

Newborn Medications

Newborn medications **Erythromycin**, **Hepatitis B** and **Vitamin K** are given shortly after birth to protect newborns from specific problems they are at risk for. If you have questions or concerns about any of the medications, please talk to your doctor at your pre-natal appointments as well as your nurse when you come to deliver your baby.



Erythromycin

Erythromycin is a topical ointment placed along the rim of your baby's eyelid. It prevents infections caused by bacteria that may be in the birth canal during delivery, including chlamydia and gonorrhea infections. This bacteria can get into your baby's eyes during birth and cause an infection that can lead to blindness.

Erythromycin is very effective at preventing these and other infections. It may cause your baby's vision to be blurry for a few minutes, but doesn't hurt them.

Hepatitis B Vaccine

Hepatitis B is a disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. It is spread by contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids. Babies can get it at birth from an infected birth parent, from infected caregivers or sharing personal care items (like toothbrushes).

How do I know who has it?

About 1 million people in the U.S. have Hepatitis B. Many have no symptoms, do not feel sick and don't know they are infected, but can still spread the virus to others. A blood test is often the only way to know if someone has it. All pregnant women are screened & tested for Hepatitis B as part of their pre-natal care. Most people with this infection were exposed as infants or young children when their immune systems were still developing.

Is there a cure for Hepatitis B?

There are medicines that can help symptoms of an infection, but there is no cure. Infants that get Hepatitis B can't fight the infection as well as adults and most will be infected for life.

Hepatitis B can be prevented by a vaccine that is safe for newborns.

All newborns should get their first dose of the vaccine at birth. If given within the first 24 hours, it is very good at preventing infection, even if the birth parent has a Hepatitis B infection.

Vitamin K

Vitamin K is given by a shot into your baby's leg muscle after birth to prevent a life-threatening disease called hemorrhagic disease of the newborn or vitamin K deficiency bleeding (VKDB).

VKDB occurs when the baby doesn't have enough vitamin K to stop bleeding. This bleeding can happen anywhere, including their intestines or brain, which can cause brain damage, seizures and even death. Often there are NO WARNING signs.

Infants that don't receive vitamin K at birth are at risk for VKDB until 6 months of age.

If Vitamin K safe?

Vitamin K shot is very safe. It is recommended that ALL babies receive it at birth by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC. Vitamin K has been given since 1961. A study from the 1990's suggested a possible link between vitamin K and childhood cancer, but no studies since have found this link again, despite careful research.



What is vitamin K?

A nutrient that our body needs for blood to clot and stop bleeding. Our body gets it through the foods we eat and the natural, good bacteria in our intestines.

Why does my baby need a vitamin K shot?

- *Vitamin K from the birthing parent is not transferred to the baby easily during pregnancy.*
- *The newborn's intestines have very small amounts of good bacteria & don't absorb it well from breastmilk or formula.*
- *Without enough vitamin K, blood can't clot well. This can lead to bleeding from a cut or inside their body that can't be stopped.*



For more
information
visit/scan:

Vitamin K



Hepatitis B



Erythromycin



<https://www.cdc.gov/vitamin-k-deficiency/fact-sheet/index.html>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/prenatal/delivery-beyond/Pages/Erythromycin-Ointment.aspx>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/hepatitis-b-vaccine-what-you-need-to-know.aspx>