

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Vitamin B 3

Another water soluble vitamin is B 3. It was discovered by Elvehjem and others in 1937. The best food sources are beef, tuna, halibut, chicken, turkey, pork and other meats. Cereal grains, legumes, mushrooms and seeds contain good amounts. Coffee and tea are sources of the vitamin.

The chemical term is niacin. The vitamin has two forms known as nicotinic acid and nicotinamide. The major functions include energy production, enzyme function, fatty acid metabolism and the production of cholesterol and steroid hormones.

A severe deficiency results in a condition known as pellagra. Classically the symptoms are known as the four D's - dermatitis, dementia, diarrhea and death. The skin problems appear as a sunburn at first. Neurological problems include paralysis, delirium and dementia. Gastrointestinal manifestations are nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Those most susceptible to deficiency of niacin are those with gastrointestinal disease who cannot absorb the vitamin. People with longstanding fever, severe stress, trauma and alcoholics have increased requirements. Poor dietary intake may have an effect.

Excessive intake may cause heartburn and nausea. The skin may itch, uric acid levels and sugar levels in the bloodstream may be elevated as in gout or in diabetes. Liver damage is known to occur. Unlike many water soluble vitamins that are freely excreted in the urine when in excess niacin is not removed this way.

Even though it may be safe to take some extra vitamin B 3 one would still recommend that you get your doctor's opinion when taking any extra vitamins.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.
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Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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