



## Colorectal Department

# Information for Patients taking Loperamide (Imodium)

You have been prescribed Loperamide (also sometimes known as Imodium) for your bowel problems. This information sheet 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 'firm up' your loose stools and so improve the control you have over your bowels.

### How does it work?

Loperamide works by slowing down the passage of food through the gut and encouraging more uptake by your body of water in your stools in the lower bowel. The longer the food takes to pass through the gut the more time there is for the water in it to be absorbed 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 by your Consultant or Specialist Nurse. People vary a lot in their response to Loperamide and you may need to experiment with the amount you need to take to achieve the right stool consistency. 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 still remain too loose or soft. It is usual to start on a low dose and gradually build up over a few days so that you can judge how your body is responding.

Loperamide comes in capsules/tablets or as syrup. As the syrup is often used for children, it can only be obtained through a prescription from your Consultant or GP. However, the syrup does have the benefit of allowing finer balancing of your dose.

#### AMOUNT YOU TAKE

#### ACTUAL DOSE OF LOPERAMIDE

1 capsule/tablet	2 mg
1 5mL medicine measuring spoon	1 mg
1 half 5mL medicine measuring spoon (2.5mLs)	Half a mg

It is best to take Loperamide half an hour before your meal. This will help slow down your gut's usual motility (movements of the digestive system and the transit of the contents within it) stimulated by eating. Most people find the bowel is more active in the morning and so Loperamide will help most if taken half an hour before your breakfast. It starts to work within half an hour of taking it and is effective for 8 to 12 hours. This means that the doses taken after lunch are not likely to help if all your problems are in the morning. However, a dose last thing at night may help early morning urgency/frequency of your bowels. Loperamide is a very safe drug which is not addictive. It can be taken in doses of up to 8 capsules (16mg) per day over long periods of time. Do not take more than 16 mg a day without medical advice.

If you require any further information please read the medicines leaflet provided with this medicine or contact your pharmacy.

## Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

Jane Curtis  
Consultant Pelvic Floor Nurse  
01305 254810

## About this leaflet:

Author	Jane Curtis RGN DPSN, Consultant Pelvic Floor Nurse
Written:	December 2018
Approved:	April 2019
Review date:	April 2022
Edition:	1

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



**INTEGRITY | RESPECT | TEAMWORK | EXCELLENCE**

© 2018 Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Williams Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2JY  
[www.dchft.nhs.uk](http://www.dchft.nhs.uk)