

are not effective in the prevention and treatment of chlamydial conjunctivitis. A 14-day course of oral erythromycin or ethylsuccinate may be given for chlamydial conjunctivitis ([Pickering and American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Infectious Diseases, 2012](#)). The administration of oral erythromycin to infants younger than 6 weeks old has been associated with the development of infantile hypertrophic pyloric stenosis; therefore parents should be informed of the potential risks and signs of the illness ([Pickering and American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Infectious Diseases, 2012](#)).

Herpes simplex virus may also cause neonatal conjunctivitis; treatment in such cases involves the use of topical and systemic antiviral medications.

Recent publications have explored alternate substances for ophthalmia neonatorum prevention, with a focus on growing concerns about the development of antimicrobial resistance. Colostrum ([Ghaemi, Navaei, Rahimirad, et al, 2014](#)) and povidone iodine (2.5%) ([David, Rumelt, and Weintraub, 2011](#); [Meyer, 2014](#)) have been studied with small samples of infants. These substances may prove to be reasonable alternatives for ophthalmia neonatorum prophylaxis in the future.

Because studies on maternal attachment emphasize that in the first hour of life a newborn has a greater ability to focus on coordinated movement than at any other time during the next several days and because eye contact is very important in the development of maternal–infant bonding, the routine administration of silver nitrate or topical ophthalmic antibiotics can be postponed for up to 1 hour after birth. However, practitioners must ensure that the drug is given by 1 hour of age.

Vitamin K Administration

Shortly after birth, vitamin K is administered to prevent hemorrhagic disease of the newborn. Normally, vitamin K is synthesized by the intestinal flora. However, because infants' intestines are relatively sterile at birth and because breast milk contains low levels of vitamin K, the supply is inadequate for at least the first 3 or 4 days. The major function of vitamin K is to catalyze the synthesis of prothrombin in the liver, which is needed for blood clotting. The vastus lateralis muscle is the traditionally