

N15 - Lipids and Cardiovascular Review

When: Admission, medication reconciliation, and a lipid result that needs a decision.

Do this

- Record the lipid-lowering medicine, dose, prescriber, tolerance, and whether it was already being taken when dialysis began.
- Bring prior heart attack, stroke, coronary procedures, recent admissions, and medication changes to the clinician reviewing the result.
- Confirm why a repeat lipid panel was ordered. Routine monthly LDL targets are not the default dialysis strategy [1].
- Ask about missed doses, new muscle symptoms, and nonprescription supplements. Route nutrition questions to the renal dietitian.

Call / escalate

- New chest pain, severe breathlessness, syncope, or stroke symptoms: activate the unit emergency response; do not wait for a lipid result.
- New medication intolerance, an unexpected result, or an unclear post-hospital medication list: request prescriber review.

Don't

- Do not start, stop, or increase a statin to make one LDL value meet a scorecard. Starting treatment after dialysis begins and continuing an existing treatment are different decisions [1].
- Do not substitute over-the-counter fish oil for a prescribed product or dose.

Evidence numbers refer to the sources on the reverse.

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Why

- KDIGO generally advises against initiating statin or statin/ezetimibe in adults already dependent on dialysis, while suggesting continuation when treatment predates dialysis [1]. Individual cardiovascular circumstances still need clinician review.
- Large dialysis trials lowered LDL without a significant reduction in their primary cardiovascular outcomes. This is why an LDL number alone is not a treatment instruction [2,3].
- A quality review should capture symptoms, treatment tolerance, and the documented prevention plan, not just whether a laboratory number is in range.

Bring this to the review

Current medicine and tolerance; when it began; cardiovascular history; reason for the lipid test; result and prior value; the decision needed from the prescriber.

Sources - click to open

1. [KDIGO lipid guideline summary. Kidney Int. 2014. PMID: 24552851](#)
2. [4D trial. N Engl J Med. 2005. PMID: 16034009](#)
3. [AURORA trial. N Engl J Med. 2009. PMID: 19332456](#)

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Adapted from the linked Clinical Mastery reviews. Updated September 27, 2026. Andrew Bland, MD, FACP, FAAP - Urine Nephrology Now.