

Treating Diarrhea Caused by Radiation

Radiation treatment over the belly or abdomen area can cause loose stools or diarrhea. Two types of medicines can help: Loperamide (brand name Imodium®) is available without a prescription at drug and grocery stores or your doctor may also prescribe Lomotil® (available by prescription only).

Follow this Treatment Plan

If more than three bowel movements (BMs) per day start:

- Imodium 2 mg (generic Loperamide is fine to use).
- Take one tablet four times a day with meals and at bedtime.
- Try to decrease your bowel movements to one to two per day with the Imodium.

Tips to Manage Diarrhea with Nutrition

- Be sure to drink plenty of liquids, at least eight to 12 cups daily. Focus on water and other decaffeinated beverages.
- Increase soluble fiber in your diet: bananas, rice, applesauce, white toast and oatmeal are good choices.
- Sip on room temperature fluids slowly and consistently throughout the day.
- Focus on four to six small meals daily. Try lying down for 30 minutes after a meal.
- Avoid foods high in insoluble fiber such as: whole grain breads, whole grain cereals, seeds, nuts, leafy greens and broccoli.
- Avoid greasy, fatty and fried foods.
- Avoid very hot or very cold fluids.
- Avoid milk and dairy products (except yogurt). Try Lactaid products or non-dairy (soy, almond, coconut or rice) products.
- Avoid spicy and seasoned foods.
- Avoid sugar-free products that contain xylitol or sorbitol.
- Avoid using toilet paper. Wash off rectal area with water and pat dry.

For Rectal Area Discomfort

Step 1: Take a sitz bath. Soak rectal area in warm (not hot) water for 10 to 15 minutes three times a day. Pat dry and let air dry.

Step 2: Alternate taking one Lomotil tablet and two Imodium tablets every three hours, as shown below in the chart. (L = Lomotil and I = Imodium).

Time	7 a.m.	10 a.m.	1 p.m.	4 p.m.	7 p.m.	10 p.m.	1 a.m.	4 a.m.
Medicine and Dose	1 L	2 I	1 L	2 I	1 L	2 I	1 L	2 I

- Start a low fiber diet. Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral to a talk with a dietician.
- You must drink at least eight, eight ounce glasses of fluid within 24 hours. The fluid may include water, Gatorade® and caffeine-free and non-carbonated drinks.

If this schedule does not help control loose stools or diarrhea within 24 hours, go to Step 3.

Step 3: Alternate taking two Lomotil tablets and two Imodium tablets or Imodium AD every six hours, as shown below in the chart.

Time	7 a.m.	10 a.m.	1 p.m.	4 p.m.	7 p.m.	10 p.m.	1 a.m.	4 a.m.
Medicine and Dose	2 L	2 I	2 L	2 I	2 L	2 I	2 L	2 I

- Continue the low-fiber diet.
- Continue to drink at least eight, eight ounce glasses of fluid within 24 hours. The fluid may include water, Gatorade® and caffeine-free and non-carbonated drinks.
- Once diarrhea seems to be under control (no bowel movement for at least 12 hours) then reduce the number of Imodium or Imodium AD you are taking.