

# Diphenoxylate

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for your pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medicine you have been given for your dog is called diphenoxylate. It may have a trade name such as Lomotil® or Lofenoxal® (which contain diphenoxylate plus atropine), but often will just be called diphenoxylate (or co-phenotrope).

## What is diphenoxylate?

Diphenoxylate belongs to a group of medicines that are called anti-motility drugs. These drugs reduce the propulsion of faeces along the intestines by acting directly on the muscle within the gut wall. Diphenoxylate also reduces the fluid content of faeces and reduces coughing. Atropine is a drug that blocks certain types of nerve junctions, resulting in (amongst other effects) relaxation of the intestinal muscle and a reduction in intestinal motility.

## Why has my pet been prescribed diphenoxylate?

Diphenoxylate (with or without atropine) is used in veterinary patients to help treat sudden-onset diarrhoea. It can also be used in longer-term problems such as irritable bowel syndrome in dogs, which can cause intermittent diarrhoea, and as part of the management of a chronic cough.

## How should I store diphenoxylate?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give diphenoxylate tablets to my pet?

Try to disguise them in a strongly flavoured food that your dog likes. Alternatively, they can be placed carefully on the back of your dog's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. It is important that your dog is also given free access to drinking water to replace body fluids lost in the diarrhoea so that they do not become dehydrated.

## How long will my pet need to take diphenoxylate?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients.

## What should I do if I run out of tablets?

Try not to run out of tablets. Make sure you order more tablets from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible.

## What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next

scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the total stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

## What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

**Contact your vet immediately** if your pet is given an overdose of diphenoxylate.

## Can my pet take diphenoxylate if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. Diphenoxylate will increase the effects of sedative drugs; if they are given together, careful monitoring by your vet will be required.

## What are the possible side effects of diphenoxylate for my pet?

Diphenoxylate can cause drowsiness and constipation. If your dog shows any unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

## What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking diphenoxylate?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any further doses and should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

## What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?

If a person accidentally takes your pet's tablets, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

## Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about diphenoxylate.

### The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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