



Doctor Discussion Guide

10 questions to start a discussion about cholesterol with your doctor

1. What do my cholesterol **numbers** mean?
2. What is my cholesterol **goal**, and how can I reach it?
3. How do **diet & exercise** affect my cholesterol levels?
4. How often should I have my levels **checked**?
5. How does cholesterol contribute to **plaque buildup**?
What can I do about it?
6. Is a cholesterol-lowering **medicine** right for me?
7. What should I **know** about cholesterol-lowering medicines (i.e., side effects)?
8. Should I **avoid** any foods or other medicines?
9. How long will I need to **take** my medicine?
10. Is there a **patient program** that offers financial assistance?

USES for NIASPAN® (niacin extended-release tablets)¹

NIASPAN is a prescription medication used along with diet when a low-cholesterol diet and exercise alone are not enough.

- NIASPAN raises HDL (“good”) cholesterol and lowers LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglycerides in people with abnormal cholesterol levels.
- NIASPAN is also used to lower the risk of heart attack in people who have had a heart attack and have high cholesterol.
- In people with coronary artery disease and high cholesterol levels, NIASPAN, when used with a bile acid-binding resin (another cholesterol medicine), can slow down or lessen the build up of plaque (fatty deposits) in your arteries.
- NIASPAN can be used in combination with lovastatin or simvastatin to improve abnormal cholesterol levels when taking NIASPAN, simvastatin, or lovastatin alone is not enough.
- No additional benefit of NIASPAN on heart disease has been demonstrated when used with simvastatin or lovastatin over that shown for niacin, simvastatin, or lovastatin alone.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION for NIASPAN

- NIASPAN is not for people with liver problems, stomach ulcers, serious bleeding problems, or those allergic to any product ingredient.
- **Severe liver damage can occur when switching to a long-acting niacin (NIASPAN) from immediate-release niacin. Do not switch between forms of niacin without talking to your health care provider.**
- Tell your health care provider about any unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, as this could be a sign of a serious side effect. This risk may be increased when NIASPAN is taken with a statin, particularly in the elderly, diabetics, and those with kidney or thyroid problems.
- **NIASPAN should be used with caution if you consume large amounts of alcohol and/or have a past history of liver disease.**
- Your health care provider should do blood tests before and during treatment to check liver enzyme levels, as these may increase with treatment.
- Tell your health care provider if you have kidney problems, or a history of gout. NIASPAN may cause an increase in uric acid levels.
- NIASPAN may cause an increase in blood sugar levels. If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar levels more frequently during the first few months or with NIASPAN dose changes.
- The most common side effects with NIASPAN are flushing, headache, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, increased cough, and itching.

- Flushing (warmth, redness, itching, and/or tingling of the skin) is a common side effect of niacin therapy that may get better after several weeks of consistent NIASPAN use. It may vary in severity and is more likely to happen when starting NIASPAN or during dose increases. Talk to your doctor about how the symptoms of flushing are different from symptoms of a heart attack. By dosing at bedtime, flushing will likely occur during sleep. If awakened by flushing, get up slowly, especially if feeling dizzy or faint, or taking blood pressure medications.
- If you are taking another cholesterol medication called a bile acid-binding resin (e.g., colestipol, cholestyramine) along with NIASPAN, take these medicines at least 4 to 6 hours apart.
- Some medicines should not be taken with NIASPAN. Tell your health care provider about all the medicines you take, including aspirin, any cholesterol medication, blood pressure medication, or blood thinner medication, or any products containing niacin or nicotinamide.

For more information, talk with your health care provider.

Full Prescribing Information is available at <http://www.rxabbott.com/pdf/niaspan.pdf>.

If you need additional information call 1.888.5NIASPAN or visit www.niaspan.com.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

If you cannot afford your medication, contact: www.pparx.org or call the toll-free phone number (1-888-4PPA-NOW) for assistance.

Reference: 1. NIASPAN [package insert]. North Chicago, IL: Abbott Laboratories.