American Society of Clinical Oncology/American Society of Hematology Clinical Practice Guideline Update on the Use of Epoetin and Darbepoetin in Adult Patients with Cancer

ESA Adult Dosing Table

Dose and Modifications	Epoetin Alfa		Darbepoetin Alfa	
	Initial Dose* of 150 U/kg SC TIW	Initial Dose* of 40,000 U SC weekly	Initial Dose* of 2.25 µg/kg SC weekly	Initial Dose* of 500 µg SC Q3W
Dose increase	Increase dose to 300 U/kg TIW if no reduction in transfusion requirements or increase in Hb *after 4 weeks of therapy to achieve and maintain lowest Hb level sufficient to avoid need for RBC transfusion*	Increase dose to 60,000 U SC weekly if no increase in Hb by ≥ 1 g/dL after 4 weeks of therapy, in the absence of a RBC transfusion *to achieve and maintain lowest Hb level sufficient to avoid need for RBC transfusion*	Increase dose up to 4.5 µg/kg if there is < 1 g/dL increase in Hb after 6 weeks of therapy	NA
Dose reduction	Decrease dose by 25% when Hb *reaches a level needed to avoid transfusion* or Hb increases > 1 g/dL in 2 weeks		Decrease dose by 40% of previous dose when Hb *reaches a level needed to avoid transfusion* or Hb increases to > 1 g/dL in 2 weeks	
Dose withholding	*If Hb exceeds a level needed to avoid transfusion; restart dose at 25% below previous dose when Hb approaches a level where transfusion may be required*		*If Hb exceeds a level needed to avoid transfusion; restart dose at 40% below previous dose when Hb approaches a level where transfusion may be required*	
Discontinue	*Following completion of CT course or if no response after 8 weeks of therapy (measured by Hb levels or continuing need for transfusions).*		*Following completion of CT course or if no response after 8 weeks of therapy (measured by Hb levels or continuing need for transfusions).*	

Note: Changes from the 2007 guideline dosing table are noted in *italics*.

Abbreviations: ESA, erythropoiesis-stimulating agent; SC, subcutaneous; TIW, three times per week; Q3W, every 3 weeks; Hb, hemoglobin; NA, not applicable; CT, chemotherapy;

*Therapy should not be initiated at hemoglobin levels ≥ 10 g/dL.

Source: FDA product labels accessed on August 10, 2010 for epoetin http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2010/103234s5199lbl.pdf, and darbepoetin http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2010/103951s5197lbl.pdf.