

What you need to know about newborn Vitamin K

Unfortunately, in most cases of *Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)*, there are **no warning signs.**

This pamphlet was created to help you make an informed choice about newborn Vitamin K. Your pediatrician will be able to answer any questions you may have.



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Vitamin K is naturally present in the body. It plays an important part in helping blood clot. Vitamin K helps prevent a serious bleeding problem that can occur in babies in the first days and weeks of life. At birth, a baby has very low stores of Vitamin K and these are quickly used up over the first few days of life.

Vitamin K is usually given as one injection into the muscle at the top of the baby's leg. It offers the best protection for a baby against bleeding. If you do not want your baby to have this injection, please talk with your pediatrician.

Vitamin K can also be given by mouth. Even though the liquid is the same, the oral (by mouth) route does not protect as well against bleeding as the injectable route, and several doses must be given.

The Canadian Pediatric Society advises that all newborns be given ***vitamin K by injection within 6 hours after birth.***

If you choose to have the Vitamin K given to your baby by mouth, it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you follow the oral dose regimen until it is completed:

- ***After birth with the first feed;***
- ***Repeated at 2 to 4 weeks of age;***
- ***Repeated at 6 to 8 weeks of age.***

Please be aware that babies that get oral Vitamin K, are at increased risk of bleeding, especially in the brain.

If you do not want your baby to have Vitamin K by any route, please look over the warning signs associated with *Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)* below, so that you can call your pediatrician for advice at any time, if you are worried.

Signs associated with VKDB:

- Bruises, especially around the baby's head and face
- Bleeding from the nose or umbilical cord.
- Skin color that is paler than before. For darker skinned babies, the gums may appear pale.
- After the first 3 weeks of life, the white parts of the baby's eyes may turn yellow.
- Stool that has blood in it, is black or dark and sticky like tar, or vomiting blood.
- Irritability, seizures, excessive sleepiness, a lot of vomiting may all be signs of bleeding in the brain.