

Loperamide

Names

The generic drug name is loperamide (loe per' a mide). The brand name is Imodium®. There may be other names for this medication.

How is it Administered?

In the U.S., Imodium® capsules are available only with your doctor's prescription, while the liquid form and the tablet form are available without a prescription.

Why am I Taking Loperamide?

Loperamide is used to control diarrhea.

How Does It Work?

Diarrhea occurs when your intestine processes the food you eat too quickly. Imodium regulates the muscles in your intestine to allow them hold onto the food matter you eat for longer periods of time, allowing for healthier bowel movements.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Loperamide?

Tell your doctor if you:

- are allergic to loperamide or have any allergies
- have a fever, blood or mucus in your stool, or difficulty swallowing
- if you or anyone in your family has ever had a liver disease, prolonged QT interval (a rare heart problem,) or an irregular heartbeat
- are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant

This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal or diet supplements that you are taking.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Dizziness or drowsiness
- Stomach pain, discomfort, or distension (enlargement)
- Constipation
- Fatigue

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if you have:

- signs of an allergic reaction: Shortness of breath, wheezing, difficulty breathing, swelling in your throat (feeling your throat is closing up), swelling of facial features, or hives

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have:

- signs of dehydration: decreased urination, dizziness and lightheadedness, dry mouth, increased thirst, wrinkled/tented skin (tented skin is skin that stays in position when you pinch your skin and it stays in place when you let go.)
- any side effect that becomes severe or does not go away

What Else Should I Know ?

- Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store it at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom).
- Symptoms of too much loperamide include nausea, inability to urinate, fainting, and fast or irregular heartbeat are symptoms you may have taken too much loperamide. If you have these symptoms, call your doctor. If they are severe, contact poison control at **1-800-222-1222**. For emergencies, call 911.
- In addition to using this medicine, you must replace the fluid your body has lost. **Drink 2-3 quarts of fluid a day**, unless your doctor gives you other instructions. Fruits, vegetables, fried or spicy foods, bran, candy, caffeine, and alcoholic beverages may make diarrhea worse.
- If you have lost too much fluid due to the diarrhea, a serious condition (dehydration) may develop.
- If you are taking loperamide liquid, be sure to use a measuring spoon, not a household spoon, to measure your dose. Do not let the liquid medication freeze.
- Imodium® should not be used for more than 2 days, unless directed by your doctor. Check with your doctor if your diarrhea does not stop after two days or if you develop a fever.