Erythropoietin (also called epoetin, Procrit®, or Epogen®) is used to prevent or treat anemia. It is a colorless liquid that is injected under the skin or given intravenously (IV, for chronic renal patients only). It is available in different strength vials:

- 2,000 unit/ml vial
- 4,000 unit/ml vial
- 10,000 unit/ml vial
- 20,000 unit/ml vial
- 40,000 unit/ml vial

How to give erythropoietin

Under the skin

- A nurse will teach you how to give the injection (shot) under the skin. It is called a subcutaneous or "Sub-Q" injection. Also, see “Do you know… How to give subcutaneous injections” for step-by-step guidelines.
- Your dose is __________ units.
- For each dose, put __________ mls of __________ unit/ml medication into the syringe. Then, after you receive the shot, discard the rest of the medicine. Do not use the same vial of erythropoietin more than one time.
- Always make sure your vials of erythropoietin are all the same strength so you receive the correct dose. Call the nurse or pharmacist if you receive a different strength of erythropoietin.

Intravenous (IV)

- A nurse will teach you how to give the medicine through your central line.
- Your dose is ______________ units.
- For each dose, put __________ mls of erythropoietin into the syringe. After you have it in the syringe, discard the rest of the medicine. Do not use the same vial of erythropoietin more than one time.
- Put __________ mls of saline into a second syringe with needle attached. Add the saline to the syringe containing the erythropoietin.
- Give erythropoietin slowly when using the central line. It should take 1–3 minutes to give the entire dose.
Erythropoietin

- Always make sure your vials of erythropoietin are all the same strength so that you receive the correct dose. Call the nurse or pharmacist if you receive a different strength of erythropoietin.

Possible side effects

- Pain, bruising, or swelling at the injection site (Sub-Q)
- High blood pressure
- Clots in the central line
- Rash
- Muscle aches and bone pain
- Fatigue
- Feeling dizzy
- Headache

These are the most common side effects, but there may be others. Please report all side effects to the doctor or nurse.

In case of a severe side effect or reaction, call the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist at 901-595-3300. If you are outside the Memphis area, dial toll-free 1-866-2STJUDE (1-866-278-5833), and press 0 once the call is connected.

Special instructions

- Your blood pressure will be checked routinely while you are receiving erythropoietin.
- Keep the erythropoietin vials in the refrigerator (do not freeze). Place the vial at room temperature about an hour before the dose is due.
- Do not shake the vial of erythropoietin.
- If you have muscle aches or bone pain while you are receiving erythropoietin, ask your doctor if you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to relieve the pain.