

# Loperamide (Imodium) for adult patients

PATIENT INFORMATION



Community Health Service

## What is Loperamide (Imodium)?

Loperamide (also called Imodium) belongs to a group of medicines called anti-diarrhoeals. These medicines are designed to thicken your stools and to reduce diarrhoea. It will also firm up slightly soft stools.

## How does Loperamide work?

Loperamide works by slowing down the passage of food through your bowels. The longer your food takes to pass through your bowels, the more time there is for water to be absorbed from your bowel motion (stool) through the bowel wall. This results in thicker firmer bowel motions that are passed less often. This reduces the risk of dehydration.

## Are there any side effects?

The most likely side effect of Loperamide is that it may cause some degree of constipation.

## What dose do I take?

Loperamide comes in 2 mg capsules. Up to eight capsules (16 mgs) can be taken per day over long periods of time.

Do not take more than 16 milligrams per day without medical advice.

**It is best to take Loperamide half an hour before you eat a meal.** This will help to slow down the normal gut activity that is stimulated by eating.

## When do I take it?

Loperamide starts to work within half an hour of taking it, and is effective for 8 to 12 hours. Most people find that their bowels are most active in the morning so Loperamide will help most if taken before breakfast. 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.

People vary a lot in their response to Loperamide. A suggested starting dose of Loperamide will have been discussed with you. It is usual to start on a low dose and build it up slowly over a few days so that you can see how your body is responding.

You might need to experiment with doses to find out what works best for you. The more Loperamide you take the firmer your stools should become. If you do not take enough your stools will remain loose or too soft.

If you have any further questions please ask the stoma nurses. For repeat prescriptions please contact your family doctor (GP)

## When do I need to seek medical advice?

If your bowel motion is bloody or if your bowel motion does not thicken after taking the maximum dose you need to contact your own doctor or after-hours medical centre.

### Contact us

If you wish to contact a stoma nurse phone:  
(04) 918 6375 8am – 4.30pm

Monday – Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

After hours phone:

Kapiti: (04) 903 0224

Kenepuru: (04) 918 2011

Wellington: (04) 806 2556

*Essential phone calls only over weekends and evenings*