

Anaemia and Kidney Disease

Contents

- What is anaemia?
- Treatment of anaemia
- Storage of erythropoietin therapy

What is Anaemia?

Anaemia having too few circulating red blood cells. Red blood cells are responsible for carrying oxygen to all parts of the body. People with anaemia may feel tired and breathless and may not have enough energy for normal work or exercise.

There are many causes of anaemia, but it is common in patients with renal problems because the kidneys produce a hormone called erythropoietin (EPO) (Pronounced: eree-thro-poy-eetin). EPO tells the bone marrow to make more red cells.

Treatment of Anaemia

Iron supplements:

Sometimes you are short of iron which can make anaemia worse. We can replace iron either by adding iron tablets (eg Ferrogradumet®), or by intravenous injection. We usually give this by intravenous infusion over a number of hours or during haemodialysis.

EPO:

Your doctor may discuss a synthetic form of EPO (eg darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp®)). This is injected under the skin or into the dialysis machine to boost the red blood cell count and try to improve your symptoms and avoid the need for any blood transfusions.

Storage of erythropoietin therapy is very important

Erythropoietin injections needs to be stored in the refrigerator (between 2° and 8° C), away from light. After you collect your syringes from pharmacy, you need to keep the injections cold on the trip home. Insulated containers (small eskies) to take your injections home can be provided by the Pharmacy Department.

If the injections are left out of the refrigerator for more than eight hours or if the injections are accidentally frozen they should be discarded and not injected. Questions about transporting or storing the erythropoietin injections can be answered by contacting the Hospital Pharmacy.

If you are admitted to hospital please bring all your medications including your erythropoietin. This allows an accurate medication history to be established.

Contact

RMH Pharmacy /RMH Kidney Care Service
9342 7782

Practitioner / Patient notes

RMH Kidney Care | KCS06.02.01 | Director of Nephrology | Reviewed Apr 2014



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