

LIMULUS AMEBOCYTE LYSATE

PYROTELL®

Single Test Vial

for the Detection and Quantification of Gram Negative Bacterial Endotoxins
(Lipopolysaccharides)

The Limulus amebocyte lysate (LAL) test, when used according to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines (1), may be substituted for the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) Pyrogen Test (stabifur fever test) for the end-point testing of "human injectable drugs (including biological products), animal injectable drugs, and medical devices." The LAL test is recommended for the quantitation of endotoxin in raw materials used in production, and in-process monitoring of endotoxin levels. The USP Bacterial Endotoxins Test (2) is the official test referenced in specific USP monographs.

Summary of Test

Limulus amebocyte lysate is an aqueous extract of blood cells (amebocytes) from the horseshoe crab, *Limulus polyphemus*. The LAL test is performed by adding 0.2 mL of the test specimen to a single test vial (STV) of Pyrotell. After the Pyrotell dissolves (approximately a minute), the solution is mixed thoroughly and the STV is placed immediately in a dry block incubator or noncirculating water bath at 37 ± 1°C for 60 ± 2 minutes. After the incubation period, the STV is removed and inverted. Materials such as blood, serum, and plasma should be treated to inactivate inhibitors prior to testing (12).

Specific Performance Characteristics

The error of the gel-clot method is plus or minus a twofold dilution at the endpoint of the assay.

Bibliography

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History and Biologic Principle

Howell described the clotting of *Limulus* blood in 1885 (3). In the 1950's, Bang at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA, discovered that gram negative bacteria cause *Limulus* blood to clot (4). Levin and Bang later determined that the reaction is enzymatic and that the enzymes are located in granules in the amebocytes (5). They showed that clotting is initiated by a unique structural component of the bacterial cell wall called endotoxin or lipopolysaccharide (6). Current understanding is that the reaction leading to clot formation is a cascade of enzyme activation steps. While the complete reaction is not understood, the last step is well described. Clotting protein (coagulogen) is cleaved by activated clotting enzyme; the insoluble cleavage products coalesce by ionic interaction to form the gel matrix. More information about the LAL reaction and applications is available in the literature (7, 8, 9).

Reagent

Single test vials of Pyrotell contain 0.2 mL lyophilized LAL. Pyrotell contains only an aqueous extract of amebocytes of *L. polyphemus*, 1.5% v/v of 25% human serum albumin (stabilizer), 3% NaCl and other appropriate ions. No preservatives, buffers, or other ingredients have been added.

Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., offers individual lots of Pyrotell in sensitivity ranges from 0.03 to 0.5 EU/mL based on the USP Endotoxin Reference Standard (also referred to as the reference standard endotoxin or RSE). Sensitivity (λ) is the minimum concentration of RSE that produces a firm gel-clot technique.

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Results and Interpretation

Example of Standard Endotoxin Series

Confirm the sensitivity of the Pyrotell and compare the laboratory or technician by performing the LAL test on a series of known standard endotoxin concentrations (1,2) that bracket the labeled sensitivity (i.e., 2 λ , 0.5 λ , and 0.25 λ). For this example, the Pyrotell sensitivity (λ) is 0.25 EU/mL.

Test Result

Endotoxin Concentration	Test Result
0.5 EU/mL (2 λ)	+
0.25 EU/mL (0.5 λ)	+
0.125 EU/mL (0.25 λ)	-
0.06 EU/mL (0.25 λ)	-
LRW (negative control)	-

The endpoint of this assay is replicated, sensitivity is expressed as the geometric mean (GM) of the individual sensitivities:

$$\text{GM} = \text{antilog} (\Sigma \log_e f) / f$$

where Σ = sum of log endpoints, and f = number of replicate endpoints.

The LRW negative control should give a negative test. If the negative control cloots, the LRW, glassware, or Pyrotell is contaminated. The mixture should be clear with no increase in viscosity. "Snowflake" or flocculent precipitation indicates an endotoxin concentration less than the Pyrotell sensitivity. In the absence of the endotoxin series, a positive control may be included with the tests. The positive control is at 2 λ , the 0.5 EU/mL level in the example above. If the positive control is negative, the Pyrotell sensitivity is less than twofold of the labeled sensitivity and the specimen test is invalid. Loss of sensitivity may mean the Pyrotell deteriorated, the endotoxin lost potency (often because of adsorption to container surface), or the test was not conducted properly.

Specimen Collection and Preparation

Specimens should be collected aseptically in non-pyrogenic containers. Reused, depyrogenated glassware or sterile, disposable polystyrene plastics are recommended to minimize adsorption of endotoxin to container surfaces. Not all plastic containers are free of detectable endotoxin and an extractive substance from some types may interfere with the LAL test. Containers (selected randomly from a batch) should be rinsed with a small volume of LAL Reagent Water (room temperature) and the rinse tested as a specimen to determine if the batch is acceptable.

The pH of the reaction mixture (sample added to Pyrotell) should be 6 to 8. Adjust the pH of the specimen with HCl or NaOH (free of detectable endotoxin) or buffer (e.g. Pyrosol). Dilute concentrated HCl or NaOH with LRW to normalities that will not lead to significant dilution of the test specimen. Substances that denature proteins, chelate cations, bind endotoxin or alter endotoxin's hydrophobic state may interfere with the test. Interference may be detected as recovery of sensitivity more or less endotoxin than that expected when a known amount of standard endotoxin is added to the specimen (see "Limitations of Procedure"). In most cases, dilution of the specimen will reduce the concentration and activity still yield valid test results. Appropriate controls and dilution schemes are discussed under "Test Procedure."

Example of a Limits (Pass/Fail) Test

It is possible to test one specimen concentration with a given sensitivity of Pyrotell and have the result indicate whether or not the test specimen has more or less endotoxin than its limit. In this example, the specimen concentration is 1 mg/mL and the desired or predetermined endotoxin limit for the specimen is 0.3 EU/mg (see "Limitations of Procedure"). The limit expressed in EU/mL is 0.3 EU/mg (1 mg/mL) = 3 EU/mL.

is greater than the sensitivity of the Pyrotell, 0.25 EU/mL, so the specimen must be diluted to perform a pass/fail test. Determine the specimen dilution that will indicate a pass, < 3 EU/mL, or a fail, ≥ 3 EU/mL, by dividing the endotoxin limit in EU/mL by the sensitivity of the LAL.

Combine one part specimen with 11 parts LRW to prepare the 1:12 dilution and test. The result will indicate whether the specimen passes the test at the 3 EU/mL limit. Positive product controls are included at the specimen dilution to rule out false negative results.

Example of a Specimen Assay

Pyrotell is quantified in an assay by finding the endpoint in a series of specimen dilutions. In the example below, the specimen is diluted with LRW and the dilutions in the table are tested; λ is 0.25 EU/mL. The results are scored as positive or negative.

Test Procedure

Test Reagents

1. Pyrotell STV (see description and method of reconstitution in section above).

2. **LRW** Reagent Water (LRW); not provided with Pyrotell; order separately. Diluent water that shows no detectable endotoxin in the LAL test must be used. Recommended sources include Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., or USP Sterile Water for injection or irrigation (WFI, without bacteriostat).

3. **Standard Endotoxin**; not provided with Pyrotell; order separately. Control Standard Endotoxin (CSE), obtained from Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., is used to confirm the sensitivity of Pyrotell, validate product, and prepare inhibition controls. Each vial contains a measured weight of endotoxin. USP Endotoxin Reference Standard may be obtained from the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. Follow manufacturers' directions for reconstitution and storage of standard endotoxins. CSE lots may show different potencies (EU/mg) when tested with various lots of Pyrotell. Request a Certificate of Analysis for the potency of a CSE with a specified lot of Pyrotell, make dilutions of standard endotoxin with the lot of water to confirm the sensitivity of the Pyrotell. If the sensitivity of the lot is confirmed and the negative control shows an increase in viscosity and no flocculent precipitation, the water is suitable for use. Use LRW to reconstitute endotoxin standards and to dilute endotoxin controls and test specimens.

4. **Control Standard Endotoxin**; not provided with Pyrotell; order separately. Control Standard Endotoxin (CSE), obtained from Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., is used to confirm the sensitivity of Pyrotell, validate product, and prepare inhibition controls. Each vial contains a measured weight of endotoxin. USP Endotoxin Reference Standard may be obtained from the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. Follow manufacturers' directions for reconstitution and storage of standard endotoxins. CSE lots may show different potencies (EU/mg) when tested with various lots of Pyrotell. Request a Certificate of Analysis for the potency of a CSE with a specified lot of Pyrotell.

5. **Materials and Equipment (not provided)**

1. Noncirculating water bath or dry block incubator (Cat# TH120) capable of maintaining 37 ± 1°C.

2. Test tube racks.

3. Pipets, automatic pipetters with pipet tips, or repeating pipetters with plastic syringe barrels.

4. Vortex-type mixer.

5. Nonpyrogenic glass tubes with adequate capacity for making dilutions of endotoxin standard or test specimen. See "Specimen Collection and Preparation" for other containers suitable for dilutions.

6. Hot air oven with 250°C capacity for depyrogenation of glassware. Commonly used minimum time and temperature settings are 30 minutes at 250°C (2, 11).

Controls

Controls are necessary to ensure a valid test. Recommended procedures are detailed by the FDA (1) and USP (2).

1. **Endotoxin controls**

a. **Endotoxin standard series**. Prepare a fresh set of dilutions from the stock endotoxin solution each day. Make dilutions such that a final series of twofold dilutions will bracket the sensitivity (λ) of the Pyrotell. Concentrations of 2 λ , 0.5 λ , and 0.25 λ are recommended to confirm Pyrotell sensitivity. Use as few dilutions as possible with appropriate pipet volumes to maximize accuracy.

b. **Positive controls** may be used instead of a series of standard concentrations in certain circumstances. Refer to the FDA guideline (1) under "Testing: Testing of Drugs by heat treatment before testing". Trypsin will cause a false positive result unless denatured by heat treatment before testing. Materials such as blood, serum, and plasma should be treated to inactivate inhibitors prior to testing (12).

c. **Positive product controls** can inhibit the Pyrotell. The final concentration of the Pyrotell is expected to entourer de pains réfrigérants dans un emballement thermiquement isolé pour le protéger des températures élevées.

d. **Pyrotell** will cause a false positive result unless denatured by heat treatment before testing. Materials such as blood, serum, and plasma should be treated to inactivate inhibitors prior to testing (12).

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x. **Pyrotell** will cause a false positive result unless denatured by heat treatment

