

Aranesp (darbepoetin alfa) is a man-made protein that helps your body produce red blood cells (RBC's). This protein may be reduced because of kidney failure or with use of certain medications. When fewer red blood cells are produced, you can develop a condition called **anemia**.

Aranesp is used to treat anemia caused by chemotherapy or chronic kidney disease.

How do I take Aranesp?

- Aranesp is injected under the skin, it is given most often in clinic by a nurse or doctor.
- It is given every 1 to 4 weeks depending on the condition being treated and as prescribed by your doctor.
- You may need frequent medical tests to be sure that there are no harmful effects from the use of Aranesp. Your injections may be delayed based on the results of these tests.
- If you need to have surgery, make your surgeon aware that you are using Aranesp. You may need to stop using for a period of time.

What drugs interact with Aranesp?

Other drugs may interact with Aranesp including:

- Prescription and over-the-counter medicines
- Vitamins
- Herbal products

Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use now and any medicine you start or stop using.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before using Aranesp?

1. You should not use this medication if you are allergic to Aranesp; or if allergic to Epogen or Procrit (epoetin alfa)
2. To make sure that Aranesp is safe for you, tell your healthcare provider if you have:
 - Heart disease, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure
 - Kidney disease (or if you are on dialysis)
 - A history of stroke, heart attack, or blood clots
 - A blood cell or clotting disorder, such as sickle cell anemia or hemophilia
 - Cancer
 - A seizure disorder
 - Allergy to latex

What side effects occur with Aranesp?

Get emergency medical help if you have signs of an allergic reaction such as:

- Hives
- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat

Aranesp can increase your risk of life-threatening heart or circulation problems, including heart attack or stroke. This risk will increase the longer you take Aranesp.

When should I call for help?

If you experience any of the symptoms below, seek emergency medical help.

1. **Heart attack** symptoms including:
 - Chest pain or pressure
 - Nausea
 - pain spreading to your jaw or shoulder
 - Sweating

2. **Stroke** symptoms including:

- Sudden numbness or weakness (especially on one side of the body),
- Sudden severe headache
- Slurred speech
- Problems with vision or balance

3. **Blood clot** symptoms in your leg including:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Warmth
- Redness in one or both legs

4. Signs of **dangerously high blood pressure** including:

- Severe headache
- Blurred vision
- Pounding in your neck or ears
- Nosebleed
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Severe chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Irregular heartbeats

Call your doctor at once if you have:

1. A lightheaded feeling, like you might pass out
2. Unusual weakness or tiredness
3. A seizure (convulsions); or
4. Shortness of breath (even with mild exertion), swelling, rapid weight gain.

Common side effects:

1. High blood pressure
2. Cough, trouble breathing
3. Stomach pain
4. Swelling in your hands or feet

These are some of the most common side effects experienced while taking **Aranesp**:

Common side effects	What can I do?	When should I call the clinic?
Abdominal (stomach) Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) as needed. Do not take more than 2,000 mg per day • Manage constipation or diarrhea if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to stay hydrated • Severe pain or pain that is associated with a sudden change in bowel habits nausea/vomiting
Cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cough medications as directed by clinic • Stay hydrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your symptoms do not go away and are interfering with your daily activities

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