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On Drugs and Therapeutics

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IN BRIEF

Rhabdomyolysis with Ezetimibe

Health Canada, the Canadian equivalent of the FDA, recently issued a public advisory about postmarketing reports of myalgia, rhabdomyolysis, hepatitis, pancreatitis and thrombocytopenia associated with use of ezetimibe (*Zetia* in the US; *Ezetrol* in Canada). Ezetimibe is often added to a statin to increase LDL cholesterol lowering ([Drugs for Lipids, Treat Guidel Med Lett 2005; 3:15](#)). The advisory did not specify whether these patients were also taking a statin, but according to the Canadian manufacturer Merck Frosst/Schering (Merck/Schering-Plough in the US), some of the patients who developed rhabdomyolysis were taking ezetimibe without a statin. In the US, ezetimibe is also available in a combination with simvastatin (*Vytorin* – [Med Lett Drugs Ther 2004; 46:73](#)). Recently, a few patients already taking a statin developed myalgia when ezetimibe was added ([R Fux et al, Ann Intern Med 2004; 140:671](#)). The possibility that adding ezetimibe to a statin could increase the risk of rhabdomyolysis should be kept in mind.

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