

Antidiarrheal Medicine

What is antidiarrheal medicine used for?

Antidiarrheal medicine helps stop frequent loose bowel movements, called diarrhea. It's common for most people to have diarrhea once in a while. Common causes include infections caused by bacteria or a virus, some foods, and stress. Diarrhea is one way that your body gets rid of an infection. Antidiarrheal medicine may be used to treat mild diarrhea for 1 to 2 days. If your diarrhea lasts more than 2 days, talk to your healthcare provider.

How does the medicine work?

There are 3 main types of antidiarrheal medicine:

- Stool thickeners that also help remove bacteria and other causes of diarrhea from the bowel
- Antispasmodic medicines that slow food down as it moves through the bowel. This gives your body more time to absorb water from the food, which makes the stool firmer. You will also have fewer stools.
- Bulking agents that thicken the stool with fibers made from plant seeds

Many antidiarrheal medicines contain both a stool thickener and an antispasmodic medicine.

What else do I need to know about this medicine?

- Follow the directions that come with your medicine, including information about food or alcohol. Make sure you know how and when to take your medicine. Do not take more or less than you are supposed to take.
- Many medicines have side effects. A side effect is a symptom or problem that is caused by the medicine. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what side effects the medicine may cause and what you should do if you have side effects.
- Try to get all of your prescriptions filled at the same place. Your pharmacist can help make sure that all of your medicines are safe to take together.
- Keep a list of your medicines with you. List all of the prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, supplements, natural remedies, and vitamins that you take. Tell all healthcare providers who treat you about all of the products you are taking.

If you have any questions, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information. Be sure to keep all appointments for provider visits or tests.

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