Epoetin Alfa injection

MEDICATION GUIDE

NOTE: This sheet is a summary. It may not cover all possible information. If you have questions about this medicine talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or health care provider.

What is this medicine?
EPOETIN ALFA [e POE e tin AL fa] helps your body make more red blood cells. This medicine is used to treat anemia caused by chronic kidney failure, cancer chemotherapy, or HIV-therapy. It may also be used before surgery if you have anemia.

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your health care provider or pharmacist if you have questions.

How should I use this medicine?
This medicine is for injection into a vein or under the skin. It is usually given by a health care professional in a hospital or clinic setting.

If you get this medicine at home, you will be taught how to prepare and give this medicine. Use exactly as directed. Take your medicine at regular intervals. Do not take your medicine more often than directed.

It is important that you put your used needles and syringes in a special sharps container. Do not put them in a trash can. If you do not have a sharps container, call your pharmacist or healthcare provider to get one.

Talk to your pediatrician regarding the use of this medicine in children. While this drug may be prescribed for selected conditions, precautions do apply.

Overdosage: If you think you have taken too much of this medicine contact a poison control center or emergency room at once.

NOTE: This medicine is only for you. Do not share this medicine with others.

What if I miss a dose?
If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only that dose. Do not take double or extra doses.

What should I tell my health care provider before I take this medicine?
They need to know if you have any of these conditions:
• Blood clotting disorders
• Cancer patient not on chemotherapy
• Cystic fibrosis
• Heart disease, such as angina or heart failure
• Hemoglobin level of 12 g/dL or greater
• High blood pressure
• Low levels of folate, iron, or vitamin B12
• Seizures
• An unusual or allergic reaction to erythropoietin, albumin, benzyl alcohol, hamster proteins, other medicines, foods, dyes, or preservatives
• Pregnant or trying to get pregnant
• Breast-feeding

What may interact with this medicine?
Do not take this medicine with any of the following medications:
• Darbepoetin alfa

This list may not describe all possible interactions. Give your health care provider a list of all the medicines, herbs, non-prescription drugs, or dietary supplements you use. Also tell them if you smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs. Some items may interact with your medicine.

What side effects may I notice from receiving this medicine?
Side effects that you should report to your doctor or health care professional as soon as possible:
• Allergic reactions like skin rash, itching or hives, swelling of the face, lips, or tongue
• Breathing problems
• Changes in vision
• Chest pain
• Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
• Feeling faint or lightheaded, falls
• High blood pressure
• Muscle aches or pains
• Pain, swelling, warmth in the leg
• Rapid weight gain
• Severe headaches
• Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg
• Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
• Seizures (convulsions)
• Swelling of the ankles, feet, hands
• Unusually weak or tired

Side effects that usually do not require medical attention (report to your doctor or health care professional if they continue or are bothersome):
• Diarrhea
• Fever, chills (flu-like symptoms)
• Headaches
• Nausea, vomiting
• Redness, stinging, or swelling at site where injected

This list may not describe all possible side effects. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I watch for while using this medicine?

Visit your prescriber or health care professional for regular checks on your progress and for the needed blood tests and blood pressure measurements. It is especially important for the doctor to make sure your hemoglobin level is in the desired range, to limit the risk of potential side effects and to give you the best benefit. Keep all appointments for any recommended tests. Check your blood pressure as directed. Ask your doctor what your blood pressure should be and when you should contact him or her.

As your body makes more red blood cells, you may need to take iron, folic acid, or vitamin B supplements. Ask your doctor or health care provider which products are right for you. If you have kidney disease continue dietary restrictions, even though this medication can make you feel better. Talk with your doctor or health care professional about the foods you eat and the vitamins that you take.

Where should I keep my medicine?

Keep out of the reach of children.

Store in a refrigerator between 2 and 8 degrees C (36 and 46 degrees F). Do not freeze or shake. Throw away any unused portion if using a single-dose vial. Multi-dose vials can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 21 days after the initial dose. Throw away unused medicine.

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