

Version 3 Last updated 3 June 2020

ab221012 p38 MAPK α Total SimpleStep ELISA[®] Kit

For the semi-quantitative measurement of p38 MAPK α Total in Human and mouse cell lysates.

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

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1. Overview

p38 MAPK α Total in vitro SimpleStep ELISA (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay) kit is designed for the semi-quantitative measurement of total p38 MAPK α protein in Human and mouse cells.

The SimpleStep ELISA employs an affinity tag labeled capture antibody and a reporter conjugated detector antibody which immunocapture the sample analyte in solution. This entire complex (capture antibody/analyte/detector antibody) is in turn immobilized via immunoaffinity of an anti-tag antibody coating the well. To perform the assay, samples or controls are added to the wells, followed by the Antibody Cocktail. After incubation, the wells are washed to remove unbound material. TMB substrate is added and during incubation is catalyzed by HRP, generating blue coloration. This reaction is then stopped by addition of Stop Solution completing any color change from blue to yellow. Signal is generated proportionally to the amount of bound analyte and the intensity is measured at 450 nm. Optionally, instead of the endpoint reading, development of TMB can be recorded kinetically at 600 nm.

p38 MAPK α is a member of the MAP kinase family, which are involved in a wide variety of cellular processes such as proliferation, differentiation, transcription regulation and development. In particular, p38 MAPK α is activated by phosphorylation at Thr180 and Tyr182, which is mediated by a variety of cellular stresses including inflammatory cytokines, UV light, osmotic shock and lipopolysaccharides.

Activated p38 MAP kinase has been shown to phosphorylate and activate several downstream kinases and transcription factors implicated in regulating stress related transcription and the control of cell cycle.

2. Protocol Summary

Prepare all reagents, samples, and controls as instructed



Add 50 μ L control or sample to appropriate wells



Add 50 μ L Antibody Cocktail to all wells



Incubate at room temperature for 1 hour



Aspirate and wash each well three times with 350 μ L 1X Wash Buffer PT



Add 100 μ L TMB Substrate to each well and incubate for 15 minutes.



Add 100 μ L Stop Solution and read OD at 450 nm

3. Precautions

Please read these instructions carefully prior to beginning the assay.

- All kit components have been formulated and quality control tested to function successfully as a kit.
- We understand that, occasionally, experimental protocols might need to be modified to meet unique experimental circumstances. However, we cannot guarantee the performance of the product outside the conditions detailed in this protocol booklet.
- Reagents should be treated as possible mutagens and should be handled with care and disposed of properly. Please review the Safety Datasheet (SDS) provided with the product for information on the specific components.
- Observe good laboratory practices. Gloves, lab coat, and protective eyewear should always be worn. Never pipet by mouth. Do not eat, drink or smoke in the laboratory areas.
- All biological materials should be treated as potentially hazardous and handled as such. They should be disposed of in accordance with established safety procedures.

4. Storage and Stability

Store kit at +4°C immediately upon receipt.

Refer to list of materials supplied for storage conditions of individual components. Observe the storage conditions for individual prepared components in the Materials Supplied section.

5. Limitations

- Assay kit intended for research use only. Not for use in diagnostic procedures.
- Do not mix or substitute reagents or materials from other kit lots or vendors. Kits are QC tested as a set of components and performance cannot be guaranteed if utilized separately or substituted.

6. Materials Supplied

Item	Quantity	Storage Condition
p38 MAPK α Total Capture Antibody	3mL	+4°C
p38 MAPK α Total Detector Antibody	3mL	+4°C
Control Lysate	1 Vial	+4°C
10X Wash Buffer PT	15 mL	+4°C
5X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR	12 mL	+4°C
50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution	1 mL	+4°C
TMB Substrate	12 mL	+4°C
Stop Solution	12 mL	+4°C
Pre-Coated 96 Well Microplate (12 x 8 well strips)	96 Wells	+4°C
Plate Seal	1	+4°C

Control Lysate:

Prepared from HeLa cells, cultured to confluence in T175 flasks in 10% FBS containing medium, then treated with 2 μ g/mL anisomycin for 15min.

7. Materials Required, Not Supplied

These materials are not included in the kit, but will be required to successfully perform this assay:

- Microplate reader capable of measuring absorbance at 450 or 600 nm.
- Method for determining protein concentration (BCA assay recommended).
- Deionized water.
- Multi- and single-channel pipettes.
- Tubes for Control lysate dilution.
- Plate shaker for all incubation steps.
- Optional: Phenylmethylsulfonyl Fluoride (PMSF) (or other protease inhibitors).
- PBS

8. Technical Hints

- Samples generating values higher than the highest Control Lysate should be further diluted in the appropriate sample dilution buffers.
- Avoid foaming or bubbles when mixing or reconstituting components.
- Avoid cross contamination of samples or reagents by changing tips between sample, control and reagent additions.
- Ensure plates are properly sealed or covered during incubation steps.
- Complete removal of all solutions and buffers during wash steps is necessary to minimize background.
- As a guide, typical ranges of sample concentration for commonly used sample types are shown below in Sample Preparation (section 11).
- All samples should be mixed thoroughly and gently.
- Avoid multiple freeze/thaw of samples.
- Incubate ELISA plates on a plate shaker during all incubation steps.
- When generating positive control samples, it is advisable to change pipette tips after each step.

- The provided 5X Cell Extraction Buffer contains phosphatase inhibitors. Protease inhibitors can be added if required.
- The provided 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution may precipitate when stored at + 4°C. To dissolve, warm briefly at + 37°C and mix gently. The 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution can be stored at room temperature to avoid precipitation.
- To avoid high background always add samples or controls to the well before the addition of the Antibody Cocktail.
- This kit is sold based on number of tests. A 'test' simply refers to a single assay well. The number of wells that contain sample or control will vary by product. Review the protocol completely to confirm this kit meets your requirements. Please contact our Technical Support staff with any questions.

9. Reagent Preparation

- Equilibrate all reagents to room temperature (18-25°C) prior to use. The kit contains enough reagents for 96 wells. The reagent volumes below are sufficient for 48 wells (6 x 8-well strips); adjust volumes as needed for the number of strips in your experiment.
- Prepare only as much reagent as is needed on the day of the experiment. Capture and Detector Antibodies have only been tested for stability in the provided 2X formulations.

9.1 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR (For cell and tissue extracts only):

Prepare 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR by diluting 5X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR and 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution to 1X with deionized water. To make 10 mL 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR combine 7.8 mL deionized water, 2 mL 5X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR and 200 µL 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution. Mix thoroughly and gently. If required protease inhibitors can be added.

Alternative – Enhancer may be added to 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR after extraction of cells or tissue. Refer to note in the Troubleshooting section.

9.2 1X Wash Buffer PT:

Prepare 1X Wash Buffer PT by diluting 10X Wash Buffer PT with deionized water. To make 60 mL 1X Wash Buffer PT combine 6 mL 10X Wash Buffer PT with 54 mL deionized water. Mix thoroughly and gently.

9.3 5X Cell Extraction/Enhancer Buffer PTR:

Prepare 5X Cell Extraction/Enhancer Buffer PTR by adding 1/10th volume of 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution. To prepare 1 mL, add 100 µL of 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution to 900 µL of 5X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR. This concentrated mix is used for lysing cells directly in cell culture medium.

9.4 Antibody Cocktail:

Prepare Antibody Cocktail by combining an appropriate volume of the capture and detector antibodies immediately prior to assay. To make 3 mL of the Antibody Cocktail combine 1.5 mL Capture Antibody with 1.5 mL Detector Antibody. Mix thoroughly and gently.

10. Control Lysate Preparation

Kit Control lysates are provided at a concentration that give consistent signal between different lots. Lysates are produced and formulated by signal intensity to be consistent to within 30% of the previous lot. As such, Control lysates are not provided with a protein concentration.

- Always prepare a fresh set of positive controls for every use.
- Prepare serially diluted control lysates immediately prior to use.
- Discard working lysate dilutions after use as they do not store well.
- The following section describes the preparation of a lysate dilution series for duplicate measurements (recommended).

10.1 Reconstitute the Lyophilized p38 MAPK Control Lysate* by adding 250 μL water. Mix thoroughly and gently. Hold at room temperature for 1 minute and mix gently. This is the 100% **Stock Lysate** Solution. Remaining stock material should be aliquoted and stored at $-80\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$.

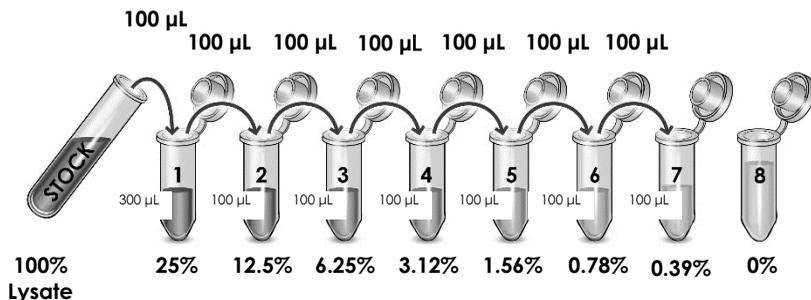
10.2 Label eight tubes, Controls 1– 8.

10.3 Add 300 μL of 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR into tube number 1 and 100 μL of 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR into numbers 2-8.

10.4 Use the Stock Lysate to prepare the following dilution series. Control #8 contains no protein and is the Blank control:

*Control lysates are supplied as a control reagent - not an absolute quantitation measure. A 3 - 4 point lysate dilution series is sufficient for this purpose.

Note: the extent of the dilution series appropriate for your samples needs to be determined empirically. Further dilutions than those shown below may be required.



11. Sample Preparation

- A cell density that yields 10,000 – 40,000 cells/well is suitable for the analysis of many cell lines. The lysis buffer volume should be adjusted so that lysates are in the range of 100-500 µg/mL of protein.

11.1 Preparation of extracts from cell pellets:

- 11.1.1 Collect non-adherent cells by centrifugation and resuspend at an appropriate density in RPMI containing 10% FBS. Typical centrifugation conditions for cells are 500 x g for 5 minutes at RT.
- 11.1.2 Return cells to a 37°C incubator for 1 - 2 hours. For certain pathways, this can allow handling-mediated pathway activation to subside. This step is optional, and depends on the activation status of your cells following re-suspension.
- 11.1.3 At the completion of the cell treatment, harvest cells by centrifugation and lyse with 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR.*
- 11.1.4 Alternatively, in the absence of centrifugation cells may be lysed directly with a 20% volume of 5X Cell Extraction/Enhancer Buffer PTR (e.g. for 80 µL of cells, use 20 µL of 5X Cell Extraction/Enhancer Buffer PTR).
- 11.1.5 Assay samples immediately or aliquot and store at -80°C. The sample protein concentration in the extract may be quantified using a protein assay.
- 11.1.6 Dilute samples to desired concentration in 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR.
*For best results, we recommend centrifugation and lysis of cells with 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR (11.2.3). Matrix effects may be observed in different cell media using the direct lysis approach (11.2).

11.2 Preparation of extracts from adherent cells by direct lysis (alternative protocol):

- 11.2.1 Remove growth media and rinse adherent cells 2 times in PBS.
- 11.2.2 Solubilize the cells by addition of chilled 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR directly to the plate (for cells cultured in 96-well microplates, lyse the cells with 100 μ L* of 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR).
*Lysis volume should be adjusted depending on the desired lysate concentration. Lysates in the range of 100 - 500 μ g/mL protein are usually sufficient.
- 11.2.3 Assay samples immediately or aliquot and store at -80°C. The sample protein concentration in the extract may be quantified using a protein assay.
- 11.2.4 Dilute samples to desired concentration in 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR.

11.3 Preparation of extracts from tissue homogenates:

- 11.3.1 Tissue lysates are typically prepared by homogenization of tissue that is first minced and thoroughly rinsed in PBS to remove blood (dounce homogenizer recommended).
- 11.3.2 Homogenize 100 to 200 mg of wet tissue in 500 μ L – 1 mL of chilled 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR. For lower amounts of tissue adjust volumes accordingly.
- 11.3.3 Incubate on ice for 20 minutes.
- 11.3.4 Centrifuge at 18,000 x g for 20 minutes at 4°C.
- 11.3.5 Transfer the supernatants into clean tubes and discard the pellets.
- 11.3.6 Assay samples immediately or aliquot and store at -80°C. The sample protein concentration in the extract may be quantified using a protein assay.
- 11.3.7 Dilute samples to desired concentration in 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR.

12. Plate Preparation

- The 96 well plate strips included with this kit are supplied ready to use. It is not necessary to rinse the plate prior to adding reagents.
- Unused plate strips should be immediately returned to the foil pouch containing the desiccant pack, resealed and stored at 4°C.
- For each assay performed, a minimum of two wells must be used as the zero control.
- For statistical reasons, we recommend each sample should be assayed with a minimum of two replicates (duplicates).
- Differences in well absorbance or “edge effects” have not been observed with this assay.

13. Assay Procedure

- Equilibrate all materials and prepared reagents to room temperature prior to use.
 - We recommend that you assay all controls and samples in duplicate.
- 13.1 Prepare all reagents, working controls, and samples as directed in the previous sections.
 - 13.2 Remove excess microplate strips from the plate frame, return them to the foil pouch containing the desiccant pack, reseal and return to 4°C storage.
 - 13.3 Add 50 µL of all sample or control to appropriate wells.
 - 13.4 Add 50 µL of the Antibody Cocktail to each well.
 - 13.5 Seal the plate and incubate for 1 hour at room temperature on a plate shaker set to 400 rpm.
 - 13.6 Wash each well with 3 x 350 µL 1X Wash Buffer PT. Wash by aspirating or decanting from wells then dispensing 350 µL 1X Wash Buffer PT into each well. Wash Buffer PT should remain in wells for at least 10 seconds. Complete removal of liquid at each step is essential for good performance. After the last wash invert the plate and tap gently against clean paper towels to remove excess liquid.
 - 13.7 Add 100 µL of TMB Substrate to each well and incubate for 15 minutes in the dark on a plate shaker set to 400 rpm.
 - 13.8 Add 100 µL of Stop Solution to each well. Shake plate on a plate shaker for 1 minute to mix. Record the OD at 450 nm. This is an endpoint reading.
 - 13.9 Alternative to 13.7 – 13.8: Instead of the endpoint reading at 450 nm, record the development of TMB Substrate kinetically. Immediately after addition of TMB Substrate begin recording the blue color development with elapsed time in the microplate reader prepared with the following settings:

Mode	Kinetic
Wavelength:	600 nm
Time:	up to 15 min
Interval:	20 sec - 1 min
Shaking:	Shake between readings

Note that an endpoint reading can also be recorded at the completion of the kinetic read by adding 100 μ L Stop Solution to each well and recording the OD at 450 nm.

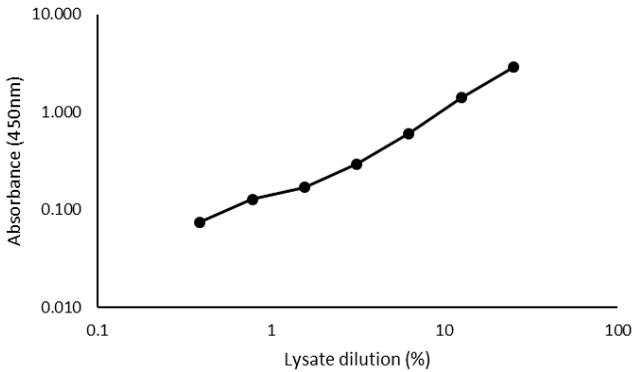
13.10 Analyze the data as described below.

14. Calculations

*Control Lysates are supplied as a control reagent – not an absolute quantitation method. □

15. Typical Data

Typical control lysate dilution series – data provided for demonstration purposes only. A new lysate dilution series must be generated for each assay performed.

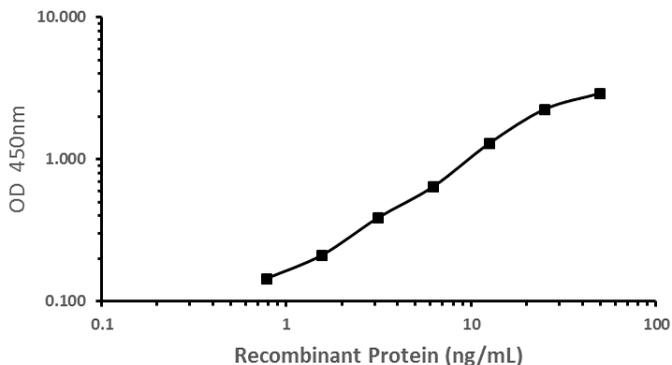


Lysate Dilution Series Measurements			
Control Lysate (%)	O.D 450 nm		Mean O.D
	1	2	
0.000	0.050	0.052	0.051
0.39	0.075	0.075	0.075
0.78	0.122	0.135	0.129
1.56	0.174	0.167	0.171
3.12	0.286	0.303	0.295
6.25	0.607	0.603	0.605
12.5	1.379	1.425	1.402
25	2.842	2.888	2.865

Figure 1. Example of a typical p38 MAPK α Total control lysate dilution series in 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR. The p38 MAPK α lysate dilution series was prepared as described in Section 10. Raw data values are shown in the table.

Kit Control lysates are provided at a concentration that give consistent signal between different lots. Lysates are produced and formulated by signal intensity to be consistent to within 30% of the previous lot. As such, Control lysates are not provided with a protein concentration.

Typical recombinant protein standard curve – data provided for demonstration purposes only.



Recombinant Protein Curve Measurements			
Concentration (ng/mL)	O.D 450 nm		Mean O.D
	1	2	
0.000	0.048	0.053	0.051
0.78	0.144	0.144	0.144
1.56	0.209	0.212	0.211
3.12	0.384	0.386	0.385
6.25	0.641	0.642	0.642
12.50	1.305	1.275	1.290
25.00	2.268	2.224	2.246
50.00	2.901	2.921	2.911

Figure 2. Example of a typical p38 MAPK α Total recombinant protein standard curve. Raw data values are shown in the table. Background-subtracted data values (mean +/- SD) are graphed.

16. Typical Sample Values

SENSITIVITY –

Important: It should be noted that absolute mass quantitation of the phosphorylated target in a cellular extract is not possible, whereas it is possible for the total protein. The latter requires generation of a standard curve for recombinant protein, and interpolation of the cellular sample values. The graph and values above (Section 15) are of an indicative nature only.

As a guide, p38 MAPK α Total is detectable in activated HeLa extracts (anisomycin treated) with a total cellular protein concentration < 5 μ g/mL (see Figure 1).

PRECISION –

Mean coefficient of variations of interpolated values from 3 concentrations of HeLa extracts within the working range of the assay.

Sample Type	Intra Assay	Inter Assay
n=	6	3
CV (%)	3.4	4.7

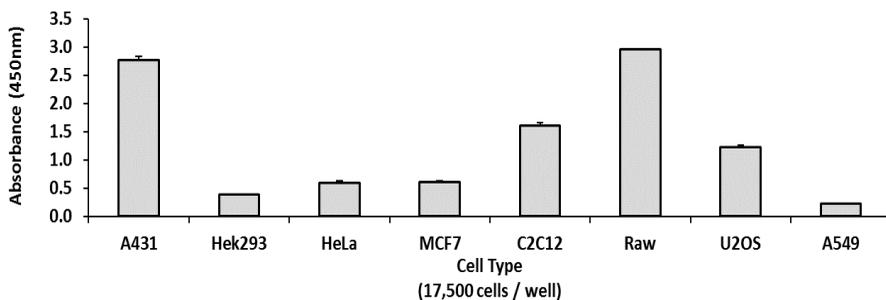


Figure 3. Cell line analysis for p38 MAPK α Total from preparations of 17,500 cells/well cell extracts. Data from triplicate measurements (mean +/- SD) are plotted.

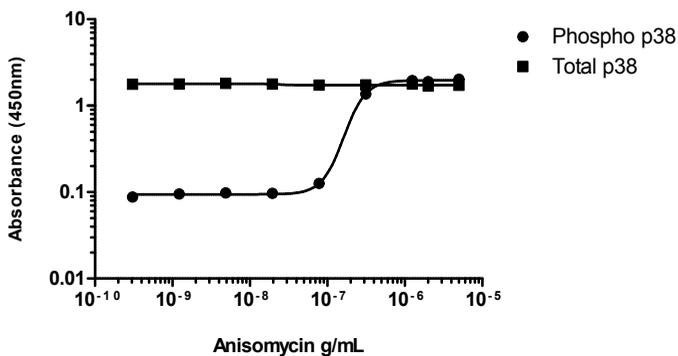


Figure 4. Induction of p38 MAPK α (pT180/Y182) phosphorylation in HeLa cells in response to anisomycin treatment, and levels of p38 MAPK α Total in the same samples. HeLa cells were cultured in 96-well tissue culture plates, serum starved (2 hr), and treated (30 min) with a dose-range of anisomycin before cell lysis. Data from duplicate measurements of p38 MAPK α (pT180/Y182) are plotted and compared against p38 MAPK α Total protein levels.

17. Assay Specificity

The p38 MAPK α Total assay detects endogenous levels of p38 MAPK α (GenBank Accession NP_001306) in cellular lysates, irrespective of phosphorylation status.

18. Species Reactivity

This kit detects p38 MAPK α Total in Human and mouse cell culture extracts. Detection in rat samples is also expected. Other species should be tested on a case-by-case basis.

Serum and plasma samples have not been tested with this kit.

Please contact our Technical Support team for more information.

19. Troubleshooting

Problem	Reason	Solution
Difficulty pipetting lysate; viscous lysate.	Genomic DNA solubilized	Prepare 1X Cell Extraction Buffer PTR (without enhancer). Add enhancer to lysate after extraction.
Poor Control Lysate series curve	Inaccurate Pipetting	Check pipettes
	Improper Lysate dilution	Prior to opening, briefly spin the stock Control Lysate tube and dissolve the powder thoroughly by gentle mixing
Low Signal	Incubation times too brief	Ensure sufficient incubation times; increase to 2 or 3 hour lysate/sample incubation
	Inadequate reagent volumes or improper dilution	Check pipettes and ensure correct preparation
	Incubation times with TMB too brief	Ensure sufficient incubation time until blue color develops prior to addition of Stop solution
Large CV	Plate is insufficiently washed	Review manual for proper wash technique. If using a plate washer, check all ports for obstructions.
	Contaminated wash buffer	Prepare fresh wash buffer
Low sensitivity	Improper storage of the ELISA kit	Store your reconstituted Control Lysates at -80°C, all other assay components 4°C. Keep TMB substrate solution protected from light.
Precipitate in 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution	Precipitation and/or coagulation of components within the 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution.	Precipitate can be removed by gently warming the 50X Cell Extraction Enhancer Solution to 37°C.

20. Notes

Technical Support

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