

Niaspan (Niacin - Vitamin B3)

BENEFITS:

- Niacin is a powerful medicine that lowers TG (triglycerides) and raises HDL (good) cholesterol levels in your blood.
- Niacin may also 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
 - ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil - 200 mg) or Naproxen (Aleve – 220 mg) may also be acceptable
- Avoid heavy alcohol use (no more than 1 regular drink per day).**
- Avoid spicy foods 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 recur if a dose is missed.

- If you develop a rash or blurred vision, stop the medication and call your doctor.
- Remember: Niaspan is not a substitute for a heart healthy diet!** It will work best only if you are choosing foods to reduce your cholesterol.
- Treatment is usually long-term.** When your cholesterol levels are at goal, you will still need to take your medicine. If you stop taking it, your cholesterol will rise again.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS:

Flushing and itching may occur, but usually happen while you are asleep, so many people don't notice. This is the main advantage of Niaspan compared to other types of niacin. Flushing is a brief reddening of the skin (as if you were embarrassed). It occurs when the blood vessels in your skin open wider.

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

OTHER LESS COMMON SIDE EFFECTS:

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

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		Week 12	

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.