



How to take Loperamide

Introduction

This leaflet will give you information about how to take Loperamide safely. A member of staff will speak to you about everything in this leaflet, but if you have any questions, please ask us.

What is Loperamide?

Loperamide is one of a group of drugs called anti-diarrhoeals. These drugs are designed to firm your stools to reduce diarrhoea or can 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 of water by the body from the waste within the 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 when you were given this leaflet, but people vary a lot in how their body responds to the drug. 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 become 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. If you have problems please contact your medical team in the hospital on numbers that you have previously been provided with.

Loperamide comes in capsules, tablets, dispersible tablets (which dissolve in water) or as oral liquid solution. The solution is often used for children so can only be obtained on prescription in this country. Some preparations are available to purchase in small doses over the counter.

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

It is best to take Loperamide 30 minutes to one hour before a meal. This will help to slow down your 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. If you have been advised to take Loperamide four times a day it is best to take your doses before meals and last thing at night. Taking a dose last thing at night may help with early morning stools or stoma output.

Are there any side effects?

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.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you need advice about your treatment or side effects outside normal working hours, please contact your GP or NHS 111 or in life-threatening circumstances call the emergency services on 999. This will depend on the nature and urgency of your concern.

For advice on medicines you have received from the hospital, call Medicines Information from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm on 020 8869 2762.

General Trust Information

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS is a confidential service for people who would like information, help or advice about the services provided by any of our hospitals. Please note that this service does not provide clinical advice so please contact the relevant department directly to discuss any concerns or queries about your upcoming test, examination or operation.

If you would like this information in an easy to read format, large print, braille, different format or language, please contact the PALS team on 020 8869 5118 or email lnwh-tr.PALS@nhs.net. We will do our best to meet your needs.