Patient information
Erythropoietin (EPO)

What is in this leaflet?
This leaflet contains information about Eprex to help you manage the change to this type of EPO from 1 September 2014.

Why does the EPO product I take have to change?
PHARMAC has moved to a sole supply agreement with Janssen Cilag for its brand of EPO. This means that from:

- **1 September 2014** your specialist or general practitioner will write a prescription for Eprex when you need a repeat.
- **1 March 2015**, only the Eprex brand of EPO will remain funded, which means you continue to pay just the co-payment when you pick up your prescription from your pharmacist.

Eprex safety
At present there are two types of EPO available, NeoRecormon (erythropoietin beta) and Eprex (erythropoietin alfa) and both have the same effect on your body. The amount of EPO you will need to take will stay the same. Although you will have to change the type of EPO you use, rest assured it works in the same way and will give you the same health benefit.

Medsafe has approved Eprex’s use and it has been prescribed for and used by many patients who need it in New Zealand for the past 20 years.

Eprex needle shield device

What differences are there between the Eprex and NeoRecormon syringe injection?
Here are some of the differences you may notice between NeoRecormon and Eprex:

- The syringe device used to deliver Eprex looks different to the NeoRecormon syringe device.
- The needle on your Eprex syringe is already attached so you don’t have to worry about attaching it to the syringe.
- Once Eprex has been injected, the needle retracts into the needle shield which helps prevent needle stick injury. This action can make a loud click noise.

More information
If you have any questions, your doctor, pharmacist or specialist nurse will be able to help you. You will also be able to find more information about the different syringe device on PHARMAC’s website. *There is a brief guide on how to give yourself an injection of Eprex on the reverse of this information leaflet.*

If you have any concerns or would like to know more about brand changes which PHARMAC makes during the year, please contact, **0800 66 00 50** between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm or you can e-mail **enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz**.

*Please keep this leaflet for future reference.*
How to inject Eprex*

This is a brief guide to giving Eprex with some safety comments. Please read the instructions in the product pack for more details about storage, how to check your dose and how to find a suitable site for subcutaneous injections (injections under the skin). Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you have any concerns.

These instructions are for subcutaneous Eprex injections only.

Take the cover off the syringe, by holding the barrel of the syringe and pulling the cover off carefully. Do not push the plunger, touch the needle or shake the syringe.

Pinch a fold of skin on your body, (most likely in the stomach area) between your thumb and index finger.

Push the needle in fully. Check that you haven't punctured a blood vessel by pulling back slightly on the plunger. If you see blood, take the needle out and insert somewhere else.

Push the plunger slowly and evenly with your thumb as far as it will go to inject all of the liquid.

When the plunger is pushed in as far as it will go, take out the needle and let go of the skin and take your thumb off the plunger. The needle will retract into the needle shield.

Dispose of your used syringe in a safe container.

*Adapted from Janssen Cilag's consumer medicine information on Medsafe's website.