

# KENTUCKY NEWBORN SCREENING PROGRAM

## PARENT TEACHING SHEET

Kentucky Newborn Screening Program, 275 East Main Street, Frankfort, KY 40621, Phone (502) 564-3756, Fax (502) 564-1510

### Galactosemia (GALT)

#### CAUSE

GALT is caused when the liver enzyme that helps the body break down galactose (a form of milk sugar) is either missing or not working properly. Since galactose cannot be broken down in a child with GALT, it builds up in the body and causes damage to the liver, brain, kidneys, eyes, and various other body systems.

#### IF NOT TREATED

GALT babies may appear normal at birth, but their condition can rapidly worsen if they are given any form of human or animal milk products. Exposure to milk products may result in liver damage, mental delays, cataract formation, partial blindness, and kidney failure – to the point where death can occur as early as one to two weeks of age.

#### TREATMENT OPTIONS

Your child will need to be under the care of a metabolic specialist and dietician. Treatment will be needed throughout life.

- Your child's metabolic specialist and dietician will put your child on a soy-based formula and develop a diet plan as your child gets older.
- As the GALT patient must avoid any food that contains milk or milk products, you will have to learn to read product ingredient labels at the grocery in order to also avoid foods that may contain dry milk products, as well.

#### IF TREATED

If diagnosis is made early and milk products are strictly avoided, the child with GALT can expect to live a relatively normal life. However, mild mental delays may still develop in GALT patients despite strict avoidance of galactose.

