ABOUT PKU

1. PKU stands for *phenylketonuria*. It is a genetic disorder in which the individual is born without the ability to break down a certain amino acid called phenylalanine. When phenylalanine builds up in the blood it damages the brain and can cause mental retardation. Fortunately, when an individual is diagnosed early in life and the phenylalanine level in the blood is kept in good control, mental retardation can be prevented. (For more information, see the *New Parents' Guide to PKU*.)

2. The diet of an individual with PKU consists of a special formula (medical food), called Phenyl-Free® and low protein foods.

3. A child with well-controlled blood phenylalanine (phe) levels will act and look like other children of the same age. The only difference between children with PKU and other children is in the foods the child with PKU can and cannot eat.

4. If you would like more information on PKU please see:

   - The New Parents' Guide to PKU
     (in the "Clinic Information" section)
   - The PKU Self-Management Timeline
     (in the "Clinic Information" section)
   - University of Washington PKU Clinic website:
     http://depts.washington.edu/pku
   - The National PKU News website:
     http://www.pkunews.org
   - National PKU Newsletter
     (order forms in the "Clinic Information" section)

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