# KENTUCKY NEWBORN SCREENING PROGRAM

# PARENT TEACHING SHEET

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# Argininemia (ARG)

## CAUSE

Argininemia affects an enzyme needed to break down certain proteins and remove waste ammonia from the body.

A person with argininemia doesn't have enough enzymes to break down protein and remove ammonia from the body. Ammonia is very harmful to the body and can cause health problems if not removed.

Argininemia is a genetic disorder that is passed on (inherited) from parents to a child. The mother and father of an affected child carry a gene change that can cause argininemia. Parents usually do not have signs or symptoms, or even know they carry the gene change.

## IF NOT TREATED

Argininemia is different for each child. Some children have a mild form of argininemia with few health problems, while other children may have a severe form of argininemia with serious complications.

If argininemia is not treated, a child might develop:

- Feeding problems
- Irritability
- Poor growth
- Seizures
- Vomiting
- Muscle stiffness (spasticity)
- Learning problems

It is very important to follow the doctor's instructions for testing and treatment.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

Argininemia can be treated. Treatment is life-long and can include:

- Low protein diet - a dietician will help you set up the best diet for your child.
- Special formula low in protein.
- Medications to help prevent high ammonia.

Children with argininemia should see their regular doctor, a doctor who specializes in argininemia, and a dietician.

## IF TREATED

Prompt and careful treatment helps children with argininemia live the healthiest lives possible.