

# Erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (epoetin and darbepoetin) for treating anaemia in people with cancer having chemotherapy

Information for the public

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[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## What has NICE said?

Erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (epoetin alfa, beta, theta and zeta, and darbepoetin alfa) are recommended as possible treatments for anaemia in people having chemotherapy to treat cancer.

## What does this mean for me?

If you have anaemia and are having chemotherapy to treat cancer, and your doctor thinks that an erythropoiesis-stimulating agent is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Erythropoiesis-stimulating agents should be available on the NHS within 3 months of the guidance being issued.

## Why has NICE said this?

Erythropoiesis-stimulating agents were recommended because the benefits to patients justify their costs.

NICE looks at how well treatments work in relation to how much they cost compared with other treatments available on the NHS.

## The condition and the treatment

Anaemia is a condition in which a person doesn't have enough red cells in their blood to carry oxygen around the body. Sometimes anaemia can be caused by chemotherapy or radiotherapy treatment for cancer.

An erythropoiesis-stimulating agent is a synthetic version of a hormone that encourages the body to make more red blood cells. There are several erythropoiesis-stimulating agents available: epoetin alfa (also known as Eprex and Binocrit), epoetin beta (NeoRecormon), epoetin theta (Eporatio), epoetin zeta (Retacrit) and darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp).

NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) may be a good place to find out more.

## Sources of advice and support

- Leukaemia Cancer Society, 020 8374 4821, [www.leukaemiacancersociety.org](http://www.leukaemiacancersociety.org)
- Leukaemia CARE, 0808 801 0444, [www.leukaemiacare.org.uk](http://www.leukaemiacare.org.uk)
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000, [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)
- Myeloma UK, 0800 980 3332, [www.myeloma.org.uk](http://www.myeloma.org.uk)
- Target Ovarian Cancer, 020 7923 5470, [www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk)

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## Accreditation

