

## **The 411 on Vitamin K**

### **What is Vitamin K?**

Also known as the clotting vitamin because of its role in blood clotting, vitamin K is a fat-soluble vitamin that may also maintain strong bones. Found in leafy green vegetables like kale, spinach, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower, as well as cereals, soybeans, and other veggies, Vitamin K is also made by bacteria that line the gastrointestinal tract.

Deficiency is quite rare, although it can occur after long-term antibiotic treatment; symptoms include easy bruising and bleeding.

Certain individuals, however, need to be very careful with regards to their Vitamin K intake. If you are on Warfarin (Coumadin), or any other prescription blood thinners, you must ask your doctor about your Vitamin K intake, as it can interfere with medication. Being on a blood thinner does not necessary mean you should avoid all foods with vitamin K, but you do need to be careful about your keeping your day-to-day intake regular.

Individuals taking the weight loss medicine Orlistat (Xenical, Alli) are at risk of deficiency, as the drug can reduce the body's absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (other fat-soluble vitamins include A, D, and E). If you are on orlistat, your doctor should have recommended a multivitamin with fat soluble vitamins.

*Fun fact:* Newborns in the U.S. customarily receive vitamin K injections just after delivery. That's because babies are born without bacteria in their intestines and cannot receive enough vitamin K from breast milk.

### **What is Vitamin K2?**

Vitamin K2 is a bone-building metabolic byproduct of vitamin K. K2 helps move calcium from your blood to your bone if you're calcium deficient, according to Dr. Mehmet Oz. (<http://www.doctoroz.com/videos/warning-signs-osteoporosis>) In fact, Vitamin K-deficient individuals have actually been shown to have a 30% increased risk of hip fractures than those with higher intakes. Also known as menaquinone-n, vitamin K2 is created in the body by naturally occurring bacteria inhabiting the intestines.

K2 can be found in an exotic food called natto, a Japanese fermented soybean dish. Sound too funky? You can also get K2 from low-fat cottage cheese, chicken, kefir, and certain cheeses, such as our farmer cheese.

### **How can kefir help?**

Kefir is an excellent source of Vitamin K, along with calcium, magnesium, Vitamin B12, and probiotics. According to kefir fan Nicholas Perricone, MD, kefir also contains

lactoferrin, which stimulates new bone growth while preventing further breakdown of existing bone tissue.

Kefir also lines the GI tract with healthy bacteria, crucial for vitamin K2 production. Each serving of Lifeway kefir contains approximately 300 micrograms of vitamin K2.

Sources:

<http://health.discovery.com/fansites/dr-oz/aging/special-k.html>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002407.htm>

<http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/vitamin-k-000343.htm>

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/279845-list-of-food-with-vitamin-k/>

<http://www.dailyperricone.com/tag/kefir/>