

# Epoetin alfa

*eh-POH-ee-tin*

**Brand Name:** Epogen, Procrit

**Drug Class:** Opportunistic Infection and Other Drugs

Epoetin alfa is a man-made version of human erythropoietin (EPO). EPO is produced naturally in the body, mostly by the kidneys. It stimulates the bone marrow to produce red blood cells. If the body does not produce enough EPO, severe anemia can occur. This often occurs in people whose kidneys are not working properly. Epoetin is used to treat severe anemia in these people. Epoetin may also be used to prevent or treat anemia caused by cancer, surgery, or certain medications.

## HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

HIV infected people who take zidovudine (Retrovir) sometimes become anemic. Epoetin alfa is used to treat anemia that is related to zidovudine treatment.

## Dosage Form/Administration

Epoetin alfa comes in liquid form and is given by injection under the skin or into a vein.

## Contraindications

Individuals should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking this medicine. Individuals who have bone problems; blood problems, including a history of blood clots; a deficiency of folic acid, iron, or vitamin B12; heart or blood vessel disease; high blood pressure; history of seizures; or sickle cell anemia should tell a doctor before receiving this medicine.

## Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, epoetin alfa may cause some serious unwanted effects. A doctor should be notified right away of side effects that include chest pain or trouble breathing. A doctor should also be notified of any of the following: fast heartbeat; headache; high blood pressure; swelling of face, fingers, lower legs, ankles, or feet; vision problems; and weight gain. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have any of these side effects.

Other side effects usually are not serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of the medicine. Less serious side effects of this medicine include bone pain, congestion in the lungs, cough, diarrhea, fever, headache, itching or stinging where injection was given, loss of energy, nausea or vomiting, muscle weakness, skin rash or hives, tiredness, and weakness. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are

bothersome.

## Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), and herbal medications.

## Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Epoetin alfa, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Epoetin alfa AND HIV Infections.

## Manufacturer Information

Epoetin alfa  
Ortho Biotech  
P.O. Box 6914  
430 Rt. 22 East  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807-0914  
(800) 682-6532

Procrit  
Ortho Biotech  
P.O. Box 6914  
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Epogen  
Amgen Inc  
1840 Dehavilland Dr  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320-1799  
(800) 772-6436

# ***Epoetin alfa***



## **For More Information**

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Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: [http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live\\_help](http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help) Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET