

# TONGUE TIE DIVISION & VITAMIN K

The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with information to help you make an informed decision. Obviously you are free to choose the option you feel is best for your baby, and this will not affect your care. Treatment will not be withheld if you decide not to have vitamin K.

## WHAT IS VITAMIN K DEFICIENCY BLEEDING?

VKDB is a rare condition which can cause significant bleeding and, in very rare cases, death due to bleeding in the brain. It is considered to be preventable by giving a vitamin K injection at birth or by a few oral doses of vitamin K.

The risk of VKDB in the period between birth and age 6 months is highest for babies who are exclusively breastfed as formula has added Vitamin K.

Classic VKDB occurs between days 2–7, often causing bleeding from the umbilical cord, skin or blood in nappies.

While late VKDB occurs from 3 weeks to 6 months, often causes internal bleeding, such as bleeding in the brain. Without Vitamin K at birth, 4.4–7.2 per 100,000 infants develop late VKDB.

## CHOOSING VITAMIN K NOW

Vitamin K is a dietary supplement, derived from plants, it is considered to be safe and effective at reducing the risk of VKDB. It is recommended by the NHS. Vitamin K can be given via an injection or three oral doses. You can still choose to give Vitamin K at this later stage. Just contact your GP or Maternity Unit to arrange this.

If you choose to give vitamin K, just a single oral dose of vitamin K, given 1 day before the tongue tie procedure, should be sufficient to give a beneficial effect.



## CAN A BLOOD TEST CHECK FOR VKDB?

There is no need to do any routine blood test to check clotting (coagulation screen) before the frenotomy. That is because coagulation (clotting) screen is not a sensitive marker for vitamin K deficiency. By the time the coagulation screen becomes deranged (abnormal), a baby would be in advanced deficiency.

## RISKS OF TONGUE TIE DIVISION WITHOUT VITAMIN K

A small amount of bleeding is expected after a frenotomy. However, if there is prolonged oozing that does not settle within the expected timeframe, it could be a sign of vitamin K deficiency bleeding (VKDB) and should be investigated. A baby would not have a life-threatening bleed from the frenotomy site itself, only prolonged oozing. However, if a baby has not received vitamin K and develops VKDB, a life-threatening bleed could occur later.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Evidence based birth – Evidence for the Vitamin K shot in newborns
- Srah Wickham – Vitamin K resources
- Please contact your GP or Maternity team if you wish to have Vitamin K. We can arrange your visit to accommodate this.