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Niacin

National Cancer Institute

Source

National Cancer Institute. *Niacin*. NCI Thesaurus. Code C689.

A water-soluble vitamin belonging to the vitamin B family, which occurs in many animal and plant tissues, with antihyperlipidemic activity. Niacin is converted to its active form niacinamide, which is a component of the coenzymes nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD) and its phosphate form, NADP. These coenzymes play an important role in tissue respiration and in glycogen, lipid, amino acid, protein, and purine metabolism. Although the exact mechanism of action by which niacin lowers cholesterol is not fully understood, it may act by inhibiting the synthesis of very low density lipoproteins (VLDL), inhibiting the release of free fatty acids from adipose tissue, increasing lipoprotein lipase activity, and reducing the hepatic synthesis of VLDL-C and LDL-C.