

The Controversy Reignites: Vitamin K shots are routine for most newborns... but the practice has its dark side

Holistic Healthcare – Joseph Mercola, D.O.

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Talking Points

- ❖ Mercola asks, “Is the vitamin K injection the best way to prevent vitamin K deficiency bleeding?” (34)
- ❖ What is Vitamin K? Vitamin K is an “important catalyst in the coagulation cascade. Without vitamin K, the coagulation cascade stops before the clot forms. When this occurs in infants, they can develop uncontrolled bleeding anywhere in their body, including the brain.” (34)
- ❖ There are three types of vitamin K deficiency bleeding: early onset, classic and late onset.
- ❖ Mercola explains them as early onset happening “within the first day of life. Early VKDB is exceedingly rare, and is typically related to medicines used by the mother that inhibit vitamin K activity. Classic: Within the first week of life. This is the most common form, occurring in 0.25–1.5% of infants who have not received vitamin K at birth. Late onset: From the second week of life up to six months of age. Occurs in 5 to 7 out of every 100,000 infants not given prophylactic vitamin K, and is indicative of inadequate intake of vitamin K, malabsorption issues, and/or impaired utilization due to an underlying liver disorder.” (35)
- ❖ Is the vitamin K injection the best way? “The amount of vitamin K injected into newborns is 20,000 times the newborn’s typical level at birth.” (35) We warn adults about mega dosing vitamins so why is mega dosing a synthetic vitamin to an infant standard practice?
- ❖ The injection also includes amounts of aluminum, preservatives and propylene glycol (skin irritant).
- ❖ Is there an important biological reason for babies being born with an initially low vitamin K level?
- ❖ As with anything, there are side effects. Please read the package insert and make an informed decision.
- ❖ If an adult overdoses on phytonadione, they’re advised to call Poison Control. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) of phytonadione for infants 0–6 months is 2 micrograms (mcg) per day, so with the shot they are receiving a dose that is 5,000 times the RDA. (36)

- ❖ What about oral vitamin K supplementation? Oral vitamin K “produces adequate serum concentrations for the prevention of classic VKDB.” (36) The effectiveness is dependent on compliance. It needs to be taken for the first three months of life.
- ❖ Mercola states, “Not only should vitamin K1 be given orally, but vitamin D and vitamin K2 should be as well... According to one recent study, breastfed infants should ideally begin receiving vitamin D supplementation at birth. The study supports using a dose of 400 IUs (international units) of vitamin D per day for the first nine months of the baby’s life.” (36)
- ❖ Mercola recommends keeping it simple. Have a natural birth, delay cutting the umbilical cord, hold your baby skin-to-skin as early as possible and give your baby oral vitamin K1, K2 and D for the first several months of life.
- ❖ What are things that you can do during your pregnancy, including during delivery, to help reduce the chances of VKDB? (Eating well, natural delivery with minimal trauma, etc.)
- ❖ You can naturally raise your child’s vitamin K levels while breastfeeding. “Vitamin K1 is found in green vegetables. Of equal importance is to optimize your gut health and vitamin D levels. Vitamin K2 is produced by certain gut bacteria, and works synergistically with vitamin D to optimize your and your baby’s health (both while in utero, and during breastfeeding).” (38)

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

Founder of the World’s #1 Health Website: <http://www.mercola.com/>

About Dr. Mercola: <http://www.mercola.com/forms/background.htm>

His non-profit coalition: <http://www.mercola.org/>

Vitamin K articles from Midwifery Today: <http://www.midwiferytoday.com/search/?q=Vitamin+K>

Vitamin K from Evidenced Based Birth: <https://gumroad.com/l/vitamink>

Article by midwife, Sara Wickham: <http://sarawickham.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/em-vitamin-k.pdf>

Compilation of Resources by Gentle Birthing: <http://www.gentlebirth.org/archives/vitktop.html>