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2. Niacin

Niacin

Generic name: niacin (nicotinic acid) [*NYE-a-sin*]**Brand names:** B-3-50, B3-500-Gr, Endur-acin, HDL Benefit, Niacin SR, ... [show all 8 brands](#)**Drug classes:** [Miscellaneous antihyperlipidemic agents](#), [Vitamins](#)Medically reviewed by [Melisa Puckey, BPharm](#). Last updated on Mar 1, 2024.[Uses](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Side effects](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is niacin?

[Niacin](#), also called nicotinic acid, is a B vitamin (vitamin B3). It occurs naturally in plants and animals, and is also added to many foods as a vitamin supplement. It is also present in many multiple vitamins and nutritional supplements.

Niacin is used to lower blood levels of "bad" cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein, or LDL) and triglycerides, and increase levels of "good" cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein, or HDL).

Niaspan is used to lower the risk of a heart attack in people who have high cholesterol and who have a history of heart attacks. **Niaspan** can also be used with another cholesterol medicine to slow down the build-up of fatty deposits in your arteries.

Warnings

You should not take niacin if you have severe liver disease, a [stomach ulcer](#), or active bleeding.

Niacin can cause certain side effects, such as flushing (warmth, itching, redness, or tingly feeling under your skin). These effects can be made worse if you drink alcohol or hot beverages shortly after you take this medicine. These effects should disappear over time as you keep taking the medication.

Avoid getting up too fast from a sitting or lying position, or you may feel dizzy. Get up slowly and steady yourself to prevent a fall.

Avoid taking colestipol (Colestid) or cholestyramine (Locholest, Prevalite, Questran) at the same time you take niacin. If you take either of these other medications, take them at least 4 to 6 hours before or after you take this medicine.

Niacin is only part of a complete program of treatment that may also include diet, exercise, weight control, and other medications. Follow your diet, medication, and exercise routines very closely.

Before taking this medicine

You should not take niacin if you are allergic to it.

To make sure you can safely take niacin, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- severe liver disease;
- a stomach ulcer; or
- active bleeding.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- liver disease;
- kidney problems;
- heart disease, chest pain ([angina](#));
- gout; or
- diabetes.

It is not known whether niacin will harm an unborn baby. You may not be able to use this medicine during pregnancy.

Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant.

You should not breastfeed while using this medicine.

Do not give niacin to a child without medical advice.

 [Niacin pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take niacin ?

Use niacin exactly as directed on the label, or as prescribed by your doctor. Read all medication guides or instruction sheets.

Niacin can cause flushing (warmth, itching, redness, or tingly feeling under your skin). These effects should disappear over time as you keep taking the medicine. Flushing may be worse if you drink alcohol or hot beverages shortly after taking niacin.

Swallow the capsule or tablet whole and do not crush, chew, break, or open it.

Your dose needs may change if you switch to a different brand, strength, or form of this medicine. Avoid medication errors by using only the form and strength your doctor prescribes.

If you stop taking niacin for any length of time, talk with your doctor before starting the medication again. You may need to restart the medication at a lower dose.

This medicine can affect the results of certain medical tests. Tell any doctor who treats you that you are using this medicine.

Niacin is only part of a complete treatment program that may also include diet, exercise, and weight control. Follow your diet, medication, and exercise routines very closely.

Your doctor may recommend you take [aspirin](#) or an NSAID (such as [ibuprofen](#), [Advil](#), or [Aleve](#)) to help prevent flushing.

Keep using these medicines for as long as your doctor has prescribed.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

 [Detailed Niacin dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. Do not take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What to avoid

Avoid drinking alcohol. It may increase your risk of liver damage, and can also worsen the flushing effects of niacin.

Avoid getting up too fast from a sitting or lying position, or you may feel dizzy.

Avoid eating foods high in fat or cholesterol, or niacin will not be as effective.

Niacin side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to niacin**: [hives](#); difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- **heart attack symptoms** - chest pain or pressure, pain spreading to your jaw or shoulder, nausea, sweating;
- **high blood sugar** - increased thirst, increased urination, dry mouth, fruity breath odor;
- unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness;
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out;
- irregular heartbeats;
- severe warmth or redness under your skin;
- vision problems; or
- [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Common niacin side effects may include:

- flushing (sudden warmth, redness, or tingly feeling);
- [upset stomach](#), nausea, [vomiting](#), [diarrhea](#);
- abnormal liver function tests;
- itching, rash, [dry skin](#);

- cough;
- skin discoloration; or
- [headache](#).

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Niacin side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Lipitor

Lipitor is used to treat high cholesterol. Learn about side effects, interactions and indications.

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What other drugs will affect niacin?

You should not take colestevlam, colestipol, or cholestyramine within 4 hours before or 4 hours after taking niacin.

Tell your doctor about all your other medicines, especially:

- other medicines to lower cholesterol or triglycerides;
- aspirin;
- blood pressure medicine; or
- **a blood thinner** - warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may interact with niacin, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible drug interactions are listed here.

 [Niacin drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does niacin interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

niacin

+

Enter a drug name

Add

Frequently asked questions

- [How long does niacin stay in the human system?](#)

References

1. [Niacor Product Label](#)

More about niacin

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Reviews \(117\)](#)
- [Drug images](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Dosage information](#)
- [During pregnancy](#)
- [Support group](#)
- [Drug class: miscellaneous antihyperlipidemic agents](#)

Patient resources

Other brands

[Niaspan](#), [Slo-Niacin](#), [Niacor](#), [Nicotinex](#)

Professional resources

- [Niacin \(Antilipemic\) monograph](#)
- [Niacin, Niacinamide \(Vitamin\) \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)
- [Niacin \(FDA\)](#)
- [Niacin Tablets \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

Related treatment guides

- [High Cholesterol](#)
- [Pellagra](#)
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- [Depression](#)

Further information



Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use niacin only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability		
	Rx and/or OTC	
Pregnancy & Lactation		
	Risk data available	
CSA Schedule*		
N/A	Not a controlled drug	▼
Approval History		
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User Reviews & Ratings

7.4 / 10

[117 Reviews](#)

Images

[Niacin Extended-Release 1000 mg \(LU D13\)](#)



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