

ST. ALBERT PREGNANCY CARE & NEWBORN CLINIC

Newborn Care Handout – Vitamin K

Vitamin K is required for your blood to clot properly and prevent severe bleeding.

Our physicians recommend the injection (IM) dose of Vitamin K for your baby, which is the Canadian Standard of Care for newborns.

Please see references below for more detailed information & [EBB Vit K Handout](#)

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Canadian Paediatric Society and the College of Family Physicians of Canada recommend routine IM administration of a single dose of vitamin K at 1.0 mg to all newborns within the first few hours after birth.

Administering oral vitamin K (2.0 mg at birth, repeated at 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 weeks of age), should be confined to newborns whose parents decline IM vitamin K.

Research shows that the 3 dose regimen with oral vitamin K is not as effective as the single dose injection given after birth, but is more effective than not giving any form of Vitamin K. [1]

The single dose of 1.0 mg injection or all 3 doses of 2.0 mg oral vitamin K are required prior to circumcision, tongue tie release, or other surgeries.

WHY IS VITAMIN K OFFERED TO ALL BABIES

All newborns are at risk for vitamin K deficiency. We cannot make our own vitamin K, and we get Vitamin K from plants in our diet.

During the first few weeks of life, vitamin K deficiency can cause Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB). VKDB is associated with bleeding in the brain, belly button site, skin, nose, or gastrointestinal tract.

VKDB is known as early VKDB when it occurs in the first week of life. Late VKDB occurs at age 2-12 weeks. VKDB, especially late VKDB, can occur as a sudden bleeding in and around the brain, which has a high mortality rate. [3]

Neither breastmilk, nor formula, provide sufficient levels of Vitamin K for newborns to prevent VKDB.

OPTIONS FOR PURCHASING ORAL VITAMIN K1 - PHYTOADIONE

Oral vitamin K (as K1-phytoadione) must be purchased privately. Please contact facilities for pricing.

Oral dosing is Vitamin K1 - 2.0 mg at birth, repeated at 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 weeks of age.

1 - [Lucina Birth Centre](#) - please contact Kayla Woodman at birthcentre@lucinamidwives.ca to arrange pick up. They carry Vitamin K (as K1-phytoadione) and product describes that four drops provides 2mg of Vitamin K1. Therefore, families should give baby 4 drops on day 1, then 4 drops between weeks 2-4 and then 4 drops between weeks 6-8.

2 - Ceders Dispensaries by Grey Nuns Hospital - Ceders Professional Park, 2925-66 Street. Edmonton. Ph 780-461-3021. **A prescription is required.** Families given Vitamin K1 suspension with syringe & has shelf life of 90 days.

Other pharmacies, in particular those who can do compounding, may carry as well, feel free to contact your local pharmacy.

REFERENCES

- [1. https://cps.ca/documents/position/vitamin-k-prophylaxis-in-newborns](https://cps.ca/documents/position/vitamin-k-prophylaxis-in-newborns)
- [2. Vitamin K - Fact Sheet for Health Professionals from National Institutes of Health](#)
- [3. https://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-for-the-vitamin-k-shot-in-newborns/ \(page 2\)](https://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-for-the-vitamin-k-shot-in-newborns/)

