

## **Newborns should receive vitamin K within six hours of birth**

February 22 2022

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Vitamin K should be administered as a single intramuscular dose for all

newborns as prophylaxis for vitamin K deficiency bleeding (VKDB), according to a policy statement published in the March issue of *Pediatrics*.

Ivan Hand, M.D., from NYC Health + Hospitals Kings County in Brooklyn, New York, and colleagues discuss the current knowledge of prevention of VKDB with respect to term and preterm infants and address parental concerns relating to administration of vitamin K.

- The authors note that vitamin K should be administered within six hours of birth as a single intramuscular dose of 1 mg for all [newborn infants](#) weighing >1,500 g.
- For preterm infants weighing  $\leq 1,500$  g, vitamin K (0.3 to 0.5 mg/kg) should be administered as a single intramuscular dose.
- A single intravenous vitamin K dose is not recommended for prophylaxis for [preterm infants](#).
- The benefits of vitamin K administration and risks of refusal should be understood by pediatricians and other [health care providers](#) and conveyed to the infant caregivers.
- When evaluating bleeding in the first six months of life, VKDB should be considered, even in infants who received prophylaxis and especially for infants who are exclusively breastfed.

"This illness is relatively rare in the United States today because we have offered this dose of vitamin K to infants," Hand said in a statement.

"This bleeding disease can be devastating and is totally preventable, and so we urge parents to ask questions if they have concerns."

**More information:** Ivan Hand et al, Vitamin K and the Newborn Infant, *Pediatrics* (2022). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2021-056036](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-056036)

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Citation: Newborns should receive vitamin K within six hours of birth (2022, February 22)  
retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-02-newborns-vitamin-hours-birth.html>

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