



## Charlotte Pediatric Clinic

### WHY DOES MY NEWBORN NEED TO GET A VITAMIN K SHOT?

Sometimes parents question the need for Vitamin K in the newborn period. The following is information strongly supporting the use of Vitamin K. The physicians of Charlotte Pediatric Clinic recommend the universal administration of Vitamin K to newborns.

#### Vitamin K:

- *Critical* for the complicated process of blood clotting.
- Not present in adequate levels in the newborn since it does not easily cross the placenta.
- Oral Vitamin K has not been proven to be equally effective and is not routinely available.
- Eventually it will be produced in the baby's gastrointestinal tract providing adequate protection after several months of age.

**Without** the injection routinely given at birth, your newborn is **vulnerable** to two types of bleeding:

- Early Vitamin K deficiency bleeding is rare and occurs in the first 24 hours of life in infants born to mothers who have a history of taking anti-seizure, TB or blood thinning medications. These babies have bleeding from the belly button, GI tract (blood in stools), nose, mouth, kidneys, needle sticks sites and circumcision sites.
- Late-onset Vitamin K deficiency occurs between 2-12 weeks of age in seemingly healthy, primarily breast fed, infants. It can be a catastrophic event that most frequently involves sudden onset of bleeding within the skull with the potential of brain damage and even death.

**Incidence:** Hemorrhaging due to deficient Vitamin K occurs in about 7 infants per 100,000 births, but it is clearly proven that administration of injectable Vitamin K in the newborn period eliminates this risk. The American Academy of Pediatrics initially recommended the routine use of Vitamin K in 1961 and re-affirmed their position in 2003.

---

*My provider has informed me about the risks of refusing Vitamin K.*

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_