

# YOU ARE WHAT YOU



## Food Restrictions: No Pastries for Pettit

LexiWalz

**M**eat, dairy, pasta, bread, chocolate, fish or any other foods containing a lot of protein, are off limits to junior Molly Pettit's diet. Pettit is diagnosed with a metabolic disorder named Phenylketonuria, or PKU for short. PKU (phenylketonuria) is an inherited disorder of body chemistry that, if untreated, can cause mental retardation. Fortunately, because PKU is now included in newborn screening tests, Molly has always treated her case.

Individuals with PKU cannot digest a part of protein called phenylalanine, which is present in most foods. Without treatment, phenylalanine builds up in the bloodstream and causes brain damage. "My body cannot break down the protein so I would have to have eaten a pretty good amount of it in order for it to affect me. However, if I continue to eat this food with a lot of that protein, my body cannot break up the protein, and I may damage my brain seriously," Pettit said.

If too much protein is consumed by a person that has PKU, the first symptoms include the muscles becoming weaker, or they react slower.

What seems like an inconvenience to many is completely normal to Pettit. She may not eat any of the high-in-protein foods many Marian girls love, however this does not phase her. "It doesn't bother me that much because I have never had a large amount of what I am not supposed to eat. Since I have had it since birth, I have adjusted to eating different foods than other people," Pettit explained.

Pettit's Pastry, Pettit's family owned bakery that has been operating since 1954, offers many things that are high in protein that Molly cannot eat. "It is only annoying when my dad brings something home that looks really good, and I can't have it. I'm not supposed to eat the products but I have a little, once in a while. Preferably my dad's cupcakes," Pettit said.

Pettit's mother and father do everything they can to make Pettit feel comfortable along with her younger sister Kalli, who is also diagnosed with the metabolic disorder. "When my little sister was 4 or 5 and didn't understand

the disorder. She used to sneak into the cupboard and steal chocolate bars. She would then take them under the kitchen table and eat them," Pettit said. "They prepare special foods and purchase food through a special company that fits our diet." The companies range from Cambrooke Foods or an online site called Pkupertpectives.com.

"Some restaurants get really confused when I'm ordering, for example, a wrap. I tell them I'll have it without meat and cheese and disregarding my order they put meat and cheese in the wrap," Pettit said. "It gets frustrating when they always mess up my orders."

A varsity athlete in the sports volleyball and basketball, Pettit has to manage her condition very carefully. "If my protein level becomes too high it affects my muscles and brain. I usually feel tired and my muscles feel sore or weak. This usually makes me play lethargically," Pettit said. Pettit's disorder has never and will never stop her from fulfilling her aspirations or dreams.

Graphic by Allison Dethiefs





# 100 Calories

By the Glass  
100 Calorie Equivalencies

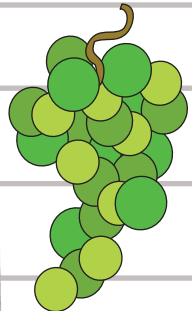
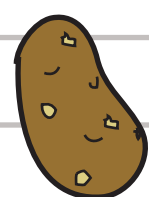
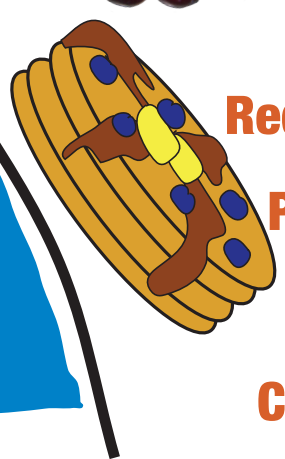


Graphic and Photos by Allison Dethlefs

## Eat this

Which do Marian girls prefer?

## Not That



- Wheat Thins: 80%
- Mashed Potatoes: 76%
- Ice Cream: 66%
- Chex Mix: 66%
- Bacon: 65%
- Red Grapes: 63%
- Pancakes: 55%
- Mayo: 55%
- Cheez-Its: 54%

- 20%: Triscuts
- 24%: Baked Potatoes
- 34%: Frozen Yogurt
- 34%: Gardettos
- 35%: Sausage
- 37%: Green Grapes
- 45%: Waffles
- 45%: Mustard
- 46%: Goldfish

Graphic and Photos by Kaylee Asche, Kathleen Gerber, Allison Dethlefs