

Niacin Protocol

Niacin is a B-vitamin that can be helpful in raising HDL cholesterol, the "good cholesterol" as well as improving Triglyceride and LDL cholesterol levels.

Benefits

In clinical studies, patients with cardiovascular disease and low HDL cholesterol have been proven to experience a reduction in future cardiovascular events by adding Niacin to the overall plan of care.

Over-the-Counter or Prescription Niacin

Niacin is available in prescription form, or may be purchased over-the-counter. Prescription Niacin is called "extended-release" Niaspan and comes with directions.

Over-the-counter Niacin is sold in two forms: immediate-release and slow-release/long acting. Slow-release Niacin is less likely to cause side effects of skin flushing (see below).

Directions for Taking Niacin

Niacin is started with a low dose, either 250mg or 500mg, and gradually increased to a dose of 2000mg-3000mg. The higher dose of above 2000mg should be closely supervised by your physician.

Example (this may be individualized depending on your medical history)

Day 1: 250mg Niacin at bedtime

Day 7: 500 mg Niacin at bedtime

Day 21 (3 wks after initial dose): 1000mg Niacin at bedtime

After 3 more weeks, increase Niacin to 1500mg at bedtime

Your provider will want to run a simple blood test after 6-8weeks to check on your liver. You will then keep increasing dose gradually until your target dose is achieved. ALWAYS take Niacin with food, never on an empty stomach.

Niacin "flushing" and Aspirin

A possible side effect of Niacin is a "flushing" or redness of the skin. To minimize the effect take a low dose aspirin 30 mins before taking Niacin. If you are already taking aspirin, you may take additional low dose aspirin in the evening.

Diabetes and Niacin

Because niacin can affect blood sugar, people with diabetes should take Niacin only under direct supervision of your physician and carefully monitor blood sugar levels.