



Niacin **(Nicotinic Acid) (Vitamin B3)**

What are the benefits of Niacin?

Niacin is the most effective drug treatment currently available for increasing HDL-C. Niacin also lowers LDL-C (especially the dangerous small dense 'sticky' size), lowers triglycerides (blood fat), VLDL-C and genetic Lp(a).

Where do I obtain Niacin?

Niacin is nicotinic acid (called Vitamin B3). Many forms of niacin may be found in drug stores, pharmacies, and discount stores and on the web. However, most of these products are not pure nicotinic acid. Rather, they contain derivatives of niacin, primarily nicotinamide or 'flush-free' niacin, and do not provide the same cardio-vascular benefits as niacin. I do not recommend these products.

There are two recommended products available that are pure nicotinic acid. Both of these products are an extended or delayed release form of niacin.

1. **Niaspan** (500 mg and 1000 mg tablets) is a prescription medication; available as a generic.
2. **Endur-Acin** (500 mg tablets) is non-prescription and is available either on Amazon.com or on the manufacturer's web site: www.endur.com. It is not sold in pharmacies or retail stores.

What are the possible Side Effects?

Niacin is taken in a delayed or extended release form to minimize any side effects. Side effects may include flushing, itching and occasionally palpitations. They usually begin within 15 minutes of taking niacin and lasts 30-60 minutes. The skin may turn red and blotchy, especially around the face and neck due to dilation of the blood vessels. Most people will experience occasional flushing as their body gets used to this medication. Rarely, the flushing may be intense, but is not serious, nor harmful, and will become infrequent over time, usually 2-4 weeks.

Note: Alcohol, hot drinks or spicy foods may increase flushing, if taken within 2 hrs. of taking your niacin tablets.

How should I take Niacin?

Niaspan is best taken after a meal (usually dinner). An alternative is to take the medication at bedtime with an ample low-fat snack. [Examples of snacks are a small apple, piece of whole-wheat toast, milk or low-fat yogurt.]

To minimize flushing - a regular 325 mg uncoated (non-enteric) aspirin, or Gelcap Motrin may be taken up to 30 minutes before your niacin. This may be especially helpful during the first two weeks of your initial use or when your dosage is increased. If you are already taking a daily aspirin, change the time you take it to coincide with your Niaspan. Niacin tablets should be taken whole. Do not break, crush, or chew them. Note: If you experience a bothersome flush, take an aspirin tablet and it will stop it.

How much Niacin should I take?

1. Start with one 500 mg tablet, as instructed above.
2. Increase to 1000 mg (2 tablets), when flushing is not bothersome. You may also take one tablet twice a day (one after breakfast and one after dinner).

Note: If your LP(a) is above 30, a further increase to 1500-2000 mg./day will be recommended.