

Travelling with erythropoietin (EPO)

EPO is a fridge and sharps item and so the following should be considered for trips requiring airline travel:

1. A written statement should be obtained from the Doctor explaining that the patient is travelling with syringes on medical grounds.
2. It is useful to take copies of past clinic letters as these briefly explain the medical condition should the patient become ill while away. The letter also contains the contact details of the renal team should problems occur.
3. Sufficient supplies of EPO should be taken as it will be extremely difficult to obtain further supplies, even in the UK. The dosage regime should be reviewed to try to reduce the number of syringes required. (e.g. changing from a three times a week regime to once weekly).
4. Travel security information is constantly being updated (**for the latest information please contact your airline**). In general EPO should be carried in hand luggage (like insulin). It should be identifiable, preferably in original packaging and with a supporting letter from the Doctor and/or a prescription.
5. The luggage hold area of an aircraft can go below freezing. As EPO must never be kept below 2°C, **it cannot be placed in the checked-in luggage**.
6. A cool bag can be used to transport the EPO as airlines tend not to allow passengers to use the fridge on the plane. For especially long journeys (where a cool bag will be insufficient) or where this is not possible, the following can be considered:

Eprex pre-filled syringes may be left out of the fridge for one single period of up to 3 days as long as the temperature does not go above 25°C.²

Aranesp pre-filled syringes may be removed from storage ONCE for a maximum single period of seven days at room temperature (up to 25°C). Once a syringe has been removed from the refrigerator and has reached room temperature (up to 25°C) it must either be used within 7 days or disposed of.³

Mircera pre-filled syringes can be left out of the fridge for a single period of ONE month. Once removed from the refrigerator, it must be used within that one month period.⁴

NeoRecormon pre-filled syringes may be removed from the refrigerator and stored at room temperature (not above 25°C) for one single period of up to 3 days.¹

7. Discuss any concerns with the anaemia nurse, pharmacist or with the airline before travelling.

References:

1. SPC for Neorecormon Solution for Injection in pre-filled syringe <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/7747> last updated 18th January 2012
2. SPC for Eprex solution for injection in pre-filled syringe <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/29446> - last updated 2nd April 2015
3. SPC for Aranesp pre-filled syringe <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/4981> last updated 22nd December 2014
4. SPC for Mircera solution for injection in pre-filled syringe <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/19960> – last updated 22nd December 2014
5. www.travax.nhs.uk – Travelling with medicines or medical equipment
6. Transportation security administration guidelines <http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/medically-necessary-liquids> (28th Aug 2014)
7. U.S. customs and border protection: FAQ: travelling with medication devices https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/67/session/L3NpZC9fbG5tci1ybA%3D%3D