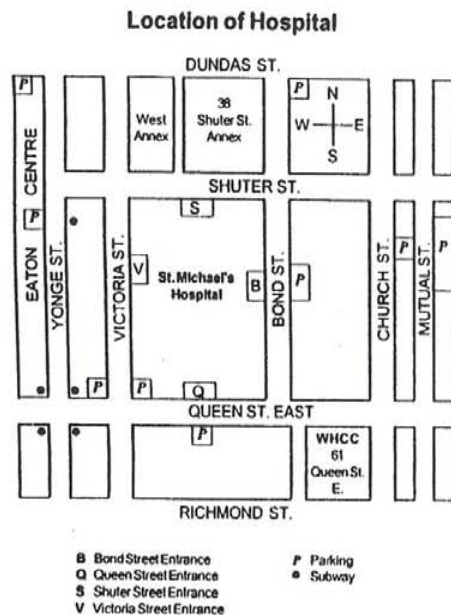


The Location...

Blood Transfusion Services, located at the 2nd floor, Victoria Wing



Blood Transfusion Services
St. Michael's Hospital
30 Bond Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5B 1W8

tel: (416) 864-5084

Form NO. 69130 Dev. 11/2000



Blood Conservation Programme

Information for Patients
About Erythropoietin

What does the Erythropoietin injection contain?

Erythropoietin Sterile Solution is a clear, colourless solution containing Erythropoietin (EPREX* epoetin alpha) as the active ingredient. Inactive ingredients contained in the sterile solution are albumin (human) or glycine and polysorbate 80 as stabilizers, sodium chloride, water for injection and either sodium citrate and citric acid, or sodium phosphate. Single and pre-filled syringes do not contain preservatives. The 20,000IU/ml multi-use vial contains benzyl alcohol as a preservative.

What is Erythropoietin?

Erythropoietin is a protein made in the laboratory which acts like a substance naturally made in the human body called Erythropoietin. Erythropoietin controls the production of red blood cells in the body.

What is Erythropoietin used for?

Erythropoietin is used to increase the production of red blood cells. It may be used in adults with kidney disease, adults who have HIV-infection and are receiving a drug called zidovudine (AZT), adult cancer patients, and adults scheduled to undergo major elective surgery.

Before taking Erythropoietin:

- Tell your doctor about medical problems and about any allergies you have, or have had in the past.
- You should **NOT** use Erythropoietin if you are allergic to any of the ingredients in the product.
- Tell your doctor if you have or have had high blood pressure, seizures, blood clots, liver disease, porphyria, or gout.
- While you are treated with Erythropoietin your doctor will need to check your blood pressure. Your blood pressure will be monitored carefully and any changes outside of the guidelines that your doctor has given you must be reported. If your blood pressure increases, you may need medication to lower it. If you already take blood pressure medication, your doctor may increase the amount.
- Your doctor will also measure your serum iron levels, red blood cell levels, and other factors in your blood, prior to starting and during treatment with Erythropoietin, as deemed appropriate.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, if you think you might be pregnant, or if you are trying to become pregnant.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast feeding.
- Tell your doctor about all medications you are using, including those obtained without a prescription, and any other remedies or dietary supplements. It is especially important that your doctor know if you are taking high blood pressure medication.

How should I use Erythropoietin?

Erythropoietin Sterile Solution is injected under the skin (subcutaneously) into the arms, legs or abdomen. While you are receiving Erythropoietin (epoetin alpha), your doctor will measure your red blood cells, in order to decide the best dose for you.

What undesirable effects may Erythropoietin have?

Any medicine may have unwanted effects. The side effects you might experience vary depending on the reason you are taking this medication. Tell your doctor or nurse about any unusual signs or symptoms whether listed below or not.

The most often reported side effects in all patients receiving Erythropoietin are:

- Flu-like symptoms such as dizziness, drowsiness, fever, headache, muscle and joint pain and weakness
- Redness, burning and pain at the site of injection
- Gastrointestinal disturbances (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)
- Additional side effects which have been reported more often in patients with kidney disease than other patients include:
 - ♦ Increased blood pressure
 - ♦ Clotting of the hemodialysis equipment
 - ♦ Changes in blood tests
 - ♦ Blood clots
 - ♦ Seizures

Be sure to tell your doctor if you have an increase in headaches, or develop unusual headaches as this may be a sign of increased blood pressure.

There is a possible association of a worsening of increased blood pressure if red cell production occurs too rapidly. Your doctor may need to reduce or withhold your dose of Erythropoietin and initiate or increase blood pressure medication. Tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing any of the following: chest pain, shortness of breath, an increase in headaches or unusual headaches, lightheadedness.

If you develop signs of allergy such as difficulty breathing, hives, itching, rash, or swelling of the throat, face eyelids, mouth or tongue, discontinue the use of Erythropoietin and contact your doctor, or obtain medical help immediately.

It is important to recognize that administration of Erythropoietin may be a useful approach to reduce the need for transfusion of allogeneic donor blood. Other associated approaches may also be useful, but use of these measures does not exclude the possibility that allogeneic blood transfusions may be required, should there be a significant loss of blood at, or following surgery.

It is important to recognize that this is not necessarily the optimal therapy for all patients.

It is also important to recognize that if the hospital is not able to provide Erythropoietin for patients. If you are a suitable candidate, we will work with you to obtain Erythropoietin via your insurance plan. Alternatively, patients may purchase this product on their own.
