

# Darbepoetin Alfa (Aranesp<sup>®</sup>)

Darbepoetin alfa is a medicine used to treat low red blood cells in patients who receive chemotherapy or who have chronic kidney disease. It can also be used to reduce the need for blood transfusions.

## How Is It Given?

- by injection just under the skin (subcutaneous injection)
- clear liquid by IV (intravenous)

## What Side Effects May Occur?

This is a partial list of the side effects you may have with this medicine. You may have some, all or none of those listed, or you may have other side effects not listed. Most side effects last only a short time.

### Common:

- fatigue
- dizziness
- fever
- nausea (feel like throwing up) or vomiting (throwing up)
- diarrhea (loose stools) or constipation
- swelling
- high blood pressure

### Less common:

- muscle or joint pain
- injection site pain or discomfort
- headache
- risk of developing blood clots

## Special Notes

- Darbepoetin alfa will be given as an injection every two weeks. A health care provider will give the medicine but you or a family member can be taught how to give it.
- You should not receive this medicine if you have high blood pressure that is not under control.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or have a bleeding disorder.
- Your blood will have to be checked regularly while on this medicine.
- You may need to take iron supplements or other nutritional supplements.
- If you are going to receive this medicine at home, you should understand the following:
  - Never shake the vial.
  - Store the vial in your refrigerator.
  - Use the vial, syringe and needle only once then throw away in a closed, hard container.
  - Each time you give the injection, use a different area of your body.

**(over)**

## When To Call Your Doctor

You should call your doctor if you have:

- itching, hives or rash
- swelling in hands, feet, mouth or throat
- shortness of breath
- chest pain or tightness
- chills, fever, or sore throat.

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you want more complete medicine information or if you have questions.