

Starting ESA (Erythropoiesis Stimulating Agent) Injections

You have been advised to start an injection to treat anaemia (a low red blood cell count). This injection is called darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp). It is usually given every two weeks but we will confirm the frequency with you.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Three leaflets are enclosed. One about the injection, one on how it is given and the third is about the delivery company (Polarspeed) that delivers them to your home.

What needs to happen now?

1. Please sign the consent form regarding data protection and return it in the addressed envelope enclosed (unless you handed it in during your clinic visit).
2. Your renal nurse and doctor will write the prescription dosage according to your weight.
3. You will get a phone call from Polarspeed in approximately **21 working days** from the time your prescription is written. They will give you a delivery date for the injection stock to arrive at your home. Please be at home for this delivery time otherwise the hospital is fined for a failed delivery.
4. On delivery, **put the injections into your fridge**. Each time an injection is due, take one out of the box and wait for it to get to room temperature before you give it (warm it by removing it from the fridge and waiting around 20 minutes. Do not use any other method to warm it). You can start the injections as soon as they arrive.

Who will give the injection?

This should be discussed with your renal nurse. The options are:

1. Give it to yourself (this is the most common method). We can arrange to see you to show you how to give it. It's a small injection under the skin either into your abdomen or thigh. (If you are on insulin, it is given the same way.)
2. We can write a letter to your GP Practice Nurse asking them to give it. You will need to arrange an appointment at your surgery as advised.
3. District nurses can be requested to come to your house **but only if you are housebound** or needing their services already for another treatment.

What should you do now?

1. Call us if you have any questions or concerns.
2. **Please call us when the stock arrives.**
3. **We usually recommend having a blood test to review effectiveness of the treatment approximately after the second injection.** This will be discussed with you when you call us.,
4. Once established on treatment you agree to a blood test at least every three months. Without results we cannot prescribe again.

Please call **Catherine Maina / Emma Bradshaw** (Renal Nurse Specialist) on 020 8725 3856.

Useful sources of information

[Anaemia and chronic kidney disease | Kidney Care UK](#)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about this treatment, please contact **Catherine Maina / Emma Bradshaw** (Renal Nurse Specialists) on 020 8725 3856. (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm). Out of hours, please contact 020 8725 1080

You can also call the switchboard on 020 8725 1000 and ask for Bleep number 7125 on Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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