Advice on Medications

- Consult your doctor immediately if you experience any allergic reactions such as skin rash, swelling of the face or hands and breathing difficulty.
- Long-term use of laxatives may lead to dependency and decreased bowel function.
- Do not take antmotility drugs indiscriminately. For diarrhoea caused by intestinal infections, antmotility drugs may hinder the evacuation of harmful bacteria in the intestines and worsen the situation.
- Inform your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about medications that you are taking, including prescription medicine, over-the-counter medicine and vitamins.

Lifestyle Advice

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- For constipation, increase fibre intake by eating vegetables, fruits or whole grains.
- For diarrhoea, maintain adequate nutrition and avoid greasy food.
- Exercise regularly.
- Develop a regular bowel habit; do not ignore the urge to defecate.
- Maintain good hygiene to prevent gastrointestinal infections.

This information leaflet is for reference only.
Medicines should be used as directed by the doctor and pharmacist.
For enquiry, please contact your doctor, dispensary staff or other healthcare professionals.
Do not share your medicine with others.
**Constipation and Diarrhoea**

Bowel habits vary among individuals. It is generally considered normal as long as there is a regular pattern of bowel movement and the stools are soft and easy to pass. Constipation refers to bowel movements that are infrequent, hard to pass, or seemingly incomplete. On the other hand, diarrhoea refers to overly active bowel movements with three or more loose or watery stools within 24 hours.

**Laxatives**

**Bulk-forming Laxatives** (Psyllium)
They increase faecal mass. The onset of action of bulk-forming laxatives ranges from 24 to 72 hours. For bulk-forming laxatives in granule form, dissolve or mix granules with water before taking them. Common side effects include abdominal pain, bloating and stomach cramps.

**Stimulant Laxatives**
(Bisacodyl, senna, glycerin suppositories)
They stimulate contraction of intestinal muscles. The onset of action of oral formulations ranges from 6 to 12 hours while that of rectal formulations is 15 to 60 minutes. Oral formulations are usually taken at night. Common side effects include abdominal pain and nausea.

**Osmotic Laxatives** (Lactulose)
They draw water into the bowel. The onset of action of osmotic laxatives ranges from 2 to 3 days. Common side effects include abdominal pain, flatulence, nausea and vomiting.

**Antimotility Drugs** (Loperamide)
They inhibit bowel movement and relieve diarrheal symptoms. Patients should not take more than the instructed dose. They should be avoided in bloody diarrhoea or fever. Common side effects include constipation, nausea and abdominal pain.

**Oral Rehydration Salts**
They are a combination of electrolytes and glucose to replenish fluids and electrolytes lost from diarrhoea. Oral rehydration salts should be dissolved in clean drinking water as directed and drunk in frequent small sips. Unused portion should be discarded 24 hours after mixing.

**Storage**

Store the medications in a cool, dry place and away from direct heat and light. Generally, there is no need to store in the refrigerator unless stated on drug labels. Store the medications out of reach of children.

**Symptoms to watch for**

Consult your doctor if you have the following symptoms:
- Prolonged constipation or diarrhoea
- Stools with mucus or blood
- Fever
- Very severe abdominal pain
- Unexplained weight loss

**Medications for diarrhoea**