



Erythropoietin (EPO) or Epoetin Alfa (Procrit[®], Epogen[®])

Generic Name: erythropoietin, epoetin alfa

Drug Name: Procrit[®], Epogen[®]

Purpose: Erythropoietin is used to treat anemia. Anemia is a condition that occurs when your body does not make enough red blood cells. Erythropoietin helps your body to make more red blood cells.

How drug is given:

- Injection (shot) under the skin by a nurse.
- A nurse can also teach you or your caregiver to give yourself this injection.

Special Instructions:

- Your healthcare provider will monitor your red blood cell count. You may still need blood transfusions if your red blood cell count is too low.
- Eat foods that are high in iron while taking erythropoietin:
 - eggs
 - meats
 - vegetables
- Your healthcare provider may suggest that you take an iron supplement while taking erythropoietin.

Possible Side Effects:

- high blood pressure
- headaches
- pain at the injection (shot) site
- flu-like symptoms (fever, muscle pain, joint pain)
- diarrhea

Important:

1. You cannot take erythropoietin if you have:
 - a. high blood pressure that is not controlled by medicine.
 - b. an allergy or sensitivity to products that are made from the cells of mammals (such as insulin, human growth hormone, growth factors including drugs that increase your blood cell counts).
 - c. an allergy or sensitivity albumin, a protein found in humans.
2. You should eat foods that are high in iron while taking erythropoietin. Tell your healthcare provider if you would like to speak with a nutritionist.
3. Keep this medicine in the refrigerator. DO NOT put the medicine in the freezer.
4. Make sure the medicine is clear and colorless before you give yourself the injection (shot).
5. DO NOT shake the medicine.