

# The Medical Letter<sup>®</sup>

## On Drugs and Therapeutics

---

Published by The Medical Letter, Inc. • 1000 Main Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801 • A Nonprofit Publication

---

Volume 50 (Issue 1285)  
May 5, 2008

[www.medicalletter.org](http://www.medicalletter.org)

### IN BRIEF

---

#### **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 In unpublished studies summarized in the package insert, patients with type 2 diabetes taking metformin (*Glucophage*, and others), a sulfonylurea or insulin (each as either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.

The Medical Letter®  
On Drugs and Therapeutics

**EDITOR:** Mark Abramowicz, M.D.  
**EXECUTIVE EDITOR:** Gianna Zuccotti, M.D., M.P.H., Weill Medical College of Cornell University  
**DEPUTY EDITOR:** Jean-Marie Pflomm, Pharm.D.  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR, DRUG INFORMATION:** Susan Morey, Pharm.D.  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:** Eric J. Epstein, M.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, DRUG INTERACTIONS:** Philip D. Hansten, Pharm.D., University of Washington  
**ADVISORY BOARD:**  
Jules Hirsch, M.D., Rockefeller University  
David N. Juurlink, BPhm, M.D., PhD, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre  
Richard B. Kim, M.D., University of Western Ontario  
Gerald L. Mandell, M.D., University of Virginia School of Medicine  
Hans Meinertz, M.D., University Hospital, Copenhagen  
Dan M. Roden, M.D., Vanderbilt University School of Medicine  
F. Estelle R. Simons, M.D., University of Manitoba  
Neal H. Steigbigel, M.D., New York University School of Medicine  
**SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS:** Donna Goodstein, Amy Faucard  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR:** Cynthia Macapagal Covey  
**EDITORIAL FELLOWS:**  
Vanessa K. Dalton, M.D., M.P.H., University of Michigan Medical School  
Lauren K. Schwartz, M.D., Mount Sinai School of Medicine  
**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:** Liz Donohue  
**PRODUCTION COORDINATOR:** Cheryl Brown  
**MANAGING EDITOR:** Susie Wong

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SALES:** Gene Carbona  
**FULFILLMENT AND SYSTEMS MANAGER:** Cristine Romatowski  
**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS:** Joanne F. Valentino  
**VICE PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER:** Yosef Wissner-Levy

Founded in 1959 by  
Arthur Kallet and Harold Aaron, M.D.

**Copyright and Disclaimer:** The Medical Letter is an independent nonprofit organization that provides healthcare professionals with unbiased drug prescribing recommendations. The editorial process used for its publications relies on a review of published and unpublished literature, with an emphasis on controlled clinical trials, and on the opinions of its consultants. The Medical Letter is supported solely by subscription fees and accepts no advertising, grants or donations. The content of The Medical Letter is controlled by the Editor, who declares no conflict. The members of the Advisory Board are required to disclose any potential conflict of interest.

No part of the material may be reproduced or transmitted by any process in whole or in part without prior permission in writing. The editors do not warrant that all the material in this publication is accurate and complete in every respect. The editors shall not be held responsible for any damage resulting from any error, inaccuracy or omission.

**Subscription Services**

**Mailing Address:**  
The Medical Letter, Inc.  
1000 Main Street  
New Rochelle, NY 10801-7537  
**Customer Service:**  
Call: 800-211-2769 or 914-235-0500  
Fax: 914-632-1733  
Web Site: [www.medicalletter.org](http://www.medicalletter.org)  
E-mail: [custserv@medicalletter.org](mailto:custserv@medicalletter.org)  
**Permissions:**  
To reproduce any portion of this issue, please e-mail your request to: [permissions@medicalletter.org](mailto:permissions@medicalletter.org)

**Subscriptions (US):**  
1 year - \$98; 2 years - \$167;  
3 years - \$235. \$49 per year for students, interns, residents and fellows in the US and Canada.  
CME: \$49 for 26 credits.  
**E-mail site license inquiries to:**  
[info@medicalletter.org](mailto:info@medicalletter.org) or call 800-211-2769 x315.  
Special fees for bulk subscriptions. Special classroom rates are available. Back issues are \$12 each. Major credit cards accepted.

Copyright 2008. ISSN 1523-2859