

3.2 Niacinamide

Natural Ativan

Niacinamide is, next to l-glutamine, the most powerful advanced nutrient in this book—for those who need it.

Niacinamide is one of the three forms of vitamin B3. The others are niacin and nicotinic acid. Niacin and niacinamide react with tryptophan to make more serotonin, the relaxing, feel-good neurotransmitter that prescription SSRIs enhance.

Niacin itself has to be approached with caution; large doses given without the right preparation can cause liver damage. But this issue disappears when we work with niacinamide.

Niacinamide can do wonders for bipolar and manic depressive people as well as those who suffer from chronic anxiety. In addition to its effects on serotonin, niacinamide also appears to calm the brain by binding with the same GABA receptors with which valium and theanine also bind.

The onset of niacinamide's anxiety-relief in those who respond to it is immediate. Oftentimes those who are used to the sudden and dramatic changes in mood produced by psychoactive pharmaceuticals can miss the subtler, more nourishing effects of the interventions described in this book. This is not the case with niacinamide. Within a few minutes after taking 200-2,000 mg many anxious persons start feeling immediate relief. Start with the lower dose and work your way up (you made need to take a 500 mg capsule apart to do it.)

Unfortunately, not everyone responds to niacinamide. But if you do, there will be no doubt in your mind.

It's important to note that those who take SSRIs like Paxil®, Prozac® and Zoloft® should not also drink alcohol. The interaction of alcohol and serotonin-enhancing meds can be terrible indeed: paranoia, suspicion, hostility and catastrophizing appear. Work and personal relationships can suffer tremendously as a result. Niacinamide can relieve much of this anxiety instead.

It's interesting to note that niacinamide's close cousin, niacin, was discovered in the 1930s as a cure for pellagra. Pellagra, the result of diets centered around B3-poor foods like corn, creates confusion and dementia in its victims. Abram Hoffer, one of the founders of ortho-

molecular psychiatry, felt this state was clinically indistinguishable from early stage schizophrenia.

But again, large amounts of niacin can be toxic to the liver if not administered correctly. Niacinamide, its molecular cousin, is safe.