Instructions for Use

For the rapid, sensitive and accurate detection of Caspase-3 inhibition by various compounds

This product is for research use only and is not intended for diagnostic use.

PLEASE NOTE: With the acquisition of BioVision by Abcam, we have made some changes to component names and packaging to better align with our global standards as we work towards environmental-friendly and efficient growth. You are receiving the same high-quality products as always, with no changes to specifications or protocols.
Table of Contents

1. Overview 2
2. Protocol Summary 2
3. Components and Storage 3
4. Assay Protocol 5
5. Factors to consider for caspase activity assays 7
6. Troubleshooting 9
1. Overview

Caspases have been shown to play a crucial role in apoptosis induced by various deleterious and physiologic stimuli. Inhibition of caspases can delay apoptosis, implicating a potential role in drug screening efforts.

Abcam’s Caspase-3 Inhibitor Drug Detection Kit provides an effective means for screening caspase inhibitors using fluorometric methods. The assay utilizes synthetic peptide substrate DEVD-AFC (AFC, 7-amino-4-trifluoromethyl coumarin). Active Caspase-3 cleaves the synthetic substrate to release free AFC, which can then be quantified by fluorometry. Compounds to be screened can directly be added to the reaction and the level of inhibition of Caspase-3 activity can be determined by comparison of the fluorescence intensity in samples with and without the testing inhibitors.

2. Protocol Summary

Sample Preparation

↓

Prepare and Add Master Mix

↓

Measure Fluorescence
3. Components and Storage

A. Kit Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2X Reaction Buffer I/2X Reaction Buffer</td>
<td>10 mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVD-AFC/Caspase Substrate DEVD-AFC (1 mM)</td>
<td>0.5 mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTT II/DTT (1 M)</td>
<td>100 µL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Caspase 3/Active Caspase-3 (Lyophilized)</td>
<td>100 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z-VAD-FMK/Caspase Inhibitor, Z-VAD-FMK (2 mM)</td>
<td>10 µL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Store kit at -20°C. All components are stable for 6 months under proper storage conditions.

Protect DEVD-AFC from light.

REACTION BUFFER: After thawing, store the 2X Reaction Buffer I/2X Reaction Buffer at +4°C. Aliquot enough 2X Reaction Buffer I/2X Reaction Buffer for the number of assays to be performed. Add DTT II/DTT to the 2X Reaction Buffer I/2X Reaction Buffer immediately before use (10 mM final concentration: add 10 µL of 1.0 M DTT II/DTT stock per 1 ml of 2X Reaction Buffer I/2X Reaction Buffer).
ACTIVE CASPASE 3/ACTIVE CASPASE-3: Reconstitute in 550 μL 2X Reaction Buffer I/2X Reaction Buffer. Aliquot and immediately store at -80°C.

B. Additional Materials Required

- Microcentrifuge
- Pipettes and pipette tips
- Fluorescent microplate reader
- 96-well plate
- Orbital shaker
4. Assay Protocol

1. Prepare test inhibitor samples in dH\textsubscript{2}O. Add 5 µL of Active Caspase 3/Active Caspase-3. Adjust volume with dH\textsubscript{2}O to a final volume of 50 µL/well. Mix well.

Prepare a **background control** by omitting the Active Caspase 3/Active Caspase-3 from the reaction mixture. The final volume should be 50 µL/well.

Prepare a **positive inhibition control** by adding 1 µL of the Caspase-3 Inhibitor (provided with the kit) instead of your testing inhibitor. The final volume should be 50 µL/well.

Prepare a **caspase activity positive control** by adding 5 µL of Active Caspase 3/Active Caspase-3 and top up with dH\textsubscript{2}O to a final volume of 50 µL/well. Mix well

*Note: This product detects proteolytic activity. Do not use protease inhibitors in the sample preparation step as it might interfere with the assay.*

2. Prepare a Master Mix for each assay containing the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
45 \mu\text{L} \\
2X \text{ Reaction Buffer} &/ 2X \\
\text{Reaction Buffer} & \\
\text{(containing 10mM DTT II/DTT)} & \\
\text{DEVD-AFC/1mM DEVD-AFC} & 5 \mu\text{L}
\end{align*}
\]
substrate (50μM final concentration)

3. Mix well and add 50 μL of the Master Mix to each well to start the reaction. Incubate at 37°C for 0.5-1 hour.

4. Read samples in a fluorescence plate reader equipped with a 400 nm excitation filter and 505 nm emission filter.

Compare the fluorescence intensity of the caspase activity positive control to determine the inhibition efficiency of the testing inhibitors.
5. Factors to consider for caspase activity assays

Three major factors need to be taken into account when using caspase activity assays:

1. The substrate in a particular assay is not necessarily specific to a particular caspase.
   Cleavage specificities overlap so reliance on a single substrate/assay is not recommended. Other assays, such as Western blot or use of fluorescent substrates e.g. FRET assays should be used in combination with caspase activity assays.

2. The expression and abundance of each caspase in a particular cell type and cell line will vary.

3. As the activation and cleavage of caspases in the cascade will change over time, you should consider when particular caspase will be at its peak concentration e.g. after 3 hours, after 20 hours etc.

The table below shows the known cross-reactivities with other caspases.

Classification of caspases based on synthetic substrate preference, does not reflect the real caspase substrate preference in vivo and may provide inaccurate information for discriminating amongst caspase activities. Thus, caution is advised in applying the intrinsic tetrapeptide preferences to predict the targets of individual caspases.
## Apoptotic Executer Caspases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caspase</th>
<th>Cleavage motif</th>
<th>Inhibitor motif</th>
<th>Cross-reactivity with other caspase:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caspase -3</td>
<td>DEVD</td>
<td>DEVD, LEHD*, IETD, LETD</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caspase 6</td>
<td>VEID</td>
<td>DEVD, LEHD*, IETD, LETD</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caspase 7</td>
<td>DEVD</td>
<td>DEVD, LEHD*, IETD, LETD</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *inhibits at high concentration*
## 6. Troubleshooting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assay not working</td>
<td>Reaction buffer at wrong temperature</td>
<td>Assay buffer must be at 4°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protocol step missed</td>
<td>Re-read and follow the protocol exactly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plate read at incorrect wavelength</td>
<td>Ensure you are using appropriate reader and filter settings (refer to datasheet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuitable microtiter plate for assay</td>
<td>Fluorescence: Black plates (clear bottoms); Luminescence: White plates; Colorimetry: Clear plates. If critical, datasheet will indicate whether to use flat- or U-shaped wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected results</td>
<td>Measured at wrong wavelength</td>
<td>Use appropriate reader and filter settings described in datasheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samples contain impeding substances</td>
<td>Troubleshoot and also consider deproteinizing samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuitable sample type</td>
<td>Use recommended sample types as listed on the datasheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Issues</td>
<td>Improperly thawed components</td>
<td>Thaw all components completely and mix gently before use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect incubation times or temperatures</td>
<td>Refer to datasheet &amp; verify the correct incubation times and temperatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect volumes used</td>
<td>Use calibrated pipettes and aliquot correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Air bubbles formed in the well/tube</td>
<td>Pipette gently against the wall of the well/tubes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substituting reagents from older kits/ lots</td>
<td>Use fresh components from the same kit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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