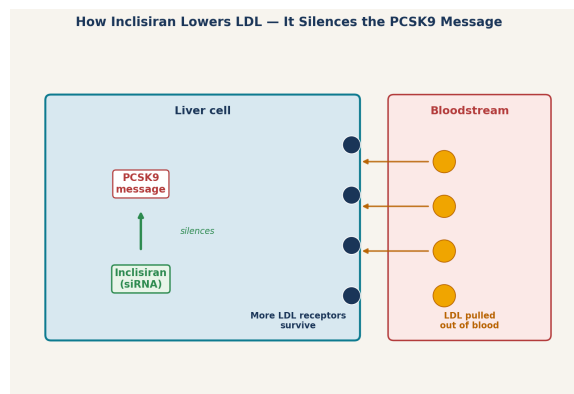


Understanding Inclisiran (Leqvio)

A twice-a-year injection that lowers LDL cholesterol

Two shots a year, plus your statin, to cut bad cholesterol by about half.



Online: <https://go.riasalimd.com/inclisiran-guide>

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Names & Terms You Will Hear

Term	Meaning
Inclisiran	The drug's generic name. It is a small piece of RNA that lowers LDL cholesterol.
Leqvio	The brand name for inclisiran in the United States.
siRNA (small interfering RNA)	A tiny piece of genetic material. It tells the liver to make less of one protein. Here, that protein is PCSK9.
PCSK9	A liver protein that breaks down LDL receptors. Less PCSK9 means more receptors, which clear more LDL from the blood.
LDL cholesterol	The 'bad' cholesterol. High LDL builds plaque in arteries and raises heart attack and stroke risk.
LDL receptor	A 'catcher' on liver cells that pulls LDL out of the blood. PCSK9 destroys these catchers; inclisiran protects them.
Subcutaneous injection	A shot given under the skin, usually in the belly, upper arm, or thigh. A nurse gives it in the office.
Nonstatin therapy	Any cholesterol drug that is not a statin. Inclisiran is one option, used with or after a statin.



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What Is Inclisiran (Leqvio)?

- Inclisiran (brand name Leqvio) is a twice-a-year shot that lowers LDL, the 'bad' cholesterol.
- It is a small interfering RNA, or siRNA. It works inside liver cells. It tells them to make less of a protein called PCSK9.
- PCSK9 destroys the liver's LDL 'catchers' (receptors). With less PCSK9, more catchers survive. They pull more LDL out of the blood.
- A nurse gives the shot under the skin in the office. You do not give it to yourself at home.
- It is added to a statin, not used in place of one, in most people. It can also be used when statins are not tolerated.
- In studies, inclisiran lowered LDL by about half when added to a statin. See our cholesterol guide for what your LDL number means: <https://go.riasalimd.com/cholesterol-guide>.

siRNA is not gene editing. Inclisiran does not change your DNA. It quietly turns down one message — the recipe the liver uses to make PCSK9. The recipe and the gene stay intact. Because the message slowly comes back, you need a fresh shot about every 6 months.



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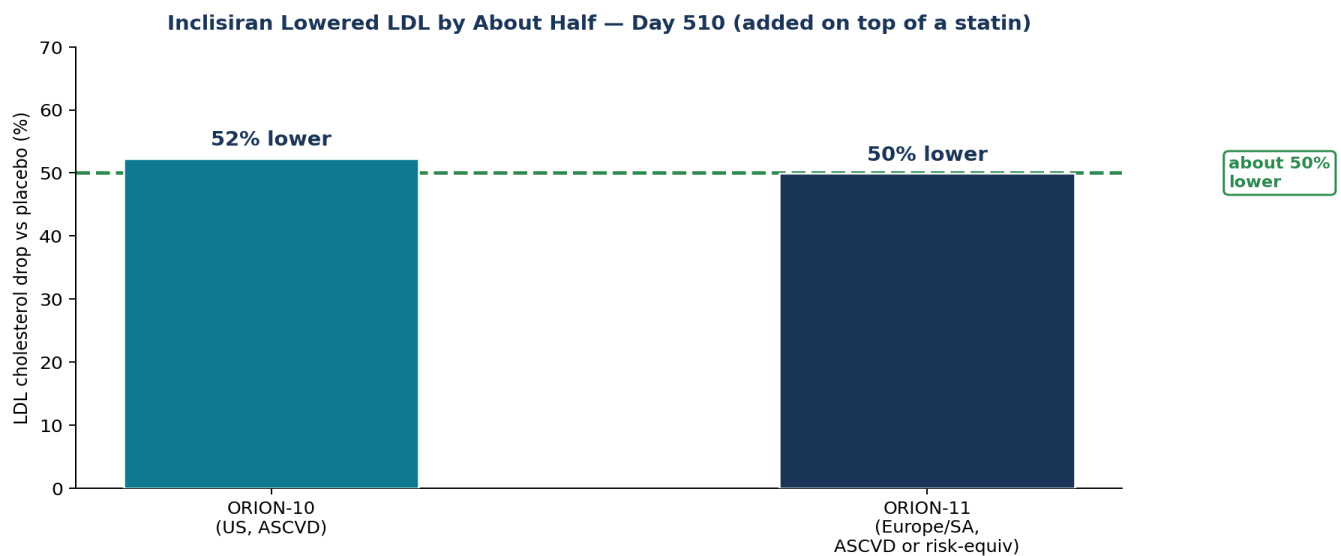
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Why It Matters

- High LDL is a main cause of heart attacks and strokes. Lowering LDL lowers that risk. Lower is better for most high-risk patients.
- Many people cannot get their LDL low enough on a statin alone. Some cannot take a full statin dose. They need a second drug.
- Inclisiran's twice-a-year schedule is its biggest advantage. Taking a daily pill is hard for many people. Missed pills mean higher LDL.
- Because a nurse gives the shot, your team knows you got your dose. This removes the guesswork of daily pills.
- The chart below shows how much inclisiran lowered LDL in two large trials, ORION-10 and ORION-11.
- Whether this LDL drop also lowers heart attacks and strokes is being tested now in large outcome trials (ORION-4 and VICTORION-2 Prevent). Results are expected in the next few years.



In ORION-10 and ORION-11, inclisiran lowered LDL by about half versus placebo, added on top of a statin.



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Inclisiran vs the Other Injection — At a Glance

Statin (pill)	PCSK9 antibody shot	Inclisiran (Leqvio)
• Taken: daily pill • Lowers LDL 30 to 50 percent • Proven to cut heart events • First choice for most	• Taken: shot every 2 to 4 weeks • Lowers LDL about 50 to 60 percent • Proven to cut heart events • Usually self-injected at home	• Taken: shot twice a year • Lowers LDL about 50 percent • Heart-event proof still being tested • Nurse gives it in the office



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Risk Factors

Some patients are more likely to develop this condition. Knowing your risk helps your care team take extra precautions.

Risk Factor	Why It Increases Risk
You may be a good fit if...	Why it points toward inclisiran
LDL stays high on a statin	You take the most statin you can, but LDL is still above goal. Inclisiran adds another big drop.
You cannot take a full statin	Muscle aches or other side effects limit your statin. Inclisiran can help close the gap. See our statin-side-effects guide.
You have trouble with daily pills	Two shots a year is far easier to keep up than a pill every day.
You have familial high cholesterol (HeFH)	An inherited condition with very high LDL from birth. Extra lowering is often needed.
You have known heart or artery disease	Prior heart attack, stent, stroke, or PAD. Your LDL goal is lower, so a strong add-on helps.



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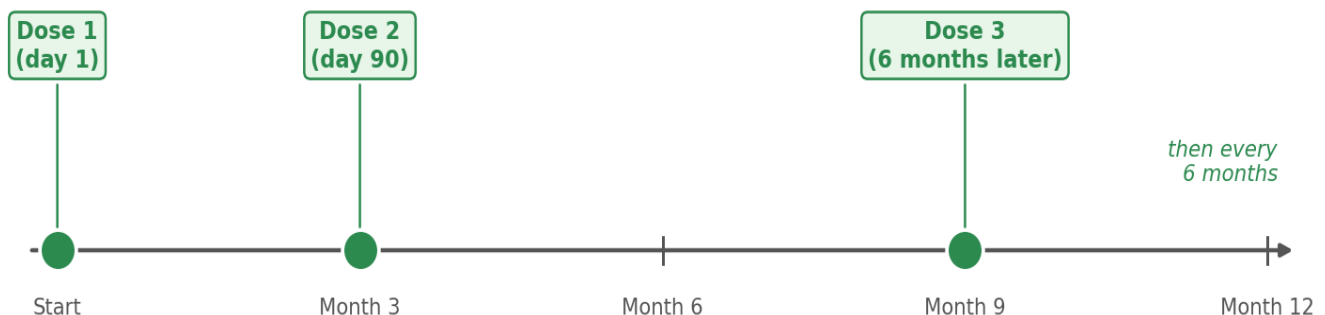


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Treatment Options

- The dose is 284 mg, given as one shot under the skin by a nurse.
- The schedule is simple: a first shot on day 1, a second at about 3 months (day 90), then one shot every 6 months after that.
- Keep taking your statin and any other cholesterol medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- Your LDL is checked before you start and again after a few months to see how well it is working.
- The timeline below shows the loading shots and the steady twice-a-year rhythm.
- Inclisiran is one of several nonstatin options. The comparison table shows how it lines up with ezetimibe, PCSK9 antibody shots, and bempedoic acid.
- Related guides: statins (<https://go.riasalimd.com/statins-guide>), PCSK9 antibody shots (<https://go.riasalimd.com/pcsk9-guide>), and ezetimibe (<https://go.riasalimd.com/ezetimibe-guide>).

Inclisiran: 2 shots to start, then just 2 a year



A statin (for comparison): one pill, every single day

Inclisiran is given on day 1 and day 90, then once every 6 months. A statin, by comparison, is a pill every day.



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LDL-Lowering Options Side by Side

Option	How it is taken	How often	Typical LDL drop
Statin	Pill	Every day	30 to 50 percent
Ezetimibe	Pill	Every day	15 to 20 percent
Bempedoic acid	Pill	Every day	15 to 25 percent
PCSK9 antibody shot	Shot (often self-given)	Every 2 to 4 weeks	About 50 to 60 percent
Inclisiran (Leqvio)	Shot (nurse-given)	Twice a year	About 50 percent



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How It Differs From a Statin

- A statin slows how much cholesterol the liver makes. Inclisiran instead protects the liver's LDL 'catchers' by lowering PCSK9.
- A statin is a daily pill. Inclisiran is a shot just twice a year after the first two loading doses.
- Statins have decades of proof that they cut heart attacks and strokes. Inclisiran's effect on those events is still being studied.
- Most people use both together. Inclisiran adds a big LDL drop on top of the statin, not in place of it.

How It Differs From a PCSK9 Antibody Shot

- Both lower PCSK9, but in different ways. The antibody grabs PCSK9 in the blood. Inclisiran stops the liver from making it in the first place.
- The antibody shot (evolocumab or alirocumab) is given every 2 to 4 weeks. Inclisiran is given only twice a year.
- Antibody shots are usually self-injected at home. Inclisiran is given by a nurse in the office.
- The antibody shots already have large trials proving fewer heart attacks and strokes. Inclisiran's outcome trials are still running.
- For more, see our PCSK9 guide: <https://go.riasalimd.com/pcsk9-guide>.

Who Is a Good Candidate

- People whose LDL stays above goal even on the most statin they can take.
- People who cannot tolerate a full statin dose because of side effects.
- People who struggle to keep up with daily pills and would do better with a twice-a-year shot.
- People with familial high cholesterol (HeFH), who often need extra lowering. See our familial high cholesterol guide: <https://go.riasalimd.com/fh-guide>.
- People with known heart or artery disease who need their LDL pushed lower.



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Comfort Measures at Home (No Medication Needed)

These simple steps support healing and ease symptoms. Use them alongside any medication your doctor prescribes.

- Eat heart-healthy: more vegetables, fruit, beans, fish, nuts, and whole grains. Cut back on red meat, fried food, and sweets.
- Move most days. Even brisk walking helps your cholesterol and your heart.
- If you smoke, quitting is the single best thing you can do for your arteries.
- Reach and keep a healthy weight. Losing even a little weight can improve your numbers.
- Limit alcohol. Heavy drinking raises triglycerides and blood pressure.
- Inclisiran works best alongside these habits, not instead of them. The shot does not replace healthy living.



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Risks, Benefits, and Alternatives

Every choice has trade-offs. Use this table to start the shared decision conversation.

Option	Risks	Benefits	Alternatives
Inclisiran (twice-a-year shot)	Injection-site soreness or redness. Cost and insurance approval. Long-term heart-event proof is still being studied.	Lowers LDL by about half on top of a statin. Only 2 shots a year. A nurse gives it, so doses are not missed.	Statin alone. PCSK9 antibody shot (every 2 to 4 weeks). Ezetimibe pill. Bempedoic acid pill.
Stay on statin alone	LDL may stay above goal. Some people get muscle aches at higher doses.	Proven to cut heart attacks and strokes. Low cost. Simple once-daily pill.	Add inclisiran, ezetimibe, a PCSK9 shot, or bempedoic acid if LDL is still high.
PCSK9 antibody shot (evolocumab or alirocumab)	More frequent shots, every 2 to 4 weeks. Usually self-injected at home. Cost.	Also lowers LDL by about half or more. Proven to cut heart events in large trials.	Inclisiran (fewer shots, given in office). Ezetimibe pill. Statin increase.
Ezetimibe pill	Smaller LDL drop, about 15 to 20 percent. A daily pill.	Low cost. Well tolerated. Adds modestly to a statin. Proven small benefit on events.	Inclisiran or a PCSK9 shot for a larger LDL drop. Bempedoic acid.



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Common Misconceptions

Myth	Reality
Inclisiran is gene therapy that changes my DNA.	No. It does not change your genes. siRNA works on the message, not the gene itself. The effect wears off, which is why you need a shot every 6 months.
I can stop my statin once I start inclisiran.	Usually not. Inclisiran is added to a statin in most people. Statins have decades of proof for cutting heart attacks. Do not stop any medicine without talking to your doctor.
Two shots a year means it is weaker than a daily pill.	The opposite. Inclisiran lowers LDL by about half, more than most pills. The twice-a-year schedule is a convenience, not a sign of weakness.
I can give the shot to myself at home.	No. A nurse or other trained staff gives inclisiran in the office. This is different from PCSK9 antibody shots, which are often self-injected.
It already proves it prevents heart attacks.	Not yet. We know it lowers LDL a lot, and lower LDL usually means lower risk. Large trials testing heart attacks and strokes are still running.
If my cholesterol is normal on a statin, I need this too.	No. Inclisiran is for people whose LDL stays high, or who cannot take enough statin. If you are at goal on your current plan, you may not need it.



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Possible Complications

Knowing what can go wrong helps you spot problems early. Most complications are uncommon, especially with treatment.

Where / What	What Can Happen
Injection site	The most common issue. Soreness, redness, a small rash, or mild swelling where the shot goes in. It is usually mild and clears on its own.
Allergic reaction (rare)	Very uncommon. A rash, hives, trouble breathing, or face and throat swelling needs emergency care. Call 911.
Joint or muscle aches	Some people report mild joint aches. Muscle aches are more often a statin effect; tell us so we can sort out the cause.
LDL creeps back up if doses are skipped	The effect wears off over months. Missing a 6-month shot lets LDL rise again. Keeping the schedule keeps the benefit.
Pregnancy and breastfeeding	There is little safety data in pregnancy. If you are pregnant, planning, or breastfeeding, talk with us before starting or continuing.



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Points to Know

If you remember nothing else, remember these key points.

- Inclisiran (Leqvio) is a twice-a-year shot that lowers LDL by about half when added to a statin.
- It is an siRNA. It tells the liver to make less PCSK9, so more LDL is cleared from the blood.
- It does NOT change your DNA, and the effect wears off, which is why you re-dose every 6 months.
- A nurse gives the shot in the office. You do not inject it yourself.
- Most people keep taking their statin. Inclisiran is an add-on, not a replacement.
- The dosing is day 1, day 90, then every 6 months.
- It is a good option if pills are hard to keep up, if your LDL stays high, or if you cannot tolerate a full statin.
- Whether it lowers heart attacks and strokes is still being tested in large trials.



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When to Call Us - and When to Call 911

If you are not sure, call. We would rather hear from you twice than miss a real problem.

- Redness, swelling, or pain at the shot site that gets worse or does not go away after a few days — call us.
- Rash, hives, trouble breathing, or swelling of the face or throat after a shot — call 911.
- Muscle aches that are new or severe — call us; this is more often from a statin, but we want to know.
- You are due for your next shot and have not been scheduled — call to set it up so your LDL does not creep back up.
- You are pregnant, planning pregnancy, or breastfeeding — call us to review whether to continue.
- Any chest pain, pressure, or stroke warning signs (face droop, arm weakness, speech trouble) — call 911.

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Trusted Resources

The links below are the trusted resources Dr. Ali used to write this guide and that he recommends you visit for more information. Each is a clickable link in the digital version and a Short.io tracked URL on the printed version.

- [Cleveland Clinic — Inclisiran \(Leqvio\) Injection](#) - Patient-friendly overview of the twice-yearly LDL-lowering injection.
- [MedlinePlus — Inclisiran Injection](#) - Plain-language NIH drug information: how it is used, side effects, and storage.
- [American Heart Association — Cholesterol Medications](#) - AHA overview of statins and nonstatin options, including PCSK9-directed therapies.
- [FDA — Leqvio \(inclisiran\) Prescribing Information](#) - The official label with the indication, dosing schedule, and safety information.



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Sources Used to Build This Guide

Every recommendation in this guide is grounded in one or more of the studies, guidelines, or trusted resources below. Short links are tracked so Dr. Ali can see which references patients are reading; nothing personally identifying is captured.

- [ORION-10 and ORION-11 — Inclisiran for LDL Cholesterol \(NEJM 2020\)](#) [Clinical Trial]
Pivotal twin RCTs: ~50% LDL-C lowering with a twice-yearly siRNA injection.
- [FDA Prescribing Information — LEQVIO \(inclisiran\)](#) [Guideline]
Authoritative label for indication, dosing schedule (day 1, 90, then every 6 months), and safety.
- [Cleveland Clinic — Inclisiran \(Leqvio\) Injection](#) [Clinical]
Patient drug overview of the twice-yearly LDL-lowering injection.
- [2022 ACC Expert Consensus Decision Pathway on Nonstatin Therapies for LDL-C Lowering](#) [Guideline]
Places inclisiran among nonstatin add-ons (with ezetimibe, PCSK9 mAbs, bempedoic acid).



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About This Guide

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Reviewer note: Reviewed: Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, AHA, and the FDA Leqvio label. This guide adds a plain-language siRNA mechanism diagram, an ORION-10/ORION-11 LDL chart, a twice-yearly dosing timeline, a side-by-side comparison of statins, ezetimibe, PCSK9 antibody shots, and inclisiran, plus an RBA table.

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This guide is for educational purposes only and does not replace medical advice from your physician. Recommendations may not apply to every patient. Always follow the specific instructions of Dr. Ali and your care team. In an emergency call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.



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