

Patient Information Leaflet



Explaining how to take Loperamide (Imodium)

The Burdett Institute
of Gastrointestinal Nursing 

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What is loperamide?

Loperamide is one of a group of drugs called anti-diarrhoeals. These drugs are designed to thicken your stools and so to reduce diarrhoea. It will also firm up slightly soft stools.

How does it work?

Loperamide works by slowing down the passage of food through the gut and encouraging more uptake by the body of water from the waste in the 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 thicker and firmer.

What dose do I take?

A suggested starting dose of loperamide will have been discussed with you. People vary a lot in their response to loperamide. It sometimes needs some experimentation to find the dose that will control your bowels without constipating you. The more you take the firmer your stools should become. If you take more than you need you may feel constipated. If you do not take enough your stools will remain loose or soft. It is usual to start on a low dose and build it up slowly over a few days so that you can judge how your body is responding.

Loperamide comes in capsules / tablets or as a syrup. As the syrup is often used for children it can only be obtained on prescription in this country.

Amount you take	Actual dose of loperamide
1 capsule / tablet	2 milligrams
1 teaspoon (5ml)	1 milligram
1 half teaspoon (2.5ml)	Half a milligram

It is best to take loperamide half an hour before a meal. 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 12 hours. This means that doses taken after lunch are not likely to help much if all your problems are in the morning. However, a dose last thing at night may help with early morning frequency. Loperamide is a very safe drug which is not addictive. It can be taken in doses of up to eight capsules (16 milligrams) per day over long periods of time. Do not take more than 16 milligrams per day without medical advice.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Contact details:

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