

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



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 abuse or toxicity. However, it is important to recognize this issue and consider it when a patient presents with unexplained cardiotoxicity.

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

KNOW THE SIGNS AND DANGERS OF LOPERAMIDE ABUSE OR TOXICITY

- » **Syncope, or fainting**
- » **Unresponsiveness**
- » **QT interval prolongation**
- » **Torsades de pointes**
- » **Ventricular arrhythmias**
- » **Cardiac arrest**

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY AND PREVENT LOPERAMIDE ABUSE

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 abusing 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, misuse, and abuse of loperamide?**

If a patient reports using more than the approved dose, once stabilized, educate them about the risks and refer them to an appropriate source of treatment for substance use disorder.

Report exposures to Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222.

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

For emergency medicine specialists.