Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Methoxy Polyethylene Glycol-Epoetin Beta

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Mircera

## Warning

- This drug may raise the chance of heart attack, stroke, heart failure, blood clots, and death. Talk with the doctor.
- People with some types of cancer have died sooner when using this drug. This drug also raised the chance of tumor growth and the tumor happening again in these people. Talk with the doctor.
- Your doctor will need to watch your blood cell counts and follow you closely to change the dose to match your body's needs. Talk with your doctor.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat anemia in certain people.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have high blood pressure.
- If you have a kind of anemia called Pure Red Cell Aplasia (PRCA).
- If you have anemia caused by chemo or if you need a blood transfusion to treat anemia.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- If you will be having surgery, talk with your doctor. You may need to take another drug to keep you from getting blood clots while you get this drug. The risk of death may also be raised in patients having bypass surgery.
- High blood pressure has happened with this drug. Have your blood pressure checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not take more than what your doctor told you. This may raise the chance of severe side effects. Call your doctor right away if you take more of this drug than what your doctor told you.

- This drug raises the amount of red blood cells in the blood. Sometimes, this type of drug has been abused and misused. Doing so can lead to severe health problems like stroke, heart attack, and blood clots. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

## What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of high potassium levels like a heartbeat that does not feel normal; feeling confused; feeling weak, lightheaded, or dizzy; feeling like passing out; numbness or tingling; or shortness of breath.
- Signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI) like blood in the urine, burning or pain when passing urine, feeling the need to pass urine often or right away, fever, lower stomach pain, or pelvic pain.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Cool or pale arm or leg.
- Dizziness or passing out.

- A fast heartbeat.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Seizures.
- Trouble walking.
- Change in balance.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Call your doctor right away if you have signs of a blood clot like chest pain or pressure; coughing up blood; shortness of breath; swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm; or trouble speaking or swallowing.
- A severe skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause severe health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in your mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

## What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Diarrhea or constipation.
- Throwing up.
- Nose or throat irritation.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Headache.
- Muscle spasm.
- Back pain.
- Stomach pain.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh or the belly area.
- This drug may be given into the outer area of the upper arm if given by someone else.
- It may be given into a vein by a doctor or other health care provider.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- If stored in a refrigerator, let this drug come to room temperature before using it. Leave it at room temperature for about 30 minutes. Do not heat this drug.
- Do not shake.
- Do not use if it has been shaken.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not give into skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, scaly, hard, scarred, or has stretch marks.
- Do not give into a mole.

- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Do not use pressure (waist band or belt) on the part where the shot is given.
- Do not mix with other liquids.
- This drug is colorless to a faint yellow. Do not use if the solution changes color.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use this drug if it has been dropped or if it is broken.
- Do not use if it has been frozen.
- Do not rub the site where you give the shot.
- Throw syringe away after use. Do not use the same syringe more than one time.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

## How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Store in the original container to protect from light.
- If needed, you may store at room temperature up to 77°F (25°C) for up to 30 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 30 days, throw this drug away.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you

have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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