

Medical Oncology

Drug Information Sheet

Epoetin Alpha (Epogen; Procrit; Retacrit): *Epoetin Alpha* is used to treat anemia and lower the need for red blood cell transfusions caused by chronic kidney disease (you may or may not be on dialysis) or some chemotherapy treatments.

How will you get this drug? A Cancer Center nurse will give this drug to you subcutaneously (injection) at the cancer center.

You **MAY OR MAY NOT** experience the side effects listed below

Possible Side Effects:	What to do:
Given when hemoglobin is low. You will get this drug when your hemoglobin level is less than ____.	Your lab values will be checked before each dose.
Nausea/vomiting Decreased appetite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take nausea medicine as instructed. Let your doctor know if it is not working for you. • Eat smaller, frequent meals. • Try liquid nutrition supplements (Boost, Ensure) • A dietitian is available to talk with you.

Less common side effects that may happen	What to do:
For people with cancer:	Your tumor may grow faster and you may die sooner if you choose to take <i>epoetin alpha (Epogen; Procrit; Retacrit)</i> .
Antibodies to <i>epoetin alpha (Epogen; Procrit; Retacrit)</i>	Call your doctor if you have unusual tiredness, lack of energy, dizziness, or fainting.
Serious heart problems (heart attack or heart failure and stroke) Occurs more with hemoglobin greater than 11 g/dL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call your 911 right away if you have any of these symptoms: ○ any shortness of breath or chest discomfort ○ trouble breathing or shortness of breath ○ pain in your legs, with or without swelling ○ a cool or pale arm or leg ○ sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or thinking ○ sudden numbness or weakness in your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body ○ drooping on one side of the face ○ blurred eyesight. ○ sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination ○ loss of consciousness (fainting)

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Less common side effects that may happen	<u>What to do:</u>
Severe skin and mouth reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a moisturizing cream free from alcohol, perfume or dye at least twice a day. • When outside, use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun. • Choose mild soaps. • Call your doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever) or a rash ○ red or irritated eyes ○ sores in your mouth, throat, nose or eyes
Serious allergic reactions	<p>Call 911 and go to the Emergency Department right away if you have any symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trouble breathing • chest tightness • swelling of your face, lips, or tongue <p>Call you doctor if you develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a rash • itching • hives
High Blood Pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let your primary care doctor know that you are taking <i>epoetin alpha</i> (<i>Epogen; Procrit, Retacrit</i>). • Your blood pressure will be checked. • Contact your doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ headaches ○ shortness of breath ○ nosebleeds ○ dizziness or passing out ○ change in eyesight
Seizures	<p>Call you doctor for any new seizure activity or change in seizure frequency.</p>
Blood clots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink 6-8 glasses of water and non-caffeine beverages a day. • Staying active by walking or doing mild exercise can decrease your risk for blood clots. • Call the doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ pain, swelling, redness or warmth in an arm or leg ○ unexplained shortness of breath ○ decreased vision in one eye ○ difficulty speaking ○ chest pain or discomfort ○ unexplained rapid heart rate ○ numbness or weakness on one side of the body.