

NICOTINIC ACID

Other names: Apo-Nicotinic Acid®



Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

How does nicotinic acid work?

Nicotinic acid belongs to the vitamin B group and is also known as niacin.

High doses of nicotinic acid have been shown to lower blood cholesterol levels, especially the low density lipoprotein (LDL), the bad cholesterol, and triglycerides.

LDL cholesterol is often called 'bad' cholesterol because it can build up in the walls of your arteries in the form of a plaque. Over time, this plaque can break off, which can lead to blockage of your arteries. This blockage can slow oxygenated blood flow to vital organs such as the heart and brain. When blood flow is entirely blocked, the result can be a heart attack or stroke. Nicotinic acid can also slow the progression and promote regression of this plaque build up.

Also, nicotinic acid also has a dilatatory action on the blood vessels.

Why you are taking this medicine

Nicotinic acid can be used for the following conditions:

- To treat high cholesterol (hyperlipidaemia)
- To treat nicotinic acid deficiency e.g. Pellagra, a vitamin B3 deficiency
- To decrease the severity and frequency of attacks of vertigo (dizziness)
- To decrease severity of chilblains

When to take this medicine

Nicotinic acid should be taken with food.

To reduce the possibility of flushing (redness of the skin, feeling warm, itching, or tingling, particularly in the head, neck, chest and upper back), you may want to avoid drinking alcohol or hot drinks or eating spicy food near the time you take your dose of nicotinic acid.

DO NOT STOP taking nicotinic acid without your doctor's permission.

If you miss a dose

Take your dose as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- stomach pain, fever, nausea, vomiting
- yellowing of the skin or eyes
- long-lasting diarrhoea
- skin rash and itching
- muscle pain or weakness
- fast, irregular or pounding heartbeat
- joint pain
- shortness of breath
- swelling of the face, legs or ankles

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- flushing (e.g. neck, face area)
- headaches
- dizziness, feeling faint
- sweating (night and cold sweats)
- sleeplessness

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of a concern to you.

Other Medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

When taken with nicotinic acid, some medicines can increase flushing (e.g. nicotine [NRT] patches and alcohol) and statins can increase muscle pain (e.g. simvastatin, atorvastatin).

If you are taking colestipol or cholestyramine, these medicines should be taken 4-6 hours before or after the nicotinic acid.

If you are a diabetic, your blood glucose levels should be checked regularly.

Storage

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.