

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET



ERYTHROPOIETIN

1 ABOUT your medicine?

Erythropoietin is a growth factor that helps your body to make red blood cells. It is used to help treat anaemia (a deficiency of red blood cells) associated with kidney disease, cancer treatment, diseases of the blood and other causes such as drug-induced anaemia. Erythropoietin can be given by injection either into the veins (intravenous) or under the skin (subcutaneous).

Anaemia may make a person feel very tired and weak. It may take several days to weeks to obtain the maximum beneficial effect of erythropoietin. For erythropoietin to work efficiently, you will need adequate amount of iron in your body. Maintain a well balanced diet and discuss the need for iron supplementation with your doctor. Foods rich in iron include meats, green vegetables, cereals and eggs.

2 HOW should I use this medicine?

Your doctor will determine the amount of medicine you should take based on the severity of your condition.

Take this medicine in the dose prescribed by your doctor.

Erythropoietin may be provided in a ready-to-use syringe, or in a vial from which you must draw the medication into a syringe before use.

If you are undergoing renal dialysis, you may be given the medicine after your dialysis sessions. Patients, when necessary, may be taught how to inject under the skin to allow self-injection at home.

For subcutaneous injection (under the skin), the sites of injection can include the U-shape area around the navel, the upper thigh or the buttocks. Rotate the sites daily to prevent any bruising or thickening of the skin.

To inject:

- Wash hands and area for injection clean.
- Pinch a fold in the skin using finger and thumb.
- Inject into the fold. Press plunger of syringe and hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Discard the used syringe and needle in a container to avoid accidental injury.

* Ref: MOH/Eng/034-Mar10

* Erythropoietin

* Keep all medication out of reach of children * Discard all medication that has expired or is no longer required.

3 What should I do If I **FORGET** a dose?

If you miss a dose or forget to inject your medicine, inject as soon as you can. However, if it is almost time for your next injection, wait until then and skip the missed injection. Do not double your injection to make up for a missed injection. If you have missed several injections, please call your physician to check what you should do.

4 What are the possible **SIDE-EFFECTS** of the medicine?

Though uncommon, side-effects can occur. Tell your doctor if any of the following occur:

- Stomach upset
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Bone pain
- Headaches
- Redness, bruising, swelling or pain at the injection sites

Should you experience any of the following, stop the medication and consult your doctor:

- Chest pain
- Swelling
- Vision problems
- Rashes or hives
- Confusion

5 What **PRECAUTIONS** should I take?

Inform your doctor if you have any allergies to erythropoietin or albumin or any other medicines, or if you develop an allergy while taking this medicine. The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following: swollen face/eyes/lips, difficulty in breathing or widespread itchy skin rashes.

Inform your doctor and pharmacist if you are already taking some other medicines, herbal preparations, nutritional products or vitamin supplement. Specifically, inform your doctor if you are taking any medications for high blood pressure (hypertension).

See your doctor if you experience excessive tiredness.

Inform your doctor if you are breast-feeding, pregnant or likely to become pregnant during the course of this treatment.

6 How should I **STORE** the medicine?

Store your medicine in the refrigerator (2⁰C to 8⁰C) BUT do not freeze. The solution should be clear prior to use. Do not shake the medicine excessively.

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