

PREVENT LOPERAMIDE MISUSE



Loperamide (also sold under the brand name Imodium®) is a prescription and over-the-counter medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to relieve the symptoms of diarrhea. Loperamide is safe and effective when used as directed. A small but growing number of individuals are intentionally misusing loperamide by consuming very high doses in an attempt to self-manage their opioid withdrawal or to achieve a euphoric high.

There are currently no treatment protocols for loperamide misuse or toxicity. However, it is important to recognize this issue and address it appropriately with patients who may be misusing or who may be at risk for misusing loperamide.

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

KNOW THE SIGNS OF LOPERAMIDE MISUSE OR TOXICITY

According to research reports, patients most at risk for misusing loperamide are those experiencing opioid withdrawal and seeking a way to self-medicate. Signs of loperamide misuse include:

- » **Syncope, or fainting**
- » **Unresponsiveness**
- » **Irregular heart rhythms**
- » **Cardiac arrest**

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY AND PREVENT LOPERAMIDE MISUSE

Loperamide will not appear in a standard toxicology screen, and there is no urine test to screen for it. If you suspect a patient is misusing loperamide, ask:

- » **Have you been taking loperamide?**
- » **How much loperamide do you take and how often?**
- » **Are you aware of the severe heart risks associated with overuse and misuse of loperamide?**

If a patient reports using more than the approved dose of loperamide, or if they report using it to help manage opioid withdrawal symptoms, educate them about the risks and connect them with appropriate treatment or resources for substance use disorder.

If a patient that you suspect of loperamide misuse faints or experiences a heart problem, call emergency services and let first responders know that you suspect loperamide misuse.



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For behavioral health specialists.
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