

Darbepoetin Alfa

Care Team Contact Information: _____

Pharmacy Contact Information: _____

Diagnosis: _____

- This treatment is used to treat anemia. People with anemia have a lower-than-normal number of red blood cells.
- It may also be used for other reasons.

Goal of Treatment: _____

- Treatment may continue for a certain time period, until it no longer works, or until side effects are no longer controlled.

Treatment Regimen

Treatment Name	How the Treatment Works	How the Treatment is Given
Darbepoetin Alfa (dar-bee-POH-ee-tin AL-fuh): Aranesp (AYR-uh-nesp)	Helps the body make more red blood cells.	Injection given under the skin into the thigh, stomach area (abdomen), upper outer area of your buttocks, or outer area of your upper arm.

Treatment Administration and Schedule: Treatment is typically repeated weekly or every 2 or 3 weeks. This length of time is called a “cycle”. Your care team may change the frequency of your dosing during your treatment.

If You or Your Caregiver has been Trained to Give Darbepoetin Alfa Injections at Home

Your darbepoetin alfa dosing instructions:

- Be sure that you read, understand, and follow the "Instructions for Use" that come with darbepoetin alfa prescription.
- Take darbepoetin alfa exactly as your care team tells you to. Do not change the dose of darbepoetin alfa unless told to do so by your care team.
- Your care team will show you how much darbepoetin alfa to use, how to inject it, how often it should be injected, and how to safely throw away the used vials, syringes, and needles.
- If you miss a dose of darbepoetin alfa, call your care team right away and ask what to do.
- If you take more than the prescribed dose of darbepoetin alfa, call your healthcare provider right away.

If You or Your Caregiver has been Trained to Give Darbepoetin Alfa Injections at Home (Continued)

Storage and Handling of Darbepoetin Alfa

- Store darbepoetin alfa in the carton it comes in to protect it from light.
- Store darbepoetin alfa in the refrigerator between 36°F to 46°F (2°C to 8°C).
- Do not freeze darbepoetin alfa. Do not use darbepoetin alfa that has been frozen.
- Do not shake darbepoetin alfa.
- Throw away the darbepoetin alfa vial or prefilled syringe after one use. Do not re-use even if there is medicine left.
- Keep darbepoetin alfa and all medicines out of the reach of children and pets.

Appointments: Appointments may include regular check-ups with your care team, treatment appointments, lab visits, and imaging tests. It's important to keep your appointments whenever you can. If you miss any appointments, call your care provider as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
High Blood Pressure	<p>Description: Treatment can cause high blood pressure. It usually has no symptoms and can be dangerous if not treated. High blood pressure increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, and other health problems.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise regularly, control your weight, and limit alcohol and sodium intake. • If you are already being treated for high blood pressure, your care team may change your blood pressure medicine. • Your care team may ask you to track your blood pressure. <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches • Dizziness or lightheadedness • Blurred vision • Trouble breathing • Nose bleeds • A pounding sensation in the chest, neck, or ears • Irregular heartbeats • Chest pain or pressure

Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms		
Increased Tumor Growth Rate (Boxed Warning)	Your tumor may grow faster and you may die sooner if you choose to take darbepoetin alfa. Your care team will talk with you about these risks.		
Heart Problems (Boxed Warning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swelling of your stomach-area (abdomen), legs, hands, feet, or ankles Shortness of breath Nausea or vomiting New or worsening chest discomfort, including pain or pressure Weight gain Pain or discomfort in your arms, back, neck, or jaw Protruding neck veins Breaking out in a cold sweat Feeling lightheaded or dizzy 		
Blood Clots (Boxed Warning)	Signs or symptoms of a blood clot in the lung, arm, or leg may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortness of breath Chest pain Arm or leg swelling 	Signs and symptoms of a heart attack may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest pain that may spread to the arms, neck, jaw, back, or stomach area (abdomen) Feeling sweaty Shortness of breath Feeling sick or vomiting 	Signs or symptoms of a stroke may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body Severe headache or confusion Problems with vision, speech, or balance
Antibodies to Darbepoetin Alfa	Your body may make antibodies to darbepoetin alfa. These antibodies can block or lessen your body's ability to make RBCs and cause you to have severe anemia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unusual tiredness Lack of energy Dizziness Fainting 		
Seizure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden uncontrollable jerking movements Loss of consciousness Confusion or "staring spells" Muscle stiffness Repetitive movements (such as lip-smacking) Sensory disturbances (like tingling or auras) Postictal confusion (a state of confusion after the seizure) 		
Severe Skin Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A red, itchy, skin rash Peeling of your skin or blisters Severe itching Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher 		
Allergic Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skin rash Itching Shortness of breath Wheezing Dizziness and fainting because of a drop in blood pressure Swelling around your mouth or eyes Fast pulse Sweating 		

Before starting treatment, ask your care team when to call 9-1-1 or seek emergency help.

If you experience any new, worsening, or uncontrolled side effects, contact your care team immediately.

Intimacy, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding

- Treatment may **change how you feel about intimacy and your body**. However, physical closeness—such as holding hands and hugging—remains safe. It is common to have questions about intimacy. If needed, talk to your care team for guidance.
- It is **not known** if darbepoetin alfa **may harm your unborn baby**. Talk to your care team about possible pregnancy and birth control choices that are right for you.
- It is **not known** if darbepoetin alfa **passes into breast milk**.

Additional Information

- **Tell your care team about all the medicines you take.**
This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbal products. Before starting any new medicine, supplement, or vaccine, ask your care team first.
- **This Patient Education Sheet may not describe all possible side effects.**
Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Notes

Updated Date: January 27, 2026

Scan the QR code below to access this education sheet.



Important notice: The Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources.

This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. All decisions related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

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