notify your PCP should you experience any of these side effects.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (352) 273-5484, and we will be happy to speak with you.

Sincerely,

<sup>1</sup> Stalenhoef AF. *The Benefit of Statins in Non-Cardiac Vascular Surgery Patients*. J Vasc Surgery 2009; 49:260-5.

<sup>2</sup> FDA. *FDA News Release: FDA Announces Safety changes in Labeling for Some Cholesterol-Lowering Drugs*. Feb 28, 2012.

<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm293623.htm>

