Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice on using Loperamide

Version number: **1**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Advice on Using Loperamide

Patient Information

Pelvic Health Team

- Author ID: RM
- Leaflet ref: Gyn 069
- Version: 1
- Leaflet title: Advice on using Loperamide
- Last review: April 2026
- Expiry date: April 2028

Introduction

This leaflet is only to be used following consultation with a health professional, and it is for patients experiencing diarrhoea that has already been investigated and no diagnosis identified. The leaflet will give you information on how to take Loperamide to improve your symptoms. If you have any questions, please ask.

What is Loperamide?

Loperamide is one of a group of drugs called anti-diarrhoeal. 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 through the gut wall. The stools that are then produced are thicker and firmer.

What dose do I take?

The aim is to establish a regular dose to firm the stools, not to take it on an ad hoc basis when the stool is loose or when you have had an accident.

A suggested starting dose will have been discussed with you when you were given this leaflet. 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 stool will become. If you take more than you need, you may become constipated; if you do not take enough, the stool will remain soft or loose. It is usual to start on a low dose and build it up slowly over a few weeks, so you can judge how your body is responding.

When do I take my Loperamide?

It is best to take Loperamide 30 minutes to an hour before a meal. This will help settle down your usual gut activity that is stimulated by eating. Most people find that their gut is most active in the morning and so Loperamide will help most if taken before breakfast. The medicine starts to work within 30 minutes of taking it and can be effective for up to 8 to 12 hours. If you have been told 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.

Risks

Loperamide is a very safe drug and is not addictive. Constipation maybe a problem if you take more than you need. The amount you take should be guided by your doctor or health professional. If you have any worries or concerns regarding your condition or taking Loperamide, please contact your GP or health professional.

Benefits

Taking a regular dose of Loperamide should help control your bowels more effectively, allowing you to live a normal life.



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