

**Patient  
Information**

# Loperamide (Imodium®) for patients with an ileostomy

## Introduction

You have been given this leaflet as you have been prescribed loperamide to help slow and thicken your ileostomy output.

## What is Loperamide?

Loperamide is one of a group of medicines called antidiarrhoeal or antimotility agents. These medicines are designed to thicken your stools and to reduce diarrhoea. This will then slow down output from your ileostomy.

## How does the medicine work?

Loperamide works by slowing down the passage of food through the small 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 more of a 'porridge' consistency.

## What dose do I take?

A suggested starting dose of loperamide will have been discussed with you by your consultant or one of their team members. People vary a lot in their response to loperamide. It sometimes needs some experimentation to find the dose that will control your ileostomy output without making it too thick. The more you take the thicker your output will become. If you do not take enough your output will remain high and thin. 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.

Loperamide comes in tablets, syrup and capsules. As the syrup is often used for children it can only be obtained on prescription in this country.

Reference No.  
**GHPI1021\_08\_18**

Department  
**Stoma Care**

Review due

**August 2021**

## Patient Information

Amount you take	Actual dose of Loperamide
1 to 2 tablets/capsules	2 to 4mg (milligram)
1 teaspoon (5ml)	1mg
Half a teaspoon (2.5ml)	½ mg

Loperamide should be taken 20 to 30 minutes before a meal. This will help to slow down the usual gut activity that is stimulated by eating.

Most people find that the bowel is most active in the morning, 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 8 to 12 hours. This means that doses taken after lunch are not likely to help much if your problems are in the morning. However, a dose last thing at night may help with early morning frequency. Loperamide is not addictive. It can be taken in doses of up to 8 tablets/capsules (16 mg) per day over long periods of time. Do not take more than 16 milligrams per day without medical advice.

## Contact information

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

### Stoma Care Department

#### Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 4363

Monday to Friday, 8:00 to 4:00

#### Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6702

Monday to Friday, 8:00 to 4:00

## Further information

Adapted from The St Marks Hospital leaflet 'Explaining How to Take Loperamide'.

Content reviewed: August 2018