
Kidney Disease: Taking Iron for Anemia

Your body needs plenty of iron to make red blood cells. Because of this, most people who take epoetin alfa (EPO) need extra iron. EPO is the injection that people with kidney disease take to boost their red blood cells. Iron can be given in pill form or by I.V. (intravenous). Some people receive it both ways.

Take iron as directed

If you take iron pills, follow these tips:

- Take iron pills as often as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Take iron between meals if you use phosphate binders at mealtime. If taken together, the iron can get caught by the binder. It won't be absorbed if that happens.
- Eat high-fiber foods to help control constipation. Fresh fruits and vegetables that are low in potassium make good choices.
- Ask your health care provider about using a stool softener if constipation becomes a frequent problem.
- Talk with your provider if you start to have stomach or digestive upset.
- Iron pills can make your stools dark or black. This doesn't mean there's something wrong.
- Contact your provider if you have any questions or concerns.

