Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Waitaha Canterbury

NICOTINIC ACID

nik-oh-ton-ik ass-id

What does it do?

Nicotinic acid is used to lower cholesterol. This helps to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and other related problems.

Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have kidney or liver problems, diabetes, gout or a stomach ulcer.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

How should you take it?

Take *nicotinic acid* regularly as directed. Take with food and a glass of water.

What if you forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and carry on as normal. Do not take two doses at the same time.

Can you take other medicines?

Some medicines available without a prescription may react with *nicotinic acid* including:

- nicotine patches (e.g. Habitrol®)

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Symptoms of liver problems including: yellow skin or eyes, itching, dark urine, pale bowel motions, abdominal pain Fast or irregular heartbeat	Tell your doctor immediately
Flushing, itching Dizziness, headache	Tell your doctor if troublesome
Stomach upset	Take with food

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- Alcohol may increase side effects of *nicotinic acid* (e.g. facial flushing). Limit alcohol intake.
- Avoid hot drinks around time when you take *nicotinic acid* as this may help prevent facial flushing.
- *Nicotinic acid* is also known as niacin or vitamin B3.