

# Statins make radiation more effective at curing prostate cancer

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Men with high-risk prostate cancer who take statin drugs commonly used to lower cholesterol while receiving radiation therapy are less likely to have their cancer return than patients who do not take these medications, according to a study published in the March issue of the International Journal of Radiation Oncology&#149;Biology&#149;Physics, an official journal of the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO).

Provided by American Society for Radiation Oncology

In the study, 1,681 men with high-risk, localized [prostate cancer](#) were treated with [radiation therapy](#) between 1995 and 2007. Of them, 382 (23 percent) were taking statin medication at diagnosis and throughout the treatment. Statins are a class of drugs used to lower the cholesterol level in people with or at risk of cardiovascular disease. The median follow-up time was approximately six years.

Researchers found that the men taking statins were less like to relapse than other patients. At five years, 11 percent of men taking statins saw their cancer return compared to 17 percent of patients not taking the medication. At eight years, 17 percent of men on statins had a relapse compared to 26 percent not taking the drug.

"In our retrospective study, we have demonstrated that statin use during radiotherapy is associated with improved biochemical tumor control among high-risk patients," Michael J. Zelefsky, M.D., the senior author of the study and a radiation oncologist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, said. "This study, along with other emerging studies, strongly suggests that statin use improves outcomes in patients treated with definitive radiation therapy."

**More information:** For more information on radiation therapy for prostate cancer, visit [www.rtanswers.org/treatmentinf ...cancertypes/prostate](http://www.rtanswers.org/treatmentinf...cancertypes/prostate)

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