

VITAMIN K, HEPATITIS B, NST [NEWBORN SCREENING TEST]

After the birth you will be offered Vitamin K and hepatitis B vaccine [if you have consented to them] to be administered to your baby.

VITAMIN K

Vitamin K helps to prevent a rare bleeding disorder called Haemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn, it helps the blood to clot. Most babies are given vitamin K by injection into the thigh. It can be given orally but several doses are required as it is not absorbed as well, and the effect does not last as long. If you choose to have the vitamin K injection given to your baby, it is one injection given once after the birth, into the muscle of the thigh.

If you choose vitamin K by mouth, your baby must have three doses: Dose 1 at birth, Dose 2 usually 3-5 days later, Dose 3 done in the fourth week if the baby is fully breastfed [if the baby is formula fed they may not need the fourth dose].

HEPATITIS B VACCINE

It is recommended that immunisation against Hepatitis B is given within 24 hours of birth with a vaccine against hepatitis B alone, this is done by an injection into the muscle of the thigh. Further doses are routinely given at two months, four months and six months, as a combination vaccine [as discussed with your Maternal and Child Health Nurse].

All newborns of mothers known to have chronic hepatitis B must receive both: a birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine and hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG). These should both be given on the day of birth, at the same time but in separate thighs.

Your midwife should give you information about these injections – you must provide consent to your baby being given these injections. Ask questions if you have not been told about them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is this injection for?

When will it be given to my baby?

Does it need to be done right away, or can I wait to make a decision?

NEWBORN SCREENING TEST [NST]

After 48 hours your baby will be weighed and the midwife will offer to complete a blood test on the baby called a Newborn Screening Test [NST]. The test should be explained to you and your consent obtained by signing the test card.

This test screens for rare metabolic disorders that if found early can be treated [but not cured]. The main conditions tested for are Phenylketonuria, Congenital Hypothyroidism and Cystic Fibrosis and other rarer conditions.

The baby's heel is pricked, and the drops of blood put onto a card which is sent to the lab at the Royal Children's Hospital for testing. Usually you do not hear any news unless the test needs to be repeated.

Other tests may be offered for your baby, if you are not sure what they are or why they are offered always ask for more information. You can hold or feed your baby for comfort while the test is being done.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is this test for?

What happens if there is a positive result?

Can I hold my baby while you do the test?

RESOURCES

<https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/vitamin-k-at-birth>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/vitamin-k-and-newborn-babies>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/hepatitis-b-immunisation>

<https://www.vcgs.org.au/tests/newborn-bloodspot-screening>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/health-daily-care/health-concerns/newborn-screening>

DISCLAIMER

This information is not intended to be medical advice, it is a guide only. Please ask your midwife or doctor for information and advice directly related to your care and your baby's care.