

Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Guidance for Parents about Vitamin K (Konakion MM Paediatric™)

What is vitamin K?

Vitamin K is a man-made vitamin that is offered to all babies after birth. It can be given either as an injection or by mouth.

Why is Vitamin K recommended?

Vitamin K is necessary to prevent bleeding diseases such as vitamin k deficiency bleeding (VKDB) and the production of proteins necessary for the normal growth of bones.

Babies do not have enough Vitamin K when they are born. They are at risk of developing VKDB. It is important to prevent this serious condition, which can cause severe bleeding into the brain and can be fatal. There is a 1:10,000 chance that your baby could develop this disease.

Research over the last 30 years has shown that giving the injection is the most effective method of preventing this disease. However the research is not conclusive in saying one route is better than the other.

At University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust, we give parents a choice between Vitamin K by injection or by mouth. This ensures that their baby is protected. The Department of Health recommend that all newborn babies receive appropriate Vitamin K regime to prevent this rare but serious and sometimes fatal disorder. Most parents choose injected Vitamin K.

If you have certain conditions such as liver disease, bleeding problems, taking certain anti-convulsants, or you have a forceps or vacuum delivery, then your baby is at greater risk of developing Haemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn. It is advised that your baby should have the injection rather than by mouth.



Patient Information

If your baby is born before 36 weeks

These babies are at special risk of bleeding and should have Vitamin K by injection. The oral form is not suitable for ill or premature babies. If your baby is admitted to Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) then the Vitamin K administration will be discussed by the baby doctor or neonatal nurses with you, as the amount of Vitamin K may be different.

How Vitamin K is given

Injection

Babies are only required to be given one injection into their leg shortly after birth. It is not usually painful but it is normal for some babies to have some local swelling / redness at the site of the injection.

By mouth

Vitamin K is given by drops into the baby's mouth shortly after birth.

For bottle feed babies the dose given shortly after birth is all that is required as Vitamin K is found in baby milk formula.

For breast feed babies it is necessary to repeat the dose again when the baby is 4-7 days old and then again at one month old, this is to ensure that your baby is protected.

You will be sent home from hospital with the second dose, and will need to get the third dose from your G.P your G.P or health visitor will be happy to help you give this.

For further information

Please feel free to contact your General Practitioner, Ante Natal Clinic Community Midwives or Health Visitor.

For contact telephone numbers please consult your Patient Hand Held Records.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact the Ante Natal Clinic on 024 7696 7350 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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