**Precious Pathways Midwifery**

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\*Maternity Care \* Breastfeeding Guidance \* Women's Health

Vitamin K for the Prevention of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)

What is Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)?

Vitamin K deficiency bleeding (VKDB) is a rare and potentially life-threatening bleeding disorder of early

infancy. VKDB was previously called hemorrhagic disease of the newborn.

What is Vitamin K?

Vitamin K is also known as Phylloquinone and Phytonadione. It is a fat-soluble vitamin and is necessary

for blood clotting function. It is most commonly found in broccoli, green cabbage, and Brussels sprouts, as

well as other green vegetables.

What causes Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB) and why is it of concern?

Babies are normally born with low levels of vitamin K, an essential factor in blood clotting. A deficiency in

vitamin K is the main cause of VKDB. Without the clotting factor if bleeding occurs, severe bleeding or

hemorrhage can result.

Who is affected by vitamin K deficiency bleeding?

Vitamin K deficiency may result in bleeding in a very small percentage of babies. Babies at risk for

developing hemorrhagic disease of the newborn include the following:

• babies who do not receive preventive vitamin K in an injection at birth

• exclusively breastfed babies (breast milk contains less vitamin K than fortified cow's milk formula.)

• babies whose mothers have seizure disorders and take anti-convulsant medications

What are the symptoms of vitamin K deficiency bleeding?

The following are the most common symptoms of VKDB. However, each baby may experience symptoms

differently. Symptoms may include:

• blood in the baby's bowel movements • nasal or oral bleeding

• blood in urine • prolonged bleeding at puncture sites

• oozing around the umbilical cord

The symptoms of VKDB may resemble other conditions or medical problems. Always consult your baby's

physician for a diagnosis.

Does the intramuscular (IM) Vitamin K have any side effects? There are risks listed by the manufacturer.

(From the Merck Package Insert. Full package insert document available upon request.)

The injectable form of vitamin K can rarely cause severe (sometimes fatal) allergic reactions when given by

injection into a muscle or vein. Therefore, vitamin K should be injected into a muscle or vein only when it cannot

be given by injection under the skin or taken by mouth, or when your doctor has judged that the benefit is greater

than the risk. Seek immediate medical attention if you experience symptoms of an allergic reaction such as rash,

itching, swelling, dizziness, or trouble breathing.

In addition, disadvantages of intramuscular administration include the following noted complications:

hematoma, vessel or nerve injury, abscess, or osteomyelitis.

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Is there a law requiring this treatment? Yes. CA Laws states: Every neonate should receive a single

parenteral 0.5-1.0 mg dose IM of vitamin K oxide or phytonadione (AquaMEPHYTON®) within 1 hour of birth for

prevention of vitamin K deficiency bleeding (Hemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn).

Is there a way to object or refuse this type of treatment? Yes. After reviewing the Client education sheet

and having all of your questions regarding Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB) you can sign the Informed

Refusal section below refusing.

Are there alternative treatments available? Yes. Although oral vitamin K is not licensed for use as a

drug by the FDA, drops for oral administration are available and can be administered at home. Parents may

choose an oral dose of Vitamin K to breastfed infants at birth, one week, at four weeks, 8 weeks and 12 weeks

of age. Oral Vit K is plant-based and has been shown effective in preventing early and late onset VKDB.

Alternatively, nursing mothers can take a daily dose of vitamin K during the first three months following birth.

If nursing mothers take a daily 5 mg. vitamin K supplement, their babiesʼ vitamin K status

improves through the first 12 weeks of life.

**K-Quinone-(Scientific Botanicals, Inc) is an oil soluble source of vitamin K-1 (phytonadione), the non-toxic natural**

**form of vitamin K present in plants.  K-Quinoe is extracted from alfalfa, nettles and green tea. It is now in a base of**

**Olive Extract. Each drop provides 2 mg of vitamin K-1 activity. Available for**purchase at Birthwithlove.com.

Mothers can eat foods with high vitamin K content during pregnancy (green vegetables, alfalfa and nettles,

dairy products) because small amounts of vitamin K are transferred to the fetus across the placenta. Pregnant

women can also take alfalfa tablets during pregnancy, a good source of vitamin K.

Your midwife also offers Konakion MM paediatric (Phytomenadione) 2mg oral. (This is purchased in the UK)

It is to be given in 5 doses covering the first 3 months of the newborn period. Your midwife will show how to

administer on the day of birth and it is the parents responsibility to provide the remaining 4 doses.

Again, this is not approved as a drug by the FDA.

What if we choose IM Vitamin K for our baby? If you choose to have the IM Vitamin K your midwife can

administer this treatment on the day of the birth or within the first few days postpartum.

What if we donʼt want Vitamin K for our baby?

If you object to the administration of Vitamin K and do not give permission for your baby to have it, you must

completed the Informed Refusal below and agree that it be placed in your client file.

**Informed Refusal: Vitamin K 2 of 2**

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Informed Refusal :

Vitamin K for the Prevention of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(mother) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(father)

understand it is the law in California to administer Vitamin K to the newborn to prevent VKDB. I understand the risks and refuse the administration of Vitamin K to my newborn and agree that this signed statement be placed in our client files.

We also acknowledge the following information:

• I have been informed of and are aware of the risks of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)

• I have been made aware of the American Academy of Pediatrics treatment protocol.

• I understand the signs and symptoms of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB) and will seek medical

advice in the event that our baby begins to show these signs.

• I accept full responsibility for any problems or disabilities that come as a result of refusing IM Vitamin K

or consenting to oral doses.

Mother:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Father:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Midwife:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Informed Consent to Alternative Treatment Protocol:

Vitamin K for the Prevention of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(mother) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(father)

choose to have oral doses of Vitamin K given to our newborn at birth, at 1 week, at 4 weeks, at 8 weeks

and 12 weeks of age. I understand it is our responsibility to administer the remaining 4 doses in the proper time

frame.

We understand that this is not approved treatment by the AAP or the FDA and that oral doses are not as effective as the IM dose, must be given more frequently than the injectable.

We also acknowledge the following information:

• I have been informed of and are aware of the risks of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB)

• I have been made aware of the American Academy of Pediatrics treatment protocol.

• I understand the signs and symptoms of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB) and will seek medical

advice in the event that our baby begins to show these signs.

• I accept full responsibility for any problems or disabilities that come as a result of refusing IM Vitamin K

or consenting to oral doses.

Mother:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Father:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Midwife:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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