

FILGRASTIM



Other names: G-CSF, granulocyte colony stimulating factor, Neupogen®, Zarzio®

Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

Why you are taking this medication

Filgrastim (fill-GRASS-tim) is a medicine that helps your bone marrow make new white blood cells. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. It is an injection given under your skin or into a vein.

If you are giving your own injection at home:

- Use filgrastim exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the package directions and feel comfortable with the injections.
- Avoid shaking the vials or syringes vigorously because this may damage the filgrastim.
- Use a different site for each injection. You will be taught which sites on your body can be used. Check with your nurse or doctor to find out which sites on your body can be used for injections.
- Use each vial or syringe once only. Place used syringes in a rigid plastic container with a lid (a suitable 'sharps' container is available from the Hospital Pharmacy; a plastic milk or soft drink bottle may be used if you are unable to obtain a proper sharps container). Return filled sharps containers to your community pharmacy or the Hospital Pharmacy. Keep syringes out of reach of children.
- For injections once a day: if you miss a dose, inject it as soon as you can if you remember the missed dose on the same day it was due. If you remember the next day, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- For injections twice a day: if you miss a dose, inject it as soon as you can if it is within 6 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 6 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- Store filgrastim **in the refrigerator** out of the reach of children. Do not freeze. If filgrastim is left at room temperature for more than 24 hours, discard in your sharps container. Do not leave the vials or syringes in direct sunlight.

Tell other doctors or dentists that you are being treated with filgrastim before you receive any treatment from them.

Other medication

Other drugs may interact with filgrastim. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new medicines.

Alcohol (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of filgrastim.

Pregnancy and breast feeding

The effect of filgrastim on sperm or the baby if used during pregnancy is not known. It is best to use birth control while being treated with filgrastim.

Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant.

Do not breast feed during treatment with filgrastim.

Side effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

| SIDE EFFECTS | WHAT TO DO |
|---|--|
| Infection | When your white blood cells are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection . To help prevent infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Take care of your skin and mouth. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Call your doctor immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (body temperature over 38°C), chills, cough, sore throat or burning when you pass urine. |
| Bone pain may occur when the white blood cells start to come back in your bone marrow. It often occurs in the lower back or hips. The pain is usually mild and often lasts for only a day. | Take paracetamol for mild to moderate pain if needed every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (8 tablets) each day. |
| Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed. | Apply warm compresses or soak in warm water for 15-20 minutes several times a day. |
| Hair loss is rare with filgrastim. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with filgrastim. The colour and texture of your hair may change. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gentle baby shampoo and soft brush. • Avoid hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms. |

See your doctor or get emergency help **immediately** if you have:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** soon after a treatment including flushing, fever, rash, itching, dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling or breathing problems.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (body temperature over 38°C); chills; cough; sore throat; pain or burning when you pass urine; redness, pain or swelling of any area of your body; sores forming anywhere on your body.

Check with your doctor if any of the following continue or bother you:

- Redness, swelling, pain or sores where the needle was placed.
- Bone pain that does not go away with pain relief recommended for you to use.
- Skin rash or itching.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist