

BE ALERT TO POTENTIAL LOPERAMIDE ABUSE



For decades, millions of consumers have relied on over-the-counter (OTC) loperamide HCl to treat symptoms of diarrhea. Loperamide is safe and effective when used as directed. The OTC maximum daily dose of loperamide is 8 milligrams per day.

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.

LOPERAMIDE PACKAGING CHANGES

In September 2019, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced loperamide packaging changes to help address the misuse and abuse of loperamide while preserving access to a safe and effective OTC remedy for millions of diarrhea sufferers.

Solid forms of OTC loperamide will now be sold only **in unit-dose packaging, with a maximum of 48 milligrams of loperamide per pack (24-count pack size)**. Liquid products will continue to be sold in **4-ounce and 8-ounce sizes**, with no more than 32 milligrams of loperamide in 8 fluid ounces.

The rollout of these changes will be managed by individual manufacturers, brands, and retailers throughout 2020.

EDUCATING CONSUMERS

Consumers may ask you questions about these packaging changes. As a healthcare professional, it is important for you to be aware of loperamide abuse. However, be cautious in how you share this information with consumers. It is important to not inadvertently inform someone of this abuse who may be at risk for misuse or abuse themselves. Remind consumers that loperamide is safe and effective **when used as directed** and that they should always review the Drug Facts label of any medicine they are taking. You can even review the Drug Facts label with them.

If someone reports using more than the approved dose of loperamide, educate them about the serious risks and refer them to an appropriate source of treatment. Report exposures to Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) and FDA's MedWatch.

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

For pharmacists and other healthcare professionals in retail-based locations
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