



## Niaspan (Niacin - Vitamin B3)

---

### **BENEFITS:**

- Niacin is a powerful medicine that lowers TG (triglycerides) and raises HDL (good) cholesterol levels in your blood.
- Niacin also may decrease LDL (bad) cholesterol levels.
- Niaspan is a long-acting, prescription version of niacin.

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Start with low doses (usually 500 mg), once per day at bedtime. Gradually increase as instructed. We will give you a schedule to follow.
- **Always take with food or skim milk.**
- **Unless told otherwise, always take full-dose aspirin (325 mg) prior to taking niacin**
  - regular, *not* enteric – coated, aspirin works best
  - Naproxen (Aleve – 220 mg) can be added if recommended by your health care provider
- **Avoid heavy alcohol use (no more than 1 regular drink per day).**
- Avoid spicy foods, alcohol, or hot drinks like coffee or tea immediately before or after taking Niaspan, since they may aggravate the flushing symptoms.
- Do not skip doses, since flushing can return if a dose is missed.
- If you develop a rash or blurred vision, stop the medication immediately and call your health care provider.

- **Remember: Niaspan is not a substitute for a heart healthy diet!** It will work best only if you are choosing foods to improve your cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- **Treatment usually is long-term.** When your cholesterol and triglyceride levels reach the goal, you will still need to take your medicine. If you stop taking it, these levels will rise again.
- **Note:** Avoid taking vitamins E or C, beta carotene, or selenium (other than in a multivitamin) as these supplements could reduce the beneficial effects of your niacin.

### **COMMON SIDE EFFECTS:**

Flushing is a brief reddening of the skin (as if you were embarrassed). It occurs when the blood vessels in your skin open wider. Flushing and itching may occur while taking Niaspan, but usually happen while you are asleep, so many people aren't bothered by them. Niaspan is tolerated better when compared to other types of niacin. It also is regulated by the FDA, so it is safer than non-prescription versions of niacin.

**Remember, if you flush, it means that the medicine is in your blood and is working!**

**OTHER LESS COMMON SIDE EFFECTS:**

Nausea	Skin changes (rare)	Muscle aches
Blurred vision	Liver inflammation	Gout (rare)
Stomach pain (ulcer)	Allergic response	Increased blood sugar
Liver test abnormalities		

**FOLLOW-UP:**

Laboratory tests should be done 6-8 weeks after any major change in your dose and about 2 times per year when you are on a steady dose of niacin.

**Niaspan Schedule - Take at Bedtime**

	Dose		Dose		Dose
Week 1		Week 5		Week 9	
Week 2		Week 6		Week 10	
Week 3		Week 7		Week 11	
Week 4		Week 8		maintenance	

Program concept developed by University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Preventive Cardiology Program. Copyright 2007. Permission granted for free use and distribution of unaltered content, conditioned upon inclusion of this attribution and copyright notice. Content requires review as of 7/09.