Your baby and Vitamin K

Vitamin K is a vital nutrient that our body needs for blood to clot and stop bleeding. Babies are born with very small amounts of vitamin K in their bodies. Vitamin K deficiency bleeding or VKDB, is a condition that occurs when the baby does not have enough vitamin K.

Protect Your Baby From Bleeds

How can I prevent VKDB?
The good news is that VKDB is easily prevented. The easiest and most reliable way to give babies vitamin K is by a shot into a muscle. One shot given at birth will protect your baby from VKDB.

Is Vitamin K safe?
Yes. Vitamin K is safe and has no increased risk to the infant. The American Academy of Pediatrics have recommended vitamin K for all newborns since 1961.
About half of all babies who develop VKDB bleed into their brains.

What are the warning signs of VKDB?
In the majority of cases of VKDB, there are NO WARNING SIGNS at all before a life-threatening bleed starts. Babies who do not get a vitamin K shot at birth might develop any of these signs of VKDB:

- Easy bruising especially around the baby’s head and face
- Bleeding from the nose or umbilical cord
- Paler than usual skin color or, for dark skinned babies, pale appearing gums
- Yellow eyes after the baby is 3 weeks old
- Blood in the stool, black tarry stool or vomiting blood

Resources
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/vitamink
http://www.aafp.org/home.html
http://www.healthychildren.org
http://evidencebasedbirth.com

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities