

Information for patients
prescribed **Aranesp®**
(darbepoetin alfa) for
renal anaemia





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A microscopic view of blood cells against a dark red background. Numerous red blood cells, which are biconcave discs, are visible. A few white blood cells, which are larger and spherical with a lighter center, are also present. Small, star-shaped platelets are scattered throughout. Three labels with leader lines point to specific cells: 'Platelets' points to a star-shaped cell, 'White blood cell' points to a large spherical cell, and 'Red blood cell' points to a large biconcave disc.

Platelets

White blood cell

Red blood cell

Why is your kidney disease causing anaemia?

To answer this question, firstly you will need to know what anaemia is...

Your doctor has prescribed Aranesp®

You have been given this booklet because your doctor has prescribed **Aranesp®** for the treatment of anaemia.

This booklet will give you information about renal anaemia and treatment with **Aranesp®**.

Please also read the patient information leaflet that comes with your **Aranesp®** pack. If you have more questions about your treatment with **Aranesp®**, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Anaemia

Normal, healthy blood is vital for health and well-being. There are three main types of blood cells - red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets.

Red blood cells are produced in the bone marrow. They collect oxygen from your lungs and carry it around your body.

If there are not enough red blood cells, you have the condition called “anaemia” and your body quite simply will not receive the oxygen it needs to ensure it works efficiently.

Common symptoms of anaemia:

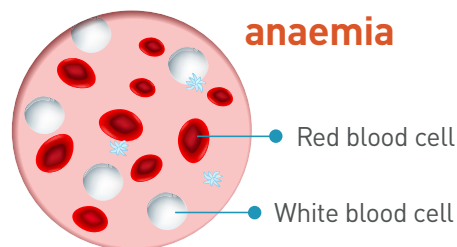
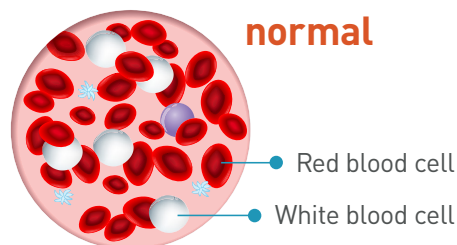
- Loss of energy
- Shortness of breath
- Not being able to carry out your usual everyday tasks
- Changes in your mood
- Not being able to sleep properly
- Pale complexion

The function of haemoglobin

The substance within red blood cells that actually carries the oxygen is called haemoglobin (Hb).

By doing a blood test to measure your Hb level, your doctor can tell how many red blood cells you have. If your Hb level is low, it means that your red blood cell level is low, and you have anaemia.

Symptoms occur when Hb levels are low, because not enough oxygen is being carried around your body.

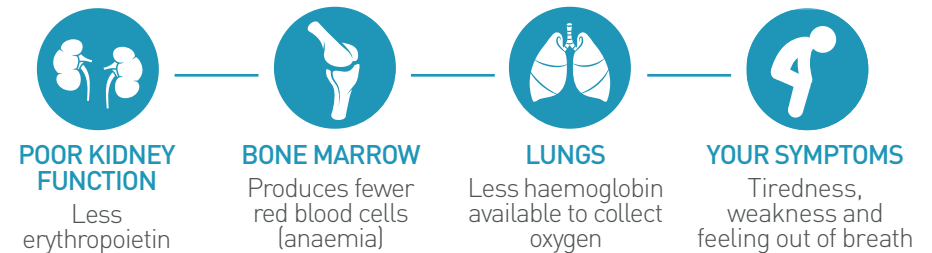


How are your kidneys involved?

Kidneys are responsible for filtering blood, but they also produce a hormone called erythropoietin (EPO).

Erythropoietin controls the production of red blood cells in your bone marrow.

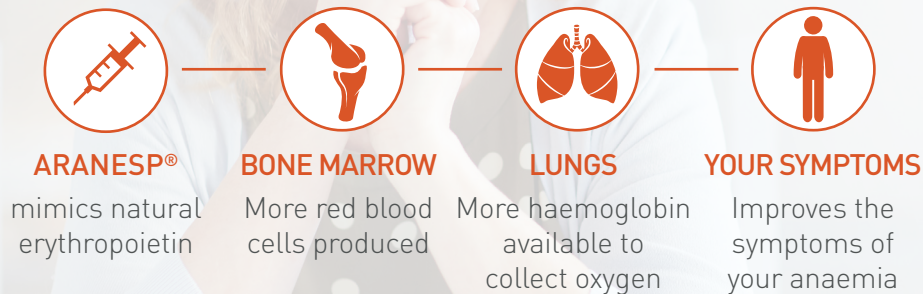
When your kidneys are not working properly, they will produce less erythropoietin than they should. So your condition (doctors call it “renal anaemia”) can be summed up like this:



How does Aranesp® help?

Your doctor or nurse will decide the dose of Aranesp® and how often you need injections. The dose may be changed depending on how well your body responds.

Aranesp® works in the same way as your body's natural erythropoietin by increasing the number of red blood cells that you produce. Aranesp®'s effects can be summed up like this:



Will I have any side effects?

Like all medicines, Aranesp® can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. The following side effects have been experienced by some patients taking Aranesp®:

Very common: may affect more than 1 in 10 people

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Allergic reactions

Common: may affect up to 1 in 10 people

- Stroke
- Pain around the area injected
- Rash and/or redness of the skin

Uncommon: may affect up to 1 in 100 people

- Blood clots (thrombosis)
- Convulsions (fits and seizures)
- Bruising and bleeding at the site of injection
- Blood clots in a dialysis access

Not known: frequency cannot be estimated from available data

- Pure red cell aplasia (PRCA) – (anaemia, unusual tiredness, lack of energy)
- Serious allergic reactions which may include:
 - Sudden life-threatening allergic reactions (anaphylaxis)
 - Swelling of the face, lips, mouth, tongue or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing (angioedema)
 - Shortness of breath (allergic bronchospasm)
 - Skin rash
 - Hives (urticaria)
- Serious skin rashes including Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS) and toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN) have been reported in association with epoetin treatment. These can appear as reddish target-like spots or circular patches often with central blisters on the trunk, skin peeling, ulcers of mouth, throat, nose, genitals and eyes (red and swollen eyes) and can be preceded by fever and flu-like symptoms. The rashes may progress to widespread peeling of the skin and life-threatening complications. **Stop using Aranesp® if you develop these symptoms and contact your doctor or seek medical attention immediately.**

Other special warnings:

- If you have symptoms which include unusual tiredness and a lack of energy this could mean you have pure red cell aplasia (PRCA), which has been reported in patients. PRCA means that the body has stopped or reduced the production of red blood cells which causes severe anaemia. If you experience these symptoms you should contact your doctor who will determine the best course of action to treat your anaemia.
- If you have symptoms which include severe headache, drowsiness, confusion, problems with your eyesight, nausea, vomiting or fits (seizures), it could mean that you have very high blood pressure. If you experience these symptoms you should contact your doctor.

Please refer to the patient information leaflet found in your Aranesp® pack or available on <https://www.medicines.ie/medicines/list/all/page-1/per-page-25?query=aranesp> for a complete list of special warnings. If you have any questions or concerns about side effects, please talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

When will I feel better?

Your symptoms will improve gradually with Aranesp®.

It takes a while for your body to make enough red blood cells to replace the ones it has lost, so you may not feel an effect for about four weeks.

What happens if I forget to take Aranesp®?

You should not worry, as the symptoms of anaemia usually return slowly. However, you should get in touch with your doctor or nurse as soon as possible to talk about when you should take your next dose.

How should Aranesp® be stored?

Aranesp® is a medicine, which means it has to be stored correctly. Just follow these simple steps.

1. Always keep your **Aranesp®** in the fridge at a temperature between 2°C and 8°C.
2. Never freeze your **Aranesp®**.
3. Always keep your **Aranesp®** in its outer packaging to protect it from light.
4. If you accidentally leave your **Aranesp®** out of the fridge, please contact your nurse or pharmacist for advice.



Remember

- Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.
- Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of used syringes.
- Properly dispose of syringe after use.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE REFER TO THE PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET THAT CAME WITH YOUR MEDICINE.

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the patient leaflet. Side effects can be reported directly to the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) using the available methods via www.hpra.ie. Side effects should also be reported to Amgen Limited on +44 (0) 1223 436441 or Freephone 1800 535 160. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

If you think there may be a defect or quality issue with the Amgen product you have received, please call us on +44 (0) 1223 436441 or Freephone 1800 535 160 and provide us with the details. Please ensure that you keep your packaging, so we are able to identify your product more easily.