

Epoetin alfa-xxxx (Procrit, Epogen, Retacrit)

About This Medicine

EPOETIN ALFA (e POE e tin AL fa) treats low levels of red blood cells (anemia) caused by kidney disease, chemotherapy, or HIV medications. It can also be used in people who are at risk for blood loss during surgery. It works by helping your body make more red blood cells, which reduces the need for blood transfusions. It can be given in the vein (IV) or as an injection under your skin (subcutaneously).

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your care team if you have questions

Possible Side Effects

- Decrease in the number of white blood cells. This may raise your risk of infection.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Trouble swallowing
- Blood sugar levels may change
- Decreased level of potassium in your blood
- Weight loss
- Bone, muscle and/or joint pain
- Headache
- Depression
- Trouble sleeping
- Cough
- Rash
- Blood clots and events such as stroke and heart attack, which can be life-threatening. A blood clot in your leg may cause your leg to swell, appear red and warm, and/or cause pain. A blood clot in your lungs may cause trouble breathing, pain when breathing, and/or chest pain.

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in 5% or greater of people with cancer on chemotherapy treated with epoetin alfa-xxxx. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your care team.

Warnings and Precautions



- Heart problems. If you are treated with epoetin alfa-xxxx to increase your hemoglobin (red blood cells) to near the same level as healthy people, you may develop serious heart problems such as heart attack, stroke, or heart failure which could be life-threatening, due to an increased level of hemoglobin in your body. Your hemoglobin level will be checked as needed, to lower the risk of these complications.
- If you have certain types of cancer, your tumor may grow faster, and you may die sooner if epoetin alfa-xxxx is used.
- Antibodies to epoetin alfa-xxxx. These antibodies can block or lessen your body's ability to make red blood cells and can cause you to have severe anemia. This is extremely rare and usually affects people with chronic kidney disease and/or hepatitis C.
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, are rare but may happen in some people. Signs of allergic reaction to this medicine may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this medicine. You should get urgent medical treatment.**
- Epoetin alfa-xxxx is made from human blood/albumin (protein) and carries an extremely rare risk of transmitting infectious diseases.
- Severe allergic skin reaction. You may develop blisters on your skin that are filled with fluid or a severe red rash all over your body that may be painful.

Note: Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your care team.

How to Take Your Medicine

- Talk to your care team for proper preparation, dosing and administration if you are self-injecting this medicine.
- Do not shake the medicine. Do not use it if the medicine has been shaken or frozen.
- **Missed dose:** If you miss a dose, contact your care team.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands with soap and water, before and after handling your medicine. Your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original package in the refrigerator, between 36°F to 46°F (2°C to 8°C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.
- **Disposal:** Discuss with your care team how to dispose of unused medicine/needles.

Treating Side Effects

- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your care team tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.



- Get regular exercise, with your care team's approval. If you feel too tired to exercise vigorously, try taking a short walk.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your care team about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- To help with weight loss, drink fluids that contribute calories (whole milk, juice, soft drinks, sweetened beverages, milkshakes, and nutritional supplements) instead of water.
- Include a source of protein at every meal and snack, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- Mouth care is very important. Your mouth care should consist of routine, gentle cleaning of your teeth or dentures and rinsing your mouth with a mixture of 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water or 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water. This should be done at least after each meal and at bedtime.
- If you have mouth sores, avoid mouthwash that has alcohol. Also avoid alcohol and smoking because they can bother your mouth and throat.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your care team says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your care team for medicine if your rash bothers you.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your care team if you are experiencing pain.
- If you have diabetes, keep good control of your blood sugar level. Tell your care team if your glucose levels are higher or lower than normal.

Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of epoetin alfa-xxxx with food.
- This medicine may interact with other medicines. Tell your care team about all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) that you are taking at this time. Also, check with your care team before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.

When to Call Your Care Team

Call your care team if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Headache that does not go away
- Blurry vision or other changes in eyesight
- Lose interest in your daily activities that you used to enjoy and feeling this way every day, and/or you feel hopelessness
- Trouble falling or staying asleep



- Tiredness and/or extreme weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Cough that is bothersome
- Chest pain or symptoms of a heart attack. Most heart attacks involve pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. The pain may go away and come back. It can feel like pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. Sometimes pain is felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach. **If any of these symptoms last 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Symptoms of a stroke such as sudden numbness or weakness of your face, arm, or leg, mostly on one side of your body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, feeling dizzy, loss of balance or coordination; or sudden, bad headache with no known cause. **If you have any of these symptoms for 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Trouble swallowing
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- New rash and/or itching
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and fatigue (low energy, feeling weak)
- Your leg is swollen, red, warm and/or painful
- Pain that does not go away, or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** Talk with your care team if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant while taking this medicine. Tell your care team right away if you think you might be pregnant
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Do not breastfeed while taking this medicine and for at least 2 weeks after the last dose.
- **Fertility warning:** The effect of this medicine on fertility is not known. If you plan to have children, talk with your care team.

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