



OXFORD BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

P.O. Box 522, Oxford MI 48371 • USA
USA: 800-692-4633 • Fax: 248-852-4466
www.oxfordbiomed.com

**Enzyme Immunoassay for
Corticosterone
Product No. EA 66**
For Research Use Only

Please read all instructions carefully before beginning this assay
Store kit at 4° C at all times

DESCRIPTION

Corticosterone is a glucocorticoid secreted by the adrenal cortex in response to stress. Glucocorticoids are also essential for proper metabolism of fats, proteins and carbohydrates in the body. While cortisol and corticosterone are both produced in response to stress in humans, corticosterone is the predominant glucocorticoid produced in mice and rats. Corticosterone has also been used as a predictor of stress in a variety of wild animals. In particular corticosterone levels were increased in Galapagos marine iguanas under famine conditions brought on by El Nino. While not always predictive of environmental stress in the wild², conditions such as starvation, rapid temperature change or changes in daily routine can cause increased corticosterone levels in laboratory mice and rats.

Corticosterone is also administered to treat inflammation because like many other steroids, it is a powerful anti-inflammatory agent.

PRINCIPLE OF ASSAY

This is an ELISA (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay) for the quantitative analysis of Corticosterone levels in biological fluid. This test kit operates on the basis of competition between the enzyme conjugate and the corticosterone in the sample for a limited number of binding sites on the antibody coated plate.

The sample or standard solution is first added to the microplate. Next, the diluted enzyme conjugate is added and the mixture is shaken and incubated at room temperature for one hour. During the incubation, competition for binding sites is taking place. The plate is then washed removing all the unbound material. The bound enzyme conjugate is detected by the addition of substrate which generates an optimal color after 30 minutes. Quantitative test results may be obtained by measuring and comparing the absorbance reading of the wells of the samples against the standards with a microplate reader at 650 nm. The extent of color development is inversely proportional to the amount of corticosterone in the sample or standard. For example, the absence of corticosterone in the sample will result in a bright blue color, whereas the presence of corticosterone will result in decreased or no color development.

MATERIALS PROVIDED

1. **EIA BUFFER:** 30 mL. To be used to dilute enzyme conjugate and corticosterone standards.
2. **WASH BUFFER 10x:** 20 mL. To be diluted 10x with deionized water. This is used to wash all unbound enzyme conjugate, samples and standards from the plate after the one hour incubation.
3. **SUBSTRATE:** 20 mL. Stabilized 3,3', 5,5' Tetramethylbenzidine (TMB) plus Hydrogen Peroxide (H₂O₂) in a single bottle. It is used to develop the color in the wells after they have been washed. Keep refrigerated – light sensitive.
4. **EXTRACTION BUFFER 5x:** 30 mL. To be diluted 5x with deionized water. This is used for diluting extracted and non-extracted samples.
5. **CORTICOSTERONE ENZYME CONJUGATE:** 150 µL. Corticosterone horseradish peroxidase concentrate. Blue capped vial.
6. **CORTICOSTERONE STANDARD:** 100 µL. Corticosterone standard at the concentration of 1 µg/mL in methanol. Green capped vial.
7. **CORTICOSTERONE ANTIBODY COATED PLATE:** A 96 well Costar[™] microplate with anti-Corticosterone rabbit antibody precoated on each well. The plate is ready for use as is. **DO NOT WASH!**

MATERIALS NEEDED BUT NOT PROVIDED

1. 300 mL deionized water for diluting wash buffer and extraction buffer.
2. Precision pipettes that range from 10 µL-1000 µL and disposable tips.

NOTE: If all or several strips are to be used at one time, it is suggested that a multichannel pipette be used.

3. Clean test tubes used to dilute the standards and conjugate.
4. Graduated cylinders to dilute and mix wash buffer and extraction buffer.
5. Microplate reader with 650 nm filter.
6. Plastic film or plate cover to cover plate during incubation.

OPTIONAL MATERIALS

7. 1 N HCl.
8. Microplate shaker.

If performing an extraction on samples, the following will be required:

9. Ethyl ether
10. Nitrogen gas
11. Vortex

WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

1. **DO NOT** use components beyond expiration date.
2. **DO NOT** mix any reagents or components of this kit with any reagents or components of any other kit. This kit is designed to work properly as provided.
3. **DO NOT** pipette reagents by mouth.
4. Always pour substrate out of the bottle into a clean test tube - **DO NOT** pipette out of the bottle (if your tip is unclean you could contaminate your substrate).
5. All specimens should be considered potentially infectious. Exercise proper handling precautions.
6. **DO NOT** smoke, eat or drink in areas where specimens or reagents are being handled.
7. Use aseptic technique when opening and removing reagents from vials and bottles.
8. Keep plate covered except when adding reagents, washing or reading.
9. Kit components should be refrigerated at all times when not in use.

PROCEDURAL NOTES

1. It is not necessary to allow reagents to warm to room temperature before use.
2. Desiccant bag must remain in foil pouch with unused strips. Keep pouch sealed when not in use to maintain a dry environment. Seal with a heat sealer. If a heat sealer is not available, thoroughly close the open end with tape. Try to remove excess air before sealing.
3. Always use different pipette tips for the buffer, enzyme conjugate, standards and samples.
4. Before pipetting a reagent, rinse the pipette tip three times with that reagent (i.e. fill the tip with the desired amount of reagent and dispense back into the same vial - repeat 2 times). Now the tip is properly rinsed and ready to dispense the reagent into your well or test tube.
5. When pipetting into the wells, **DO NOT** allow the pipette tip to touch the inside of the well, or any of the reagents already in the well - this can cause cross contamination.
6. Standards and samples should be assayed in duplicate.
7. To quantitate, always run a standard curve when testing samples. If testing a sample that is not extracted, dilute standards in the same type of medium being tested, which is known to be negative.
8. Gently mix specimens and reagents before use. Avoid vigorous agitation.
9. When using only partial amounts of a kit, it is recommended to transfer the appropriate volume of each reagent to a clean vessel for repeated dispensing. This will reduce reagent contamination by repeated sampling from the original container.
10. The enzyme conjugate is most stable in its concentrated form. Dilute only the volume necessary for the amount of strips currently being used.
11. Before taking an absorbance reading wipe the outside bottom of the wells with a lint-free wiper to remove dust and fingerprints.
12. Before opening the enzyme conjugate and standard vial, tap vial in an upright position to remove any liquid in the cap.

SAMPLE PREPARATION

1. Usually, urine and tissue culture supernatant can be assayed directly by diluting them with the diluted extraction buffer. Plasma and most other mediums will need to be extracted.

EXTRACTION OF CORTICOSTERONE

1. Pipet 100 μL of plasma into a glass tube (10x75 mm) and add 1 mL of ethyl ether.
2. Vortex the tube for 30 seconds and then allow the phases to separate.
3. Transfer the organic phase into a clean glass tube and evaporate the solvent with a stream of N_2 .
4. Dissolve the residue in 100 μL of diluted extraction buffer.
5. Dilute the extract 100-fold by adding 10 μL of the above extract into 990 μL of diluted extraction buffer.
6. Vortex and assay 50 μL in duplicates.
7. The values obtained are multiplied by 100 to give final ng/mL concentrations. If additional dilution is necessary, values must be multiplied by the additional dilution factor in order to calculate the final ng/mL concentration.
8. If the concentration is higher than the high range of the standard curve, the samples in #6 need to be further diluted and reassayed.

Note: Extraction buffer must be diluted 5x with deionized water before use. Any precipitant present must be brought into solution before dilution.

TEST PROCEDURES

1. Prepare standards as follows:

STANDARD

PREPARATION

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | stock solution 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ (this is provided) |
| B | take 20 μL of A, add to 980 μL of EIA buffer and mix = 20 ng/mL |
| C | take 200 μL of B, add to 1.8 μL of EIA buffer and mix = 2 ng/mL |
| D | take 200 μL of C, add to 1.8 μL of EIA buffer and mix = 0.2 ng/mL |

Continue standard preparation following Scheme I.

Scheme I

Standard	ng/mL	EIA buffer (mL added)	B Standard μL	C Standard μL	D Standard μL
S_0	0	as is	-	-	-
S_1	0.05	750	-	-	250
S_2	0.10	500	-	-	500
S_3	0.20	-	-	-	as is
S_4	0.50	750	-	200	-
S_5	1.00	500	-	500	-
S_6	2.00	-	-	as is	-
S_7	5.00	750	250	-	-

2. Determine the number of wells to be used.

NOTE: Allow for extra wells when calculating amount of conjugate to dilute to allow for loss during pipetting (i.e. 4 extra wells if using a single pipette; 10 extra wells if using a multichannel pipette).

3. Dilute the corticosterone enzyme conjugate. Add 1 μL of enzyme conjugate into 50 μL total volume of EIA buffer for each well assayed. For the whole plate, add 110 μL of the enzyme conjugate into 5.5 mL total volume of EIA buffer. Mix the solution thoroughly.
4. Add 50 μL of standards (S) or unknown (U) (some samples may require diluting) to the appropriate wells in duplicate.

See Scheme II for suggested template design.

Scheme II

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	S ₀	S ₀	U ₁	U ₁	U ₉	U ₉	U ₁₇	U ₁₇	U ₂₅	U ₂₅	U ₃₃	U ₃₃
B	S ₁	S ₁	U ₂	U ₂	U ₁₀	U ₁₀	U ₁₈	U ₁₈	U ₂₆	U ₂₆	U ₃₄	U ₃₄
C	S ₂	S ₂	U ₃	U ₃	U ₁₁	U ₁₁	U ₁₉	U ₁₉	U ₂₇	U ₂₇	U ₃₅	U ₃₅
D	S ₃	S ₃	U ₄	U ₄	U ₁₂	U ₁₂	U ₂₀	U ₂₀	U ₂₈	U ₂₈	U ₃₆	U ₃₆
E	S ₄	S ₄	U ₅	U ₅	U ₁₃	U ₁₃	U ₂₁	U ₂₁	U ₂₉	U ₂₉	U ₃₇	U ₃₇
F	S ₅	S ₅	U ₆	U ₆	U ₁₄	U ₁₄	U ₂₂	U ₂₂	U ₃₀	U ₃₀	U ₃₈	U ₃₈
G	S ₆	S ₆	U ₇	U ₇	U ₁₅	U ₁₅	U ₂₃	U ₂₃	U ₃₁	U ₃₁	U ₃₉	U ₃₉
H	S ₇	S ₇	U ₈	U ₈	U ₁₆	U ₁₆	U ₂₄	U ₂₄	U ₃₂	U ₃₂	U ₄₀	U ₄₀

5. Add 50 μL of the diluted enzyme conjugate to each well. (Use 8-channel pipette or 12-channel pipette for rapid addition.)
6. Mix by shaking plate gently. (A microplate shaker may be used.)
7. Cover plate with plastic film or plate cover and incubate at room temperature for one hour. **Note:** Keep plate away from drafts and temperature fluctuations.
8. Dilute concentrated wash buffer with deionized water (i.e. 20 mL of wash buffer plus 180 mL of deionized water). Mix thoroughly.
9. After incubation, dump out the contents of the plate. Tap out contents thoroughly on a clean lint-free towel.
10. Wash each well with 300 μL of the washing buffer. Repeat for a total of three washings. (An automated plate washer can be used.)
11. Add 150 μL of substrate to each well. (Use multichannel pipette for best results.) Mix by shaking plate gently.
12. Allow to stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.
13. Gently shake plate before taking a reading to insure uniform color throughout each well.
14. Plate is read in a microplate reader at 650 nm. If a dual wavelength is used, set W_1 at 650 nm and W_2 at 490 nm.

15. If accounting for substrate background, use 2 to 8 wells as blanks with only substrate in the wells (150 μL /well). Subtract the average of these absorbance values from the absorbance values of the wells being assayed.

NOTE: Some microplate readers can be programmed to do these subtractions automatically when reading the plate. Consult your instrument manual.

OPTIONAL TEST PROCEDURES

16. Add 50-100 μL of 1 N HCl to each well to stop enzyme reaction.
17. Read plate at 450 nm, if 1 N HCl solution was used.
18. Plot the standard curve and estimate the concentrations of the samples from the curve. See "CALCULATIONS."

Note: Absorbance readings will approximately double when stopped with acid. If absorbance readings are too high for measuring with your microplate reader, decrease the substrate incubation approximately 10 minutes but no more than 15 minutes.

CALCULATIONS

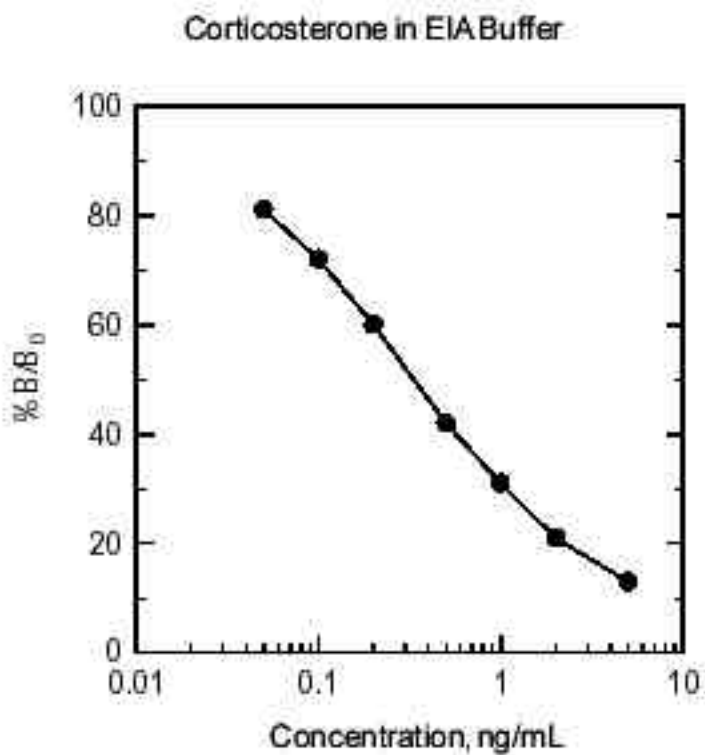
1. After the substrate background has been subtracted from all absorbance values, average all of your duplicate well absorbance values.
2. The average of your two S_0 values is now your B_0 value. (S_1 now becomes B_1 , etc.)
3. Next, find the percent of maximal binding ($\%B/B_0$ value). To do this, divide the averages of each standard absorbance value (now known as B_1 through B_7) by the B_0 absorbance value and multiply by 100 to achieve percentages.
4. Graph your standard curve by plotting the $\%B/B_0$ for each standard concentration on the ordinate (y) axis against concentration on the abscissa (x) axis. Draw a curve by using a curve-fitting routine (i.e. 4-parameter or linear regression).
5. Divide the averages of each sample absorbance value by the B_0 value and multiply by 100 to achieve percentages.
6. Using the standard curve, the concentration of each sample can be determined by comparing the $\%B/B_0$ of each sample to the corresponding concentration of $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ standard.
7. If the samples were diluted, the concentration determined from the standard curve must be multiplied by the dilution factor.

TYPICAL DATA

Note: "Typical data" is a representation. Variances in data will occur. Optical density readings may fluctuate during the shelf-life of the kit, but the $\%B/B_0$ should remain comparable. Measuring wavelength: 650 nm

Standard	Standard Concentration (ng/mL)	Optical Density (Absorbance Value)	%B/B ₀
S ₀ (B ₀)	0	1.270	100
S ₁ (B ₁)	0.05	1.112	81
S ₂ (B ₂)	0.1	0.991	72
S ₃ (B ₃)	0.2	0.827	60
S ₄ (B ₄)	0.5	0.591	42
S ₅ (B ₅)	1	0.425	31
S ₆ (B ₆)	2	0.285	21
S ₇ (B ₇)	5	0.171	13

TYPICAL STANDARD CURVE



CROSS REACTIVITY

Corticosterone	100.0%
Deoxycorticosterone	38.0%
6-Hydroxycorticosterone	19.0%
Progesterone	5.1%
Tetrahydrocorticosterone	2.7%
Prednisolone	1.5%
Cortisol	1.1%
Pregnenolone	0.85%
11-Epicorticosterone	0.78%
Cortisone	0.27%
21-Desoxycortisol	0.24%
d-Aldosterone	0.13%
Testosterone	0.12%
17 -Hydroxyprogesterone	0.12%
Prednisone	0.10%
Dexamethasone	0.03%
Cholesterol	<0.01%
Estradiol	<0.01%
Estriol	<0.01%

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

If you need technical information or assistance with assay procedures, call our Technical Support Department at 1-800-692-4633 or 1-248-852-8815. Our staff will be happy to answer your questions about this or any other product in the Oxford Biomedical line.

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Oxford Biomedical Research, Inc.
P.O. Box 522
Oxford, MI 48371 U.S.A.

Orders: 800-692-4633
Technical Service: 248-852-8815
Fax: 248-852-4466
E-mail: info@oxfordbiomed.com

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