

DRUG-INDUCED OR TOXIC MYOPATHIES

The most common toxic myopathies are caused by the cholesterol-lowering agents and glucocorticoids. Others impact practice to a lesser degree but are important to consider in specific situations.

Table 449-6 provides a comprehensive list of drug-induced myopathies with their distinguishing features.

■ MYOPATHY FROM LIPID-LOWERING AGENTS

All classes of lipid-lowering agents have been implicated in muscle toxicity, including HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors (statins) and, to a much lesser extent, fibrates, niacin, and ezetimibe. Myalgia and elevated CKs are the most common manifestations. Rarely, patients exhibit proximal weakness or myoglobinuria. Concomitant use of statins with fibrates and cyclosporine increases the risk of severe myotoxicity. EMG demonstrates irritability, and myopathic units and muscle biopsies reveal necrotic muscle fibers in weak muscles. Severe myalgia, weakness, marked elevations in serum CK (>3 – 5 times baseline), and myoglobinuria are indications for stopping the drug. Patients usually improve with drug cessation, although this may take several weeks. Rare cases continue to progress after the offending agent is discontinued. It is possible that in such cases the statin may have triggered an immune-mediated necrotizing myopathy, as these individuals require immunotherapy (e.g., intravenous immunoglobulin or immunosuppressive agents) to improve and often relapse when these therapies are discontinued (**Chap. 365**). Autoantibodies directed against HMG-CoA reductase have been identified in many of these cases.

■ GLUCOCORTICOID-RELATED MYOPATHIES

Glucocorticoid myopathy occurs with chronic treatment or as “acute quadriplegic” myopathy secondary to high-dose IV glucocorticoid use. Chronic administration produces proximal weakness accompanied by cushingoid manifestations, which can be quite debilitating; the chronic use of prednisone at a daily dose of ≥ 30 mg/d is most often associated with toxicity. Patients taking fluorinated glucocorticoids (triamcinolone, betamethasone,