

What about side effects of Vitamin K injection or drops?

All medicines can have side effects. Rare side effects can include irritation, redness, infection or swelling near the injection site.

Serious side effect are rare, but if they occur **immediately contact** your doctor or go to the nearest Emergency department.

These side effects are:

- rash
- hives
- swelling of face/lips/tongue or other parts of the body
- shortness of breath, wheezing or trouble breathing.

How would I know my baby has VKDB?

A baby that develops VKDB usually has symptoms including:

- Bleeding from the cord stump
- Bleeding from any part of baby
- Blood stained vomit or poo
- Bruising

When would I see these symptoms?

- early onset **within 24 hours after delivery**
- classic onset at **1-7 days**
- late onset at **1-2 week**

Contact your midwife or doctor if you notice any of these or are concerned in any way



Vitamin K for Newborns

Information for Pregnant Women and Whanau

 COUNTIES MANUKAU HEALTH	Department: Women's Health Approved by: Director of Midwifery Owner: Midwife Educator B&A	Updated: September 2019 Review: September 2022
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Women's Health Division

What is Vitamin K?

It is needed for blood to clot (stop bleeding). It is essential to prevent serious bleeding.

Adults and children will get Vitamin K from many food sources like green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, fish, meat, eggs. It is also produced in the gut.

All newborn babies have only a small amount of Vitamin K at birth.

After birth your baby will get Vitamin K in the breastmilk (or formula). This is in too small amounts to provide protection for baby.

What is the risk of low Vitamin K levels for my baby?

When your baby's Vitamin K level are low baby could be put at risk for Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB).

This is an internal bleeding (inside the body and brain) and uncommon.

About 1 in 100,000 (0.001%) babies will develop VKDB in New Zealand.

But if it does happen it is very serious and can result in brain damage or death of your baby.

This is more likely to happen in babies who have not been given Vitamin K at birth and

increasing baby's risk to about 69 in 100,000 (0.069%).

Vitamin K is recommended by the Paediatric Society New Zealand, New Zealand College of Midwives, New Zealand College of GP's.
It is also recommended internationally.

Is my baby at risk?

It is not possible to know which babies will have VKDB so it is recommended all babies have Vitamin K.

Some babies are at higher risk of VKDB, or suffering from internal bleeds:

- Premature and sick babies
- Babies whose mothers are on certain medicines; E.g. medicines used to stop blood clotting or to prevent seizures (fits)
- Babies who have had a ventouse, forceps, caesarean section or long labour
- Babies who have surgery (including circumcision)
- Babies whose breastfeeding time is restricted
- Babies that have a known liver disease

How is Vitamin K given?

Vitamin K can be given shortly after birth as a single injection into your baby's thigh. This is the most reliable way giving your baby Vitamin K.

Alternatively Vitamin K can also be given as drops into baby's mouth (oral).

Your baby needs three (3) oral doses to give enough protection because Vitamin K is not well absorbed by mouth.

It is important that **baby has all 3 doses** because the effect does not last as long as the injection.

Dose 1 – at birth

Dose 2 – given at Day 3–5

Dose 3 – given at 4-6 weeks

Please talk to your midwife or GP if you have any questions so you can make an informed decision.

You have a right to accurate written information.

It is your choice whether your baby will be given Vitamin K after birth and how it is given.