

DESPITE TREND OF THERAPEUTIC SUBSTITUTION, SURVEY DATA SHOWS PATIENTS WANT THEIR PHYSICIAN TO BE THE ULTIMATE DECISION MAKER ON THEIR RX MEDICATIONS

AstraZeneca reveals survey results and offers tips designed to help patients ensure they get “just what the doctor ordered”

WILMINGTON, Del., December 5, 2011 — New survey data reveals that 84 percent of American patients surveyed feel that their physician should be the leading decision maker in what prescription medications they take for a condition. Moreover, the same survey data indicates that 87 percent of these patients want to be told at the pharmacy if they are not getting their originally prescribed medication.¹

Unfortunately, that is not always the case. It is possible that the patient’s health insurance company may contact the patient, their doctor, or pharmacist and ask that the patient be changed from the currently prescribed medication to a different drug in the same therapeutic category. This practice is called therapeutic substitution.²

“Therapeutic substitution can be a good thing because it could reduce costs, but there can be differences among medications. It’s important that patients be involved with health care decisions and be informed about the medication they are prescribed and that they are receiving at the pharmacy,” said Dr. Philip deVane, Executive Director of Clinical Development at AstraZeneca. “Ultimately the patient’s physician should make the final determination regarding what medication is best for the patient.”

According to the National Consumers League, a nonprofit advocacy group representing consumers on marketplace and workplace issues, therapeutic substitution often occurs with statins which are drugs that can help lower cholesterol levels. However, it is important to know that no two drugs in one therapeutic class are exactly the same and not all of them have FDA-approved generic forms.

For example, there is no generic form of CRESTOR® (rosuvastatin calcium). A doctor may recommend CRESTOR when diet and exercise alone are not enough. Along with diet, CRESTOR is proven in adults to [lower bad cholesterol](#) by up to 52% (at the 10-mg dose vs 7% with placebo). CRESTOR is also FDA approved to slow [plaque buildup in arteries](#), known as [atherosclerosis](#), as part of a treatment plan to lower cholesterol to goal. CRESTOR is not right for everyone, including anyone who has previously had an allergic reaction to CRESTOR, anyone with liver problems, or woman who are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant. Please see additional safety information below.

Knowing your rights as a patient can help you navigate conversations with your doctor and pharmacist if you do find yourself faced with therapeutic substitution. When your doctor prescribes a medication, it is because they feel it is the right one for you. So, what can patients do to ensure they get the medication that they’ve been prescribed?

- If applicable, make sure your doctor writes “medically necessary,” “may not substitute,” or “dispense as written” on the prescription as required by the state you live in.
- Before leaving the physician’s office, be sure you understand why your doctor has prescribed that specific medication.
- Take the time to ask your pharmacist questions and ensure you’re getting the medicine you’ve been prescribed and check before you leave the pharmacy.

- Be familiar with what your medication looks like.
- Request that your physician and/or regular pharmacist puts a note in your electronic record explaining that you take a particular medication and that it should not be changed.
- Tell your doctor and/or check with your insurance plan if your medication is changed without doctor/patient communication.

The AstraZeneca-sponsored survey, conducted by StrategyOne using Toluna field services, was fielded online between May 19 and May 23, 2011 among a nationwide cross-section of 1,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. The overall margin of error was ± 3.1 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval.

For more information on CRESTOR, please visit CRESTOR.com

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About CRESTOR® (rosuvastatin calcium) Tablets

When diet and exercise alone aren't enough, adding CRESTOR can help.

In adults, CRESTOR is prescribed along with diet to lower high cholesterol, and to slow the buildup of plaque in arteries as part of a treatment plan to lower cholesterol to goal.

Important Safety Information about CRESTOR® (rosuvastatin calcium) Tablets

CRESTOR is not right for everyone, including anyone who has previously had an allergic reaction to CRESTOR, anyone with liver problems, or women who are nursing, pregnant, or who may become pregnant. Your doctor should do blood tests before and during treatment with CRESTOR to monitor your liver function. Unexplained muscle pain or weakness could be a sign of a rare but serious side effect and should be reported to your doctor right away. Elevated blood sugar levels have been reported with statins, including CRESTOR. Be sure to tell your doctor if you are taking any medications. The most common side effects are headache, muscle aches, abdominal pain, weakness, and nausea.

Please read the full [Prescribing Information](#).

If you have any questions concerning prescription only CRESTOR, please visit CRESTOR.com or contact AstraZeneca at 1-800-CRESTOR.

About AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca is a global, innovation-driven biopharmaceutical business with a primary focus on the discovery, development and commercialization of prescription medicines for gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, neuroscience, respiratory and inflammation, oncology and infectious disease. AstraZeneca operates in over 100 countries and its innovative medicines are used by millions of patients worldwide.

For more information about AstraZeneca in the U.S. or our AZ&Me™ Prescription Savings programs, please visit: www.astrazeneca-us.com or call 1-800-AZandMe (292-6363).

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References:

¹Data on File, 1303202, AstraZeneca, LP.

²Gray T, Bertch K, Galt K, et al. ACCP Position Statement. Guidelines for therapeutic interchange-2004. Pharmacotherapy. 2005;25:1666-1680.

³National Consumers League. "Common therapeutic drug substitutions." Available at <http://www.nclnet.org/health/42-drug-substitution/91-common-therapeutic-drug-substitutions>. Accessed June 22, 2011.

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