Innovative RESEARCH Results Driven Research

Human Alpha-Fetoprotein ELISA Kit

Introduction

Alpha-Fetoprotein (AFP) is a fetal-specific glycoprotein with a molecular weight of around 70 kDa. It is expressed in the embryonic liver, by cells of the vitelline sac and by the fetal intestinal tract in the first trimester of pregnancy (1). After birth the synthesis of alpha-fetoprotein decreases rapidly. AFP level in adults is low but detectable (2). Alpha-fetoprotein has no known function in healthy adults. High level of alpha-fetoprotein in adult individual may be associated with Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), malignant tumor of the liver (1, 3). Thus, the concentration of alpha-fetoprotein in serum can be measured as a first step in HCC diagnosis (4, 5). Moreover the elevated level of alpha-fetoprotein has been observed in lung cancer (6), gastric cancer (7, 8), yolk sac tumor and adenocarcinoma (9).

Principal of the Assay

The Alpha-Fetoprotein ELISA kit is designed for detection of human Alpha-Fetoprotein in plasma, serum, and cell culture supernatants. This assay employs a quantitative sandwich enzyme immunoassay technique, which measures Alpha-Fetoprotein in less than 4 hours. A polyclonal antibody specific for Alpha-Fetoprotein has been pre-coated onto a microplate. Alpha-Fetoprotein in standards and samples is sandwiched by the immobilized antibody and biotinylated polyclonal antibody specific for Alpha-Fetoprotein, which is recognized by a streptavidin-peroxidase conjugate. All unbound material is then washed away and a peroxidase enzyme substrate is added. The color development is stopped and the intensity of the color is measured.

Caution and Warning

- **Prepare all reagents (working diluent buffer, wash buffer, standards, biotinylated-antibody, and SP conjugate) as instructed, prior to running the assay.**
- **Prepare all samples prior to running the assay. The dilution factors for the samples are suggested in this protocol. However, the user should determine the optimal dilution factor.**
- **Spin down the SP conjugate vial and the biotinylated-antibody vial before opening and using contents.**
- This kit is for research use only.
- The kit should not be used beyond the expiration date.
- The Stop Solution is an acid solution

Reagents

- **Alpha-Fetoprotein Microplate:** A 96 well polystyrene microplate (12 strips of 8 wells) coated with a polyclonal antibody against human Alpha-Fetoprotein.
- **Sealing Tapes:** Each kit contains 3 pre-cut, pressure-sensitive sealing tapes that can be cut to fit the format of the individual assay.
- **Alpha-Fetoprotein Standard:** Human Alpha-Fetoprotein in a buffered protein base (80 ng, lyophilized).
- **Biotinylated Alpha-Fetoprotein Antibody (50x):** A 50-fold biotinylated polyclonal antibody against Alpha-Fetoprotein (170 µl).
- **MIX Diluent Concentrate (10x)**: A 10-fold concentrated buffered protein base (30 ml).
- **Wash Buffer Concentrate (20x)**: A 20-fold concentrated buffered surfactant (30 ml, 2 bottles).
- **Streptavidin-Peroxidase Conjugate (SP Conjugate):** A 100-fold concentrate (80 µl).
- **Chromogen Substrate**: A ready-to-use stabilized peroxidase chromogen substrate tetramethylbenzidine (8 ml).
- **Stop Solution**: A 0.5 N hydrochloric acid to stop the chromogen substrate reaction (12 ml).

Storage Condition

- Store components of the kit at 2-8^{0}C or -20^{0}C upon arrival up to the expiration date.
- Store SP Conjugate and Biotinylated Antibody at -20^{0}C
- Store Microplate, Diluent Concentrate (10x), Wash Buffer, Stop Solution, and Chromogen Substrate at 2-8^{0}C
- Opened unused microplate wells may be returned to the foil pouch with the desiccant packs. Reseal along zip-seal. May be stored for up to 1 month in a vacuum desiccator.
- Diluent (1x) may be stored for up to 1 month at 2-8^{0}C.
- Store Standard at 2-8^{0}C before reconstituting with Diluent and at -20^{0}C after reconstituting with Diluent.

Other Supplies Required

- Microplate reader capable of measuring absorbance at 450 nm.
- Pipettes (1-20 µl, 20-200 µl, 200-1000µl and multiple channel).
- Deionized or distilled reagent grade water.

Sample Collection and Storage

- **Plasma:** Collect plasma using one-tenth volume of 0.1 M sodium citrate as an anticoagulant. Centrifuge samples at 2000 x g for 10 minutes and assay. Dilute samples 1:4 into MIX Diluent. The undiluted samples can be stored at -20^{0}C or below for up to 3 months. Avoid repeated freeze-thaw cycles. (EDTA or Heparin can also be used as anticoagulant.)
- **Serum:** Samples should be collected into a serum separator tube. After clot formation, centrifuge samples at 2000 x g for 10 minutes. Remove serum and assay. Dilute samples 1:4 into MIX Diluent. The undiluted samples can be stored at -20^{0}C or below for up to 3 months. Avoid repeated freeze-thaw cycles.
- **Cell Culture Supernatants:** Centrifuge cell culture media at 2000 x g for 10 minutes to remove debris. Collect supernatants and assay. Store samples at -20^{0}C or below. Avoid repeated freeze-thaw cycles.

Reagent Preparation

- Freshly dilute all reagents and bring all reagents to room temperature before use.
- **MIX Diluent Concentrate (10x)**: If crystals have formed in the concentrate, mix gently until the crystals have completely dissolved. Dilute the MIX Diluent Concentrate 1:10 with reagent grade water. Store for up to 1 month at 2-8^{0}C.
- **Alpha-Fetoprotein Standard:** Reconstitute the 80 ng of human Alpha-Fetoprotein Standard with 4 ml of MIX Diluent to generate a Stock Solution of 20 ng/ml. Allow the standard to sit for 10 minutes with gentle agitation prior to making dilutions. The Stock Solution (20 ng/ml) can be further diluted 1:2 with MIX Diluent to produce 10 ng/ml Standard Solution. Prepare duplicate or triplicate standard points by serially diluting the Standard Solution (10 ng/ml) 1:2 with MIX Diluent to produce 5, 2.5, 1.25, 0.625, 0.313 and 0.156 ng/ml. MIX Diluent serves as the zero standard (0 ng/ml). Any remaining solution should be frozen at -20^{0}C.

Standard Point	Dilution	[AFP] (ng/ml)
P1	1 part Standard (20 ng/ml) + 1 part MIX Diluent	10.00
P2	1 part P1 + 1 part MIX Diluent	5.000
P3	1 part P2 + 1 part MIX Diluent	2.500
P4	1 part P3 + 1 part MIX Diluent	1.250
P5	1 part P4 + 1 part MIX Diluent	0.625
P6	1 part P5 + 1 part MIX Diluent	0.313
P7	1 part P6 + 1 part MIX Diluent	0.156
P8	MIX Diluent	0.000

- **Biotinylated Alpha-Fetoprotein Antibody (50x):** Spin down the antibody briefly and dilute the desired amount of the antibody 1:50 with MIX Diluent. Any remaining solution should be frozen at -20^{0}C.
- **Wash Buffer Concentrate (20x):** If crystals have formed in the concentrate, mix gently until the crystals have completely dissolved. Dilute the Wash Buffer Concentrate1: 20 with reagen**t** grade water.
- **SP Conjugate (100x):** Spin down the SP Conjugate briefly and dilute the desired amount of the Conjugate 1:100 with MIX Diluent. Any remaining solution should be frozen at -20^{0}C.

Assay Procedure

- Prepare all reagents, working standards and samples as instructed. Bring all reagents to room temperature before use. The assay is performed at room temperature (20-30^{0}C).
- Remove excess microplate strips from the plate frame and return them immediately to the foil pouch with desiccant inside. Reseal the pouch securely to minimize exposure to water vapor and store in a vacuum desiccator.
- Add 50 µl of Standard or sample per well. Cover wells with a sealing tape and incubate for two hours. Start the timer after the last sample addition.
- Wash five times with 200 µl of Wash Buffer manually. Invert the plate each time and decant the contents; hit it 4-5 times on absorbent paper towel to completely remove the liquid. If using a machine wash six times with 300 µl of Wash Buffer and then invert the plate, decant the contents; hit it 4-5 times on absorbent paper towel to completely remove the liquid.
- Add 50 µl of Biotinylated Alpha-Fetoprotein Antibody to each well and incubate for one hour.

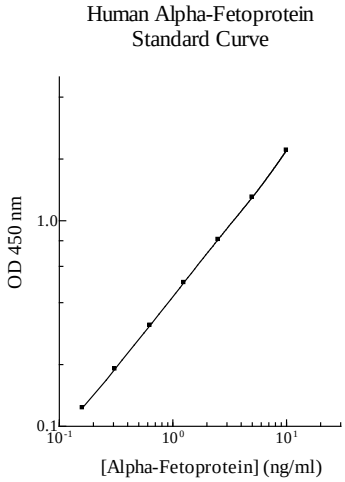
- Wash the microplate as described above.
- Add 50 µl of Streptavidin-Peroxidase Conjugate per well and incubate for 30 minutes. Turn on the microplate reader and set up the program in advance**.**
- Wash the microplate as described above.
- Add 50 µl of Chromogen Substrate per well and incubate for about 10 minutes or till the optimal color density develops. Gently tap the plate to ensure thorough mixing and break the bubbles in the well with pipette tip.
- Add 50 µl of Stop Solution to each well. The color will change from blue to yellow.
- Read the absorbance on a microplate reader at a wavelength of 450 nm immediately. If wavelength correction is available, subtract readings at 570 nm from those at 450 nm to correct optical imperfections. Otherwise, read the plate at 450 nm only. Please note that some unstable black particles may be generated at high concentration points after stopping the reaction for about 10 minutes, which will reduce the readings.

Data Analysis

- Calculate the mean value of the duplicate or triplicate readings for each standard and sample.
- To generate a Standard Curve, plot 4-parameter graph or log-log graph using the standard concentrations on the x-axis and the corresponding mean 450 nm absorbance on the y-axis and draw a best fit curve through the points on the graph. The best-fit line can be determined by regression analysis using log-log or four-parameter logistic curve-fit.
- Determine the unknown sample concentration from the Standard Curve and multiply the value by the dilution factor.

Standard Curve

- The curve is provided for illustration only. A standard curve should be generated each time the assay is performed.



Performance Characteristics

- The minimum detectable dose of Alpha-Fetoprotein is typically 0.15 ng/ml
- Intra-assay and inter-assay coefficients of variation were 4.8 % and 7.1 % respectively.
- This assay recognizes both natural and recombinant human Alpha-Fetoprotein.

Linearity

	Average Percentage of Expected Value	
Sample Dilution	**Plasma**	**Serum**
1:2	92%	91%
1:4	100%	96%
1:8	104%	101%

Recovery

Standard Added Value	0.3 - 3 ng/ml
Recovery %	92-105 %
Average Recovery %	97 %

Cross-Reactivity

Species	% Cross Reactivity
Bovine	< 30
Mouse	None
Rat	None
Swine	None
Rabbit	None
Dog	< 30
Monkey	< 40

Reference Value

- The normal blood level of Alpha-Fetoprotein in adult individual is averaged 1-5 ng/ml.

References

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