Parent Fact Sheet

Galactosemia (GALT)

(Ga lacto see me a)

What is Galactosemia?

Galactosemia (GALT) is a metabolic disorder. This means the body has a chemical imbalance. GALT is a condition in which an enzyme is absent. That missing enzyme prevents the body from breaking down and using lactose (milk sugar). GALT is inherited. It is present at birth.

What type of problems occurs with GALT?

A baby who has this condition may have a poor appetite, yellow color to eyes, and an enlarged liver. Early diagnosis and treatment will help prevent these problems.

What is the chance my baby will have GALT?

This condition occurs in less than 1 in every 50,000 births. Babies born with this condition have a changed gene from each parent. A person who has one changed gene is called a carrier. A person who is a carrier does not have symptoms. If both parents are carriers, either parent can pass on the changed gene to their baby. If both parents pass on the changed gene, the baby will have the condition. If both parents are carriers, for each pregnancy:

- There is a 25% chance that the baby will be born with this condition.
- There is a 50% chance that the baby will be a carrier for this condition.
- There is a 25% chance that the baby will not be born with this condition and will not be a carrier.

What is the treatment of GALT?

The treatment of GALT is a lactose-free diet. Putting infants on soy formula is common. Your baby's metabolic doctor will help you make sure that your baby gets the right diet and medical care.

Where in Virginia can I take my baby for care?

Please speak to your baby's pediatrician about obtaining a referral to a pediatric metabolic specialist in your area. If you want to know more about this condition, please contact Virginia Newborn Screening Services, Virginia Department of Health. The Web site is http://www.vahealth.org/gns.

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