

## LOPERAMIDE

**Other NAMES:** Imodium®

### WHY is this drug prescribed?

Loperamide is used to treat sudden short-term or chronic diarrhea. Loperamide can decrease stool frequency and increase the consistency of the stools. Also, certain symptoms associated with diarrhea such as abdominal pain, bloating and flatulence (gas) can be improved.

### HOW should this drug be taken?

Loperamide is available in two forms, a 2 mg tablet that should be swallowed and a 2 mg quick dissolve tablet that should be placed on the tongue where it will dissolve rapidly. Loperamide can be used on occasion on an as needed basis or it can be used regularly to treat more persistent, chronic diarrhea.

Your dosage is:

2 mg tablet (swallow):

2 mg quick dissolve tablet (place on tongue):

\_\_\_\_tablets(\_\_\_\_mg) after the first episode of loose stools, followed by \_\_\_\_tablets (\_\_\_\_mg) after each

loose stool, until the diarrhea disappears

or

\_\_\_\_tablets(\_\_\_\_mg)\_\_\_\_times a day

You should never take more than 8 tablets (16 mg) over a 24-hour period.

Under the advice of a doctor, loperamide can be used in children aged between 2 and 12. The doctor will determine the proper dosage for the child based on his or her weight.

### What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If loperamide must be taken regularly and you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is time for your next dose, do not double the dose, just carry on with your regular schedule.

### What ADVERSE EFFECTS can this drug cause? What should you do about them?

The adverse effects that are possible are usually minor and temporary. Some people will experience **constipation, drowsiness, abdominal discomfort, dizziness, tiredness, dry mouth, nausea and**

**vomiting.** An allergic reaction accompanied by a **skin rash** can sometimes occur. If a skin rash occurs stop taking loperamide and call your doctor.

If you are taking the quick dissolve tablet you may experience a burning or prickly sensation on the tongue.

**It is important that you keep your doctor appointments and come for your laboratory tests so that your progress can be followed.**

### What other PRECAUTIONS should you follow while using this drug?

Loperamide should not be used if you have a fever or if you have blood in your stools. Consult your doctor if you have these symptoms since you might need antibiotics to treat the diarrhea.

You should not take loperamide if you have already had an allergic reaction to this drug or if you have a preexisting disease of the intestines (eg. colon cancer, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease). Consult your doctor for directions on how to treat the diarrhea in these circumstances.

Loperamide should be stopped immediately if constipation or important abdominal pain develops. You should also stop this drug and

consult a doctor if acute diarrhea does not improve within 48 hours.

The safety of loperamide during pregnancy and breastfeeding has not been established. Please discuss this with your doctor if this is a concern.

Diarrhea is often accompanied by dehydration. It is crucial to always drink appropriate amounts of fluids in order to avoid dehydration. If you have minor diarrhea (less than 4 stools daily) drinking caffeine-free soft drinks, juices or sport rehydration drinks can be sufficient. If the diarrhea is more severe, specially formulated rehydration drinks should be taken.

These products can be obtained in pharmacies (for example, Pedialyte® or Gastrolyte®). These drinks contain sugar as well as other substances that you may lose in high amounts because of the diarrhea (sodium, potassium). Your pharmacist can tell you how much of these drinks you need to take to avoid dehydration.

You should consult a doctor if you have one or more symptoms associated with dehydration. These are dry mouth, excessive thirst, wrinkled skin, little or no urination, dizziness and lightheadedness.

### **How should this drug be STORED?**

Loperamide tablets and quick dissolve tablets should be stored in a cool (15 - 30°C) dry place, protected from light and well out of the reach of children. Ensure that the drug has not expired by checking the expiry date ("EXP") shown on the outside of the package.

Do not store in your bathroom or kitchen, as heat and moisture may cause the drug to be less active.

**If you have any questions or concerns about this drug or if you are experiencing adverse effects, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.**

**Write questions or concerns down to ensure they are addressed.**

The following pharmacist is available to answer questions:

Pharmacist: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: Product monograph Imodium® (loperamide). Guelph, ON, Canada: McNeil Consumer HealthCare, 2000. Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, 2003. Reviewed 2009.

Additional medication fact sheets and updates may be found at: [www.hivclinic.ca](http://www.hivclinic.ca)

***LOPERAMIDE***

***MEDICATION***

***FACT SHEET***