



### USE OF NICOTINIC ACID FOR THE TREATMENT OF HYPERLIPIDEMIA

#### Patient Information

Niacin, in high doses, is useful to treat a variety of blood lipid abnormalities. It is the least expensive drug to use to treat these conditions because it can be obtained "over-the-counter" in many drug and health food stores. Niacin causes side effects in a large percentage of patients in the doses required to reduce blood lipids. The most common side effects are generalized flushing, itching of the skin, headaches, and abdominal discomfort. A variety of other side effects can occur with nicotinic acid. Flushing is the most common side effect and occurs in most patients. The flushing associated with the use of nicotinic acid can be minimized by:

1. Taking the drug with meals.
2. Increasing the dose of nicotinic acid slowly.
3. Avoiding hot beverages around the time of nicotinic acid ingestion.

For patients who have a very difficult time with flushing, use of ½ to 1 aspirin tablet daily ½ hour prior to the niacin dose (unless on coumadin) can be helpful. Not every patient, however will require use of aspirin.

#### To get started:

1. The patient will be instructed to purchase over the counter Niacin 100 mg tablets at the drug store. These tablets are to be taken before each meal (3 times per day).
2. The dosage will be increased as indicated by the schedule below, up to a total of 2,000 mg daily.
3. Follow the Niacin instructions given below.
  - No Niacin SR (sustained release).
  - Brand name of Rugby is preferred.

Week 1	Niacin 100 mg	1 tablet	3 times daily
Week 2	Niacin 100 mg	2 tablets	3 times daily
Week 3	Niacin 100 mg	3 tablets	3 times daily
Week 4	Niacin 100 mg	4 tablets	3 times daily
Week 5	Niacin 100 mg	5 tablets	3 times daily
Week 6	Niacin 100 mg	6 tablets	3 times daily
Week 7	Niacin 100 mg	6 tablets	3 times daily <b>plus</b> additional 200 mg daily
			Final total daily dose = 2,000 mg daily

Remember that the flushing is not an allergic reaction and will go away with time. If you are unable to increase the dose of nicotinic acid as quickly as we suggest, do not be concerned but merely go at a slower pace.

You will need to have a coronary risk profile and SMAC blood work every three months, for 18 months, then every six months. Please call the appropriate NWOCC office when it is time for your lab work.