

Glycomacropeptide (GMP)-Based Food for the Treatment of PKU and Other Metabolic Disorders

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Technology description

Phenylketonuria (PKU) is a genetic disorder in which an individual lacks the enzyme phenylalanine hydroxylase (PAH) that converts the amino acid phenylalanine into tyrosine. If left untreated, the buildup of phenylalanine in the blood can lead to mental retardation and central nervous system disorders.

The treatment for PKU is a lifelong reduced protein diet. Because most proteins contain significant amounts of phenylalanine, the specialized diet usually is protein poor and supplemented with other amino acids. This diet is difficult to follow, restrictive and unpalatable. Non-compliance is a common problem and can cause severe neuropsychological impairment. UW-Madison researchers have developed an improved medical food for treating PKU. This food is made with highly purified glycomacropeptide (GMP) as its primary protein source and supplemented with other amino acids, including arginine, histidine, leucine, tyrosine and tryptophan. It provides a complete, low-phenylalanine source of protein and is more palatable than the standard specialized diet.

GMP is a naturally occurring protein that is formed during cheese making and contains no phenylalanine. The purity of GMP is one key to producing this medical food. The other is the amount and type of amino acid supplementation. For example, if too many sulfur-containing amino acids are used, the food tastes bad and patients will not eat it.

The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) is seeking commercial partners interested in developing improved medical food for the nutritional management of phenylketonuria (PKU).

Additional Information

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Application area

Nutritional management of PKU

Advantages

Provides the highest quality, most effective medicinal foodstuff available for treating patients with PKU
Provides a complete source of protein while reducing the levels of phenylalanine in the blood of patients with PKU
Tastes good enough for patients to remain compliant with the diet
Economically feasible to manufacture
Can be produced as a variety of food types, including beverages, bars, wafers, puddings, gelatins, crackers, fruit leathers, nut butters, sauces, flakes, crisp cereal pieces, puffs, pellets and extruded solids
May be used to treat other metabolic disorders in addition to PKU

Institution

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