

Darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp)

Erythropoietin (rHuEpo) has been recognized for several decades as a hormone, but its use as a therapeutic agent in patients with renal failure has been confined to slightly longer than 10 years

Darbepoetin alfa is a new recombinant erythropoietic protein with a 3-fold longer half-life than recombinant human erythropoietin (rHuEpo).

Epoegen Initial Dose for Non-Oncology Patients:

50-100 units/kg SC three times a week

Darbepoetin alfa Initial Dose for Non-Oncology Patients:

0.45 mcg/kg SC every week. Round to the nearest vial size (25 mcg if < 70 kg or 40 mcg if > 70 kg).

0.75 mcg/kg SC every other week. Round to the nearest vial size (40 mcg if < 70 kg or 60 mcg if > 70 kg).

Darbepoetin alfa Conversion Chart, Non-Oncology Patients		
Darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp™) once weekly dose†	Nephrology weekly dose ranges for epoetin alfa (Epoegen®, Procrit®)	Non-nephrology typical weekly epoetin alfa doses
6.25 mcg	< 2500 units	
12.5 mcg	2500 – 4999 units	
25 mcg	5000 – 10, 999 units	10,000 units
40 mcg	11, 000 – 17, 999 units	
60 mcg	18, 000 – 33, 999 units	20,000 units
100 mcg	34,000 – 59, 999 units	40,000 units
150 mcg	60, 000 – 89,999 units	≥ 60,000 units
200 mcg	≥ 90,000 units	

Bold indicates available darbepoetin vial size.

† Nephrology Service routinely doses darbepoetin alfa every other week in patients previously treated with epoetin alfa. Based on the patient's response, darbepoetin alfa may be administered as infrequently as **once every three (3) or four (4) weeks**.

Goal of darbepoetin alfa therapy is to achieve and maintain a target hemoglobin not to exceed 12 g/dL.

Increases in dose should not be made more frequently than once a month

If the hemoglobin exceeds 12 g/dL, doses should be temporarily withheld until the hemoglobin begins to decrease, at which point therapy should be reinitiated at a dose approximately 25% below the previous dose.

If the hemoglobin increases by more than 1 g/dL in a 2-week period, the dose should be decreased by approximately 25%.