



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Information for Patients taking Loperamide

Surgical Division Royal Liverpool Hospital
and Broadgreen Hospital

This information sheet is for patients who have been prescribed Loperamide (also known as Imodium) for a bowel problem. It is designed to give you some more information about this medication.

What is loperamide?

Loperamide is one of a group of drugs called anti-diarrhoeal. These drugs are designed to thicken your stool, reducing diarrhoea with the aim to improve control.

How does it work?

Loperamide works by slowing down the passage of food through the gut and encouraging your body to take up more water from the waste in your lower bowel. The longer food takes to pass through the gut, the more time there is for water to be absorbed from it through the gut wall. The stools that are then produced are firmer.

What dose do I take?

The doctor/nurse who prescribed Loperamide will have discussed with you a suggested starting dose. People vary a lot in their response to Loperamide. It sometimes needs some experimentation to find the dose that will control your bowels without making you constipated.

The more you take, the firmer your stools will become. If you take too much you will become constipated, too little and your stools will remain soft or loose. It is usual to start on a low dose and build up slowly over a few days so that you can judge how you are responding.

Loperamide comes in capsules / tablets or as a syrup.

Amount to take	Actual Dose of Loperamide
1 capsule/ tablet	2 milligrams
1 teaspoon (5mls)	1 milligram
1 half teaspoon (2.5 mls)	½ milligram

It is best to take this medication half an hour before food. This will help to slow down the usual gut activity that is stimulated by eating. Most people find that the bowel is most active in the morning and so Loperamide will help most if taken before breakfast.

The medicine starts to work within half an hour of taking it and is effective for eight to twelve hours. This means that a dose taken after lunch is not likely to help much if all your problems are in the morning. However, a dose last thing at night may help with morning frequency. Loperamide is a safe drug, which is not addictive. It can be taken in doses up to eight capsules per day over a long period.

Do not take more than this dose without medical advice.

Do not take Loperamide if you:

- are allergic to Loperamide.
- have active ulcerative colitis
- have diarrhoea caused by certain bacteria (eg Salmonella, Shigella and Campylobacter).
- have been advised to avoid constipation.

Possible side effects of Loperamide

The following side effects have been reported, many of which can be managed and some may go away over time.

- dizziness
- dry mouth
- increased wind
- headaches
- tiredness
- nausea and vomiting.

Stop the medication and consult your family doctor (GP) if you experience any of the following:

- abdominal or stomach pains
- cramps
- discomfort or distension (swelling of the stomach)
- constipation
- rash.

If you have further questions please do not hesitate to ask your Doctor or Specialist Nurse

Further Information

Bowel Dysfunction

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Bowel Dysfunction

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