



WELCHOL (Colesevelam HCL)

Patient Information

Indications

Welchol is indicated in the treatment of elevated low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. It is used in combination with a low fat/cholesterol diet and exercise.

How does Welchol work?

Welchol is in the class of drugs called the bile acid sequestrants. Here is how it lowers your cholesterol:

1. Cholesterol is broken down into bile acids in the liver.
2. The bile acids are secreted from the liver into the intestines.
3. Welchol binds bile acids in the intestine, thus depleting the liver of cholesterol.
4. This causes the liver to remove more cholesterol from the circulation, resulting in lower blood cholesterol.

How quickly does Welchol work?

The decline in cholesterol is usually seen in one month. Welchol may lower your LDL cholesterol 15-18% and raise your high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol by 3%.

Side Effects

The most common side effects are constipation, flatulence, dyspepsia, and headache. Serious side effects are uncommon because it is not absorbed into the body.

How to reduce the incidence of nausea and constipation

1. Take Welchol with meals.
2. Increase the intake of fiber in your diet. A high fiber diet reduces the constipation associated with the use of Welchol and may even increase its effectiveness. If constipation remains a problem, Metamucil (or similar type product) can be taken. Metamucil is also known to decrease LDL cholesterol.
3. A stool softener (such as Colace) may be helpful to prevent constipation.
4. Increased fluid intake may be useful in the prevention and treatment of constipation.
5. Exercise may help prevent constipation.

Do not use Welchol if:

You have bowel obstruction or are hypersensitive to any of its components. Welchol may raise serum triglycerides, therefore it should be used with caution in people with triglyceride levels greater than 300mg/dL.

Dosing Information

Welchol is available in 625mg tablets.

Starting Dose

3 tablets taken twice daily with meals **OR**
6 tablets once daily with a meal. This dose may be titrated up or down depending on your cholesterol levels.