

# CONSIDER **LOPERAMIDE** **ABUSE** IN YOUR DIAGNOSIS



Loperamide (also sold under the brand name Imodium®) is an anti-diarrhea prescription and over-the-counter medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Loperamide is **safe and effective when used as directed**. However, recent data suggests that some **people are misusing or abusing loperamide** by taking very high doses in an attempt to self-manage their opioid withdrawal symptoms or to achieve a euphoric high.

**Taking very high doses of loperamide can lead to serious cardiac events and death.**

## **KNOW THE SIGNS OF LOPERAMIDE ABUSE AND CARDIOTOXICITY**

There are currently **no specific treatment protocols for cardiotoxicity** due to loperamide abuse. However, it is important to recognize this issue and consider it when a patient presents with signs of cardiotoxicity.

The following are **signs of cardiotoxicity** related to loperamide abuse:

- » **Syncope**
- » **Unresponsiveness**
- » **QT interval prolongation**
- » **Torsades de pointes**
- » **Ventricular arrhythmias**
- » **Cardiac arrest**
- » **Loperamide packaging or medication at the scene**

## **ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO LOPERAMIDE ABUSE**

If the patient has any signs of loperamide abuse or related cardiotoxicity, note them on the patient's chart.

If you suspect a patient of abusing loperamide, ask them:

- » **Have you been taking loperamide?**
- » **How much loperamide do you take? How often?**
- » **Have you experienced any other noticeable side effects from using loperamide?**

If a patient reports using more than the approved dose, educate them about the risks and inform the patient's emergency medical providers.

To learn more, visit **[LOPERAMIDESAFETY.ORG](https://www.loperamidesafety.org)**

For emergency medical services practitioners

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