



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient:

Other names:

Filgrastim

G-CSF, granulocyte colony stimulating factor, NEUPOGEN®, GRASTOFIL®, NIVESTYM®, NYPOZI®

- Filgrastim (*fill-GRASS-tim*) is a drug that helps your bone marrow make new white blood cells. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. Filgrastim is a clear liquid that is injected under your skin or into a vein.
- **If you are giving your own injection at home**, use filgrastim exactly as directed by your healthcare team. Make sure you understand the package directions and feel comfortable with the injections.
 - **Avoid vigorous shaking** of the vials and syringes 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 for injections.
 - **Use each syringe once only.** Place used syringes in a rigid plastic container with a lid.
 - Keep syringes **out of reach of children.**
 - **Discard** the container as instructed by your cancer treatment centre.
- For injections given **once a day**: if you **miss a dose** of filgrastim, inject it as soon as you can if it is within 16 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 16 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- For injections given **two times a day**: if you **miss a dose** of filgrastim, 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 **vials and syringes** in the refrigerator out of the reach of children. Do not freeze. If filgrastim is left at room temperature for more than 14 days, throw it away. Do not leave the vials or syringes in direct sunlight.
- Other drugs may **interact** with filgrastim. Tell your doctor if you are taking any other drugs as your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) will not affect the safety or usefulness of filgrastim.
- 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 breastfeed during treatment.

- **Tell** your doctor, dentist, and other health professionals that you are being treated with filgrastim before you receive any treatment from them.

When your white blood cells are low, **you are at greater risk of having an infection.**

To help prevent infection:

- 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 healthcare team ***immediately*** at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F), chills, cough, sore throat or burning when you pass urine.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

| SIDE EFFECTS | MANAGEMENT |
|---|---|
| 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 acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per 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. Colour and texture may change. | If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout.*</i> |

***Please ask your nurse or pharmacist for a copy.**

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.

STOP USING FILGRASTIM AND CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM 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 acetaminophen.
- Skin rash or itching.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM
