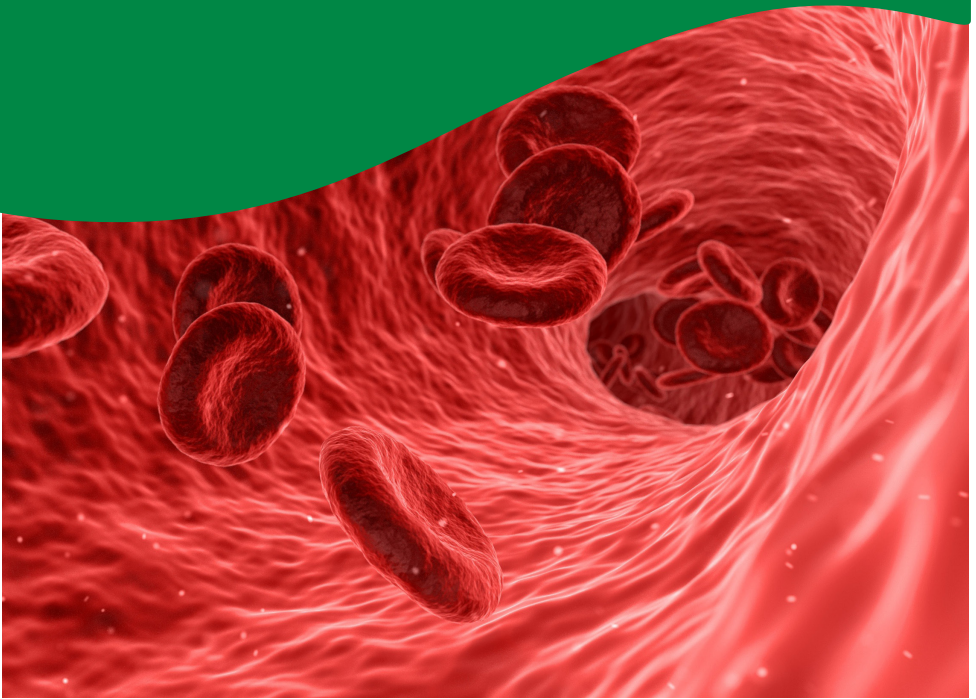


# Aranesp injections for Anaemia

Information for patients

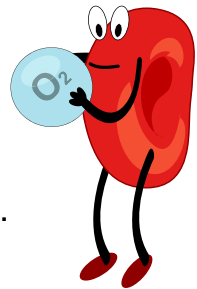


Abdominal Medicine  
and Surgery

You have been asked to start monthly Aranesp injections for Anaemia. This booklet has been designed to help you understand why you have been started on Aranesp and what you need to know to give yourselves these injections safely at home

## What is Anaemia?

Anaemia occurs when there are not enough red blood cells to carry oxygen from the lungs to places it is needed around the body. This is common in patients with chronic kidney disease.



## Why have I been asked to start Aranesp?

Patients with chronic kidney disease often suffer from anaemia as failing kidneys do not produce enough of the hormone erythropoietin (EPO).

This hormone stimulates the bone marrow to produce red blood cells in the body which carry haemoglobin (Hb). Haemoglobin carries oxygen around the body.

The Renal team at St James's Hospital monitors your haemoglobin level and aims for a Haemoglobin level of 100 to 120(g/L). If your Haemoglobin drops below 100, Aranesp may be prescribed by the renal service.

Aranesp is a ESA (erythropoiesis stimulating agent) and increases the production of the red blood cells

## How do I know I am anaemic?

Common symptoms are tiredness, shortness of breath and palpitations. Some people may also become irritable and frustrated at the difficulty experienced in doing their daily tasks.

## What should this drug do for me?

Aranesp injections will increase your haemoglobin level, correcting the symptoms of anaemia. You should feel less tired and have more energy and your appetite should improve. It does not cure your kidney disease but helps manage the symptoms of anaemia.

## Will I need extra blood tests?

The blood tests you have approximately every three to four months when you attend a renal clinic appointment, are sufficient to monitor how well the Aranesp is working. If we require any extra blood tests the renal team will let you know.

## How much will I need?

We aim for the drug to be given under the skin as an injection every 4 weeks (monthly) but this may change when we adjust the dose. The drug comes in different strengths in prefilled syringes or dosing pens.

The renal team at St James are responsible for prescribing and monitoring the drug and will inform you of any changes. They will also inform your GP practice.

## How do I get the drug?

The home delivery company will ring you and arrange a date and time for delivery. When it arrives, the small box will have 4 Aranesp syringes inside or 4 small boxes with a dosing pen inside. **These must be stored in your fridge until required.**

## How should Aranesp be stored?

Always keep your Aranesp in the fridge at a temperature between 2 - 8oC.

To reduce the pain at the injection site please take one dose out of the fridge approximately 30 minutes before giving.

If you accidentally leave the Aranesp out of the fridge, **DO NOT** put back in the fridge. Ring the renal team for advice.

## I am already on iron tablets for anaemia is this the same?

No your body also needs iron to produce the haemoglobin as the haem in haemoglobin is iron. This will help maintain your iron stores but does not stimulate your body to produce red blood cells. You can continue to take the iron tablets as prescribed. You may also be asked to attend the Renal Intervention Centre (RIC) for an iron infusion either after a clinic if at St James's or staff from RIC will ring you to make an appointment. This should only be once or twice a year depending on your ferritin levels (stored iron).

## Why do I have to take my blood pressure?

Aranesp can cause blood pressure (BP) to rise in some patients. We ask you to check your blood pressure before you give your injection.

If your BP is above **180/95** do not give the Aranesp. Inform your renal nurses. Your blood pressure will need to be treated by your GP or renal specialist.

Please purchase your own BP machine; these can be purchased from chemists and Amazon for around £20. (the use of smart watches is not appropriate)

## Are there any side effects?

As well as the possibility of high blood pressure as detailed above, you may experience injection site pain. Skin rash and redness around the injection site are rare. Some may experience nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea.

Any hypersensitivity reactions/severe rash needs to be reported to the renal service please do not give any further injections. (If you develop an all over body rash please seek medical attention at A&E. This is very rare)

## When should I feel better?

Your symptoms will improve gradually with Aranesp. It takes a while for your body to make enough red blood cells, so you may not feel an effect for about four to six weeks.

## Useful contact numbers

**Pre dialysis team - 0113 206 6719**

**Nephrology nurses - 0113 206 7185**

**J48 (24 hours) - 0113 206 9148**

**Peritoneal Dialysis - 0113 206 5756**

**RIC - 0113 206 4370**





## What did you think of your care?

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