

Epoetin Alfa

Care Team Contact Information: _____

Pharmacy Contact Information: _____

Diagnosis: _____

- This treatment is often used for anemia. People with anemia have a lower-than-normal number of red blood cells.
- It may also be used for other reasons.

Goal of Treatment: _____

- Treatment may continue for a certain time period, until it no longer works, or until side effects are no longer controlled.

Treatment Regimen

Treatment Name	How the Treatment Works	How the Treatment is Given
Epoetin Alfa (ee-POH-ee-tin AL-fuh): Procrit (PROH-krit), Epogen (EE-poh-jen), Retacrit (REH-tuh-krit)	Helps the body make more red blood cells.	Injection given under the skin into the thigh, stomach area (abdomen), upper outer area of your buttocks, or outer area of your upper arm.

Treatment Administration and Schedule

Treatment is typically repeated 3 times weekly, once weekly, or every 2 weeks. Your care team may change the frequency of your dosing during your treatment.

If You or Your Caregiver has been Trained to Give Epoetin Alfa Injections at Home

Your epoetin alfa dosing instructions:

- Be sure that you read, understand, and follow the "Instructions for Use" that come with epoetin alfa prescription.
- Take epoetin alfa exactly as your care team tells you to. Do not change your dose or stop taking epoetin alfa unless your care team tells you to.
- Your care team will show you how much epoetin alfa to use, how to inject it, how often it should be injected, and how to safely throw away the used vials, syringes, and needles.
- If you miss a dose of epoetin alfa, call your care team right away and ask what to do.
- Your care team may tell you to change your dose, temporarily stop, or completely stop taking epoetin alfa if you develop certain side effects.

If You or Your Caregiver has been Trained to Give Epoetin Alfa Injections at Home (Continued)

- During treatment with epoetin alfa, continue to follow your care team's instructions for diet and medicines.
- If you take too much epoetin alfa, call your care team or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

Storage and Handling of Epoetin Alfa

- Store epoetin alfa in the refrigerator between 36°F and 46°F (2°C and 8°C).
- Do not freeze epoetin alfa. Do not use a vial of epoetin alfa that has been frozen.
- Keep epoetin alfa away from light.
- Do not shake epoetin alfa. Shaking could cause epoetin alfa not to work. If you shake epoetin alfa, the solution in the vial may look foamy and should not be used.
- Single-dose vials of epoetin alfa should be used only one time. Throw the vial away after use even if there is medicine left in the vial.
- After removing a dose from the multidose vial, store the vial in the refrigerator (but not the freezer). Do not store the vial for more than 21 days.
- Keep epoetin alfa and all medicines out of the reach of children and pets.
- Ask your care team how to safely throw away any unused epoetin alfa.

Appointments

Appointments may include regular check-ups with your care team, treatment appointments, lab visits, and imaging tests. It's important to keep your appointments whenever you can. If you miss any appointments, call your care provider as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
<p>Nausea and Vomiting</p>	<p>Description: Nausea is an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach or the need to throw up. You may or may not vomit.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat smaller, more frequent meals. • Avoid fatty, fried, spicy, or highly sweet foods. • Eat bland foods at room temperature and drink clear liquids. • If you vomit, start with small sips of water, broth, or other clear liquids. If these stay down, try soft foods (such as gelatin, plain cornstarch pudding, yogurt, strained soup, or strained cooked cereal) and gradually return to solid foods. • Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms. <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomiting for more than 24 hours • Nonstop vomiting • Signs of dehydration (very thirsty, dry mouth, dizziness, or dark urine) • Blood or coffee-ground-like appearance in your vomit • Severe stomach pain that does not go away after vomiting
<p>High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)</p>	<p>Description: High blood pressure means the force of blood against your artery walls is too high. Treatment can raise your blood pressure or make it harder to control.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise regularly, control your weight, and limit alcohol and salt (sodium). • Take blood pressure medicines as prescribed. Your care team may change your medicines if needed. • Your care team may ask you to check and record your blood pressure at home. Bring readings to appointments. • Follow diet and lifestyle advice from your care team. <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe or new headaches • Dizziness or lightheadedness • Blurred vision • Trouble breathing • Nosebleeds that do not stop • A pounding sensation in your chest, neck, or ears • Irregular or fast heartbeats • Chest pain or pressure

Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms		
Increased Tumor Growth Rate (Boxed Warning)	Your tumor may grow faster and you may die sooner if you choose to take epoetin alfa. Your care team will talk with you about these risks.		
Heart Problems (Boxed Warning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling of your stomach area (abdomen), legs, hands, feet, or ankles • Shortness of breath • Nausea or vomiting • New or worsening chest discomfort, including pain or pressure • Weight gain • Pain or discomfort in your arms, back, neck, or jaw • Protruding neck veins • Breaking out in a cold sweat • Feeling lightheaded or dizzy 		
Blood Clots (Boxed Warning)	Signs or symptoms of a blood clot in the lung, arm, or leg may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath • Chest pain • Arm or leg swelling 	Signs and symptoms of a heart attack may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chest pain that may spread to the arms, neck, jaw, back, or stomach area (abdomen) • Feeling sweaty • Shortness of breath • Feeling sick or vomiting 	Signs or symptoms of a stroke may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body • Severe headache or confusion • Problems with vision, speech, or balance
Antibodies to Epoetin Alfa	Your body may make antibodies to epoetin alfa. These antibodies can block or lessen your body's ability to make RBCs and cause you to have severe anemia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual tiredness • Lack of energy • Dizziness • Fainting 		
Seizure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden uncontrollable jerking movements • Loss of consciousness • Confusion or "staring spells" • Muscle stiffness • Repetitive movements (such as lip-smacking) • Sensory disturbances (like tingling or auras) • Postictal confusion (a state of confusion after the seizure) 		
Severe Skin Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A red, itchy, skin rash • Peeling of your skin or blisters • Severe itching • Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher 		

<p>Allergic Reactions, Including Anaphylaxis</p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away if you develop any of the following signs or symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling of your lips, mouth, tongue, or throat • Trouble breathing or swallowing • Raised red areas on your skin (hives) • A very fast heartbeat • You feel dizzy or faint
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**Before starting treatment, ask your care team when to call 9-1-1 or seek emergency help.
If you experience any new, worsening, or uncontrolled side effects, contact your care team immediately.**

Intimacy, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding

- Treatment may **change how you feel about intimacy and your body**. However, physical closeness—such as holding hands and hugging—remains safe. It is common to have questions about intimacy. If needed, talk to your care team for guidance.
- Treatment may **harm an unborn baby**.
 - If you are able to become pregnant:
 - Take a pregnancy test before starting treatment.
 - Use an effective method of birth control during treatment with epoetin alfa.
 - If you think you might be pregnant or if you become pregnant, tell your care team right away.
 - If your partner is able to become pregnant, use an effective method of birth control—such as condoms—during treatment with epoetin alfa.
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment and for 2 weeks after your last dose of epoetin alfa.

Additional Information

- **Tell your care team about all the medicines you take.**
This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbal products. Before starting any new medicine, supplement, or vaccine, ask your care team first.
- **This Patient Education Sheet may not describe all possible side effects.**
Call your care team for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Notes

Updated Date: July 6, 2026

Scan the QR code below to access this education sheet.



Important notice: The Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources.

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PES-640