

## **The importance of Vitamin K for a newborn**

### ***Why is Vitamin K necessary?***

Vitamin K is essential for the formation of blood clotting factors and normal blood clotting.

### ***Why is ensuring an adequate intake of Vitamin K particularly important for a newborn?***

Newborns have low stores of Vitamin K because the placenta poorly transfers Vitamin K, breast milk contains only a small amount of Vitamin K, and the newborn's intestinal bacteria cannot produce enough Vitamin K.

### ***What can Vitamin K deficiency cause in a child?***

Vitamin K deficiency can lead to a serious bleeding episode shortly after birth or within the first few months, typically occurring in the brain but also potentially in internal organs. Severe brain bleeding in a newborn can result in permanent disability.

### ***How does administering Vitamin K affect the occurrence of severe bleeding?***

Administering Vitamin K through an intramuscular injection shortly after birth practically prevents serious early bleeding. Vitamin K can also be administered orally in multiple doses during the first few weeks, but its effectiveness is not as high as when given intramuscularly.

### ***Are there side effects associated with Vitamin K administration?***

Intramuscular administration of Vitamin K for the prevention of serious early bleeding in newborns has been practiced since the 1950s. Giving Vitamin K is safe, and there are no short-term or long-term side effects.

**The administration of Vitamin K is always based on parental consent. Pediatricians specialized in newborn care recommend giving Vitamin K to all newborns primarily through intramuscular injection and secondarily through oral administration. In maternity hospitals, parents are provided with information about the significance of Vitamin K for newborns to support decision-making as needed.**

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## References

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2. Jullien S. Vitamin K prophylaxis in newborns. *BMC Pediatr* 2021;21(Suppl 1):350.
3. Ng E, Loewy A. Guidelines for vitamin K prophylaxis in newborns. *Paediatr Child Health* 2018;23:394-402.