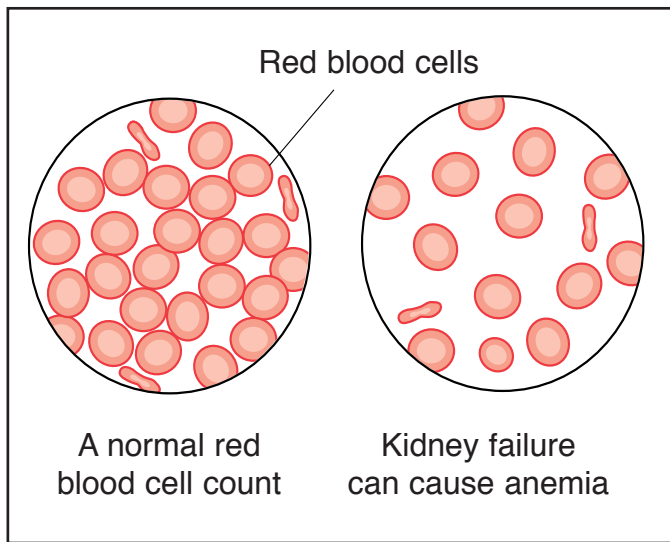




### **What is anemia?**

Every part of your body needs oxygen. Red blood cells carry oxygen through the body. People with too few red blood cells have **anemia**.



### **What causes anemia?**

People on dialysis often have anemia because they lack a hormone called *erythropoietin* (a-rith-ro-po-ee'-tin), or EPO.

EPO is made by healthy kidneys. EPO tells the bone marrow to make more red blood cells. When your kidneys fail, they no longer produce EPO. Without enough EPO, there are fewer red blood cells to carry oxygen in the body.

Other causes of anemia include iron loss due to blood loss. Some blood is lost when needles are placed and removed, and in dialysis tubing. Some blood loss occurs in surgery. Blood is also taken for lab tests.

### **Why is anemia important to me?**

Anemia can reduce your quality of life and increase your risk of death. With anemia, you feel tired and have less energy to do things you enjoy. Less oxygen reaches your brain, so you may not think as clearly. You may be less able to fight off infection.

People with anemia are also more likely to have heart problems. Men with anemia may be less able to have erections. Women may have changes in their menstrual cycles. Children with anemia may not grow as well.

### **How is anemia treated?**

Two medications treat anemia. Man-made EPO, called EPOGEN® (Epoetin alfa), helps the body make red blood cells. Iron supplements provide the building blocks for red blood cells. Your iron level must be adequate for EPOGEN® to work.

### **How is anemia measured?**

A blood test called *hemoglobin* (Hgb) measures the oxygen-carrying protein in the red blood cells. A blood test called *hematocrit* (Hct) measures the percent of red blood cells in the blood.

NKF-DOQI™ recommends that your target Hgb level should be 11 to 12 mg/dL (a Hct of 33% to 36%). (The EPOGEN® package insert recommends a target Hgb of 10 to 12 mg/dL; a Hct range of 30% to 36%.)

## How can I avoid anemia?

Problem	How can I prevent it?	What should I ask?
I feel tired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss your target Hgb/Hct with your treatment team.</li> <li>• Discuss your symptoms with your doctor to see if there is another cause for your fatigue.</li> <li>• Be sure to get as much iron as your body needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is my target Hgb/Hct?</li> <li>• Am I getting enough iron?</li> <li>• What foods have iron?</li> <li>• What can I do if my Hgb/Hct is at the target level and I'm still tired?</li> <li>• Do I need IV (intravenous) iron?</li> </ul>
My Hgb goes up and down like a roller coaster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the team how your dose of EPOGEN® (Epoetin alfa) and iron affects your anemia.</li> <li>• Exercise to build stamina and raise Hgb/Hct levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can my EPOGEN® dose be changed or given more often to make my Hgb more stable?</li> <li>• Do I need to receive EPOGEN® by injection rather than through the tubing?</li> <li>• How much should my Hgb/Hct change each month?</li> <li>• What kind of exercise can I do safely?</li> </ul>

## Where can I find more information about anemia?

- *The Importance of Having Enough Iron: A Guide for Dialysis Patients and their Families.* To request a free copy, call the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) at (800)749-AAKP, email AAKP at AAKPnat@aol.com, or visit the AAKP website at: <http://www.aakp.org>
- *EPO: Treating Anemia in Chronic Renal Failure.* To request a free copy, call the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) at (800)622-9010
- *Getting the Most from Your Treatment: What You Need to Know About Anemia.* To request a free copy, call the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) at (800)622-9010

EPOGEN® is indicated for the treatment of anemia in dialysis patients with chronic renal failure. Patients who receive EPOGEN® may experience adverse events such as hypertension and flu-like symptoms.

