

# The Medical Letter®

## On Drugs and Therapeutics

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### IN BRIEF

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#### **A New Indication for Colesevelam (*Welchol*)**

Colesevelam (*Welchol* - Daiichi Sankyo – [Med Lett Drugs Ther 2000; 42:102](#)), a bile-acid sequestrant used to lower LDL cholesterol, has been approved by the FDA as an adjunct to diet and exercise in the treatment of type 2 diabetes. In unpublished studies summarized in the package insert, patients with type 2 diabetes taking metformin (*Glucophage*, and others), a sulfonylurea or insulin (each as either monotherapy or in combination with other anti-diabetic agents) were given colesevelam 3800 mg per day or placebo; colesevelam significantly reduced glycosylated hemoglobin (A1c) by about 0.5% more than placebo in all three trials. The mechanism is unclear.

Colesevelam can cause constipation, nausea and dyspepsia, increase serum triglyceride concentrations, and interfere with absorption of other oral drugs. One month's treatment with *Welchol* obtained from [drugstore.com](http://drugstore.com) would cost about \$200. Medical Letter consultants are not enthusiastic about prescribing it for this indication.

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