

# Options for Your Newborn

## **Vitamin K**

### ***What is Vitamin K?***

Vitamin K is a necessary component in the body for the prevention of bleeding. It is needed in particular for the body's coagulation factors.

### ***Where do we get Vitamin K?***

Vitamin K is formed in the intestines due to a bacterial process, following the occurrence of digestion. Levels are usually adequate by approximately 8 days after birth, but they continue to increase for the first six weeks of life. This natural process of having low vitamin K levels in the fetus actually protects them while in the womb during cell division and development.

### ***Why is Vitamin K so important?***

Without vitamin K, bleeding in the brain can occur (see statistics below). In 90% of these cases, the babies are breastfed. This bleeding occurs much less in formula fed babies due to vitamin K being so unnaturally high in these formulas.

### ***What are the risks of receiving vitamin K?***

There are many reports that have shown a very minimal correlation between childhood leukemia and the use of vitamin K in infants. There are 1.5 more cases of leukemia per 100,000 children due to vitamin K injections. However, 1.8 permanent injuries or deaths per 100,000 babies occur due to brain bleeding without the vitamin K injection. Hemorrhagic disease of the newborn (HDN) usually occurs in the first week of life, but can occur up to 3 months of age.

### ***Statistics:***

Incidence of early HDN (1 <sup>st</sup> week):	1 to 6.8 per 400 births
Incidence of late HDN (2-12 wks):	4.4 to 7.2 per 100,000 births
Incidence of late HDN with oral vitamin K:	1.4 to 6.4 per 100,000 births
Incidence of HDN with IM (shot) vitamin K:	Almost zero

I have been informed of the risks and benefits of vitamin K injection for my newborn. I would like to accept treatment of vitamin K via injection for my newborn at the time of birth.

---

Signature

Date

I have been informed of the risks and benefits of vitamin K injection for my newborn. I would like to refuse treatment of vitamin K via injection for my newborn at the time of birth.

---

Signature

Date

## **Erythromycin eye ointment**

### ***What is erythromycin eye ointment?***

Erythromycin is a broad-spectrum antibiotic that can be used for many different infections. It is in the form of an ointment that is placed into the eyes within the first hour or so following the birth.

### ***Why is eye ointment so important?***

The administration of antibiotic eye ointment replaced the use of silver nitrate ( $\text{AgNO}_3$ ) for use in eyes of infants years ago. The ointment is primarily of importance to prevent blindness in infants who are born to mothers with the sexually transmitted disease gonorrhea. Other sexually transmitted diseases also can cause eye infections, but rarely blindness. There are also many other bacterial organisms the infant could pick up while being born through the vagina; however, these would most likely not cause a problematic eye infection in the infant.

### ***What are the risks of erythromycin eye ointment?***

There is a definite contraindication if either mother or father of the baby have an allergy to antibiotics in this class. The ointment does cause the eyelids to become red and puffy for about 12-24 hours, as well as blurring their vision. The ointment does not sting the eyes.

I have been informed of the risks and benefits of erythromycin eye ointment for my newborn. I would like to accept treatment of erythromycin eye ointment for my newborn at the time of birth.

---

Signature

Date

I have been informed of the risks and benefits of erythromycin eye ointment for my newborn. I would like to refuse treatment of erythromycin eye ointment for my newborn at the time of birth.

---

Signature

Date