

Propionic Acidemia (PA) (pro-pee-ON-ik a-sid-EE-mia)

What is PA?

Propionic Acidemia (PA) is a metabolic disorder. This means the body has a chemical imbalance. PA is a condition where the body is unable to completely break down protein. People with this condition have a build up of toxic chemicals that result in illness. Stress, not eating, having surgery, or illnesses can trigger this action. PA is inherited. This means it is present at birth.

What type of problems occurs with PA?

A baby who has this condition may have little to no appetite, have vomiting, and not be as alert and responsive as usual. If untreated, this condition can lead to seizures, coma, or even death. Children with PA may have feeding problems, which can lead to delays in growth and development. Early diagnosis and treatment will help prevent these problems.

What is the chance my baby will have PA?

This condition occurs in about 1 in every 75,000 births. It is more common among people of Saudi Arabian background. 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 PA?

The treatment of this condition is a low protein diet. A special medical formula and carnitine supplements may also be used. Your baby's metabolic doctor will help you make sure that your baby gets the right diet and medical care. Routine illness, like the common cold, can make this condition worse. So be sure to contact your baby's doctor whenever your baby gets sick.

Where in Virginia can I take my baby for care?

There are three different treatment centers in Virginia. The names of the centers and the metabolic doctor are listed below.

- Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, Dr. Arti Pandya
- Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, Virginia, Dr. Virginia Proud
- University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, Dr. Bill Wilson

If you want to know more about this condition, please contact Virginia Newborn Screening Services, Virginia Department of Health. The telephone number is 804-864-7714 or 804-864-7715. The Web site is <http://www.vahealth.org/genetics>.



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