

PROTOCOL

Human IgM / IgA Double-Color Enzymatic ELISPOT Assay

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- Protocol



Visit our YouTube channel for several helpful videos on working with ELISPOT assays and PBMC: www.youtube.com/user/ImmunoSpot.

The CTL Thawing Protocol for Cryopreserved Human PBMC is available at www.immunospot.com.

PROCEDURE for polyclonal prestimulation of B cells to obtain *in vitro* ASC

DAY -4: Prestimulate B Cells¹ (Indices refer to footnotes below.)

- Prepare CTL-Test[™] B Culture Medium.²
- Adjust PBMC (freshly-isolated from blood or thawed from cryopreserved PBMC) in CTL-Test[™] B to 4 million/ml.
- Add B-Poly-S[™] reagent to PBMC in CTL-Test[™] B 1:1000 (e.g., 10µl B-Poly-S[™] to 10ml CTL-Test[™] B).
- Culture cells in a 37°C humidified incubator 7-10% CO₂ for four days.³

DAY -1: Coat the ELISPOT Plate

- Prepare Capture Solution containing the Human Ig Capture Ab. (see Solutions)
- Pipette 80µl/well of the Capture Solution into the PVDF plate provided.⁴
- Seal plate with parafilm and incubate at 4°C overnight.

ELISPOT PROTOCOL

DAY 0 / 1: Cell Harvest and Plating

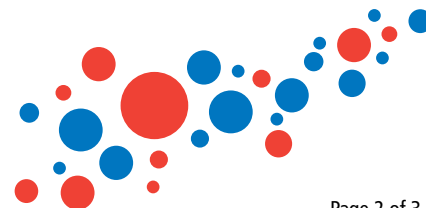
- **For *in vitro* ISC/ASC:** Harvest prestimulated PBMC and wash cells three times with CTL-Test[™] B.⁵
- **For *in vivo* ISC/ASC:** Isolate PBMC from blood.
- **For both:** Adjust PBMC to desired concentration in CTL-Test[™] B.⁶
- **Prepare the plate for the assay:** Decant the Capture Solution plated the previous day.
- Wash plate one time with 200µl/well of sterile PBS at room temperature. (see Solutions)⁷
- Plate PBMC dilution series for *in vivo/vitro* ISC/ASC.⁸
- Incubate for 4-24 hours at 37°C.⁹

ASC Detection

- Prepare Buffer Solutions: PBS, distilled water, and Tween-PBS. (see Wash Buffers)
- Prepare Anti-human IgM/IgA Detection Solution. (see Solutions)
- Wash plate two times with PBS and two times with 0.05% Tween-PBS, 200µl/well each time.
- Add 80µl/well of Anti-human IgM/IgA Detection Solution.
- Incubate at room temperature for a minimum of two hours wrapped in parafilm.¹⁰
- Prepare Tertiary Solution. (See Solutions)
- Wash plate three times with 0.05% Tween PBS, 200µl/well.
- Add 80µl/well of Tertiary Solution. Incubate at room temperature for one hour.
- During incubation, prepare Blue and Red Developer Solutions. (see Solutions)
- Wash plate two times with 0.05% Tween-PBS, 200µl/well, then two times with distilled water, 200µl/well.
- Add Blue Developer Solution, 80µl/well. Incubate at room temperature for 15-20 minutes.
- Stop reaction by gently rinsing the plate membrane with tap water, decant, and repeat rinsing three times.
- Decant plate containing the tap water and wash once more with distilled water, 200µl/well.
- Add Red Developer Solution, 80µl/well. Incubate at room temperature for 15-20 minutes.
- Stop reaction by gently rinsing the plate membrane with tap water, decant, and repeat rinsing three times.
- Remove protective underdrain and rinse back of plate with tap water. If using strip plates, there is no underdrain.¹¹
- Let plate dry completely.¹²
- Scan and count plate. (CTL has scanning and analysis services available and offers a trial version of ImmunoSpot[®] Software with the purchase of any kit. Email kitscanningservices@immunospot.com for more info.)¹³

See other side for Solutions and Technical Tips.

For laboratory research use only. Not for use in diagnostic or therapeutic procedures.



SOLUTIONS

All solutions should be freshly-made prior to use. It is important to quick-spin vials before use to ensure content volumes.

- **CTL-Test™ B, B Cell Culture Medium²:** Prepare medium by adding 1% fresh L-glutamine. The amount of medium needed will depend on variables such as cell yield and number of samples tested but will be no less than 20ml for one full plate.
- **Capture Solution:** Dilute the *Human Ig Capture Ab* in *Diluent A*. For one plate, add 170µl of *Human Ig Capture Ab* to 8.5ml *Diluent A*.
- **Anti-human IgM/IgA Detection Solution:** Dilute the *Anti-human IgM (FITC)* and *Anti-human IgA (Biotin) Detection Antibodies* in *Diluent B*. For one plate, add 25µl of *Anti-human IgM (FITC)* and 25µl of *Anti-human IgA (Biotin) Detection Ab* to 10ml of *Diluent B*.
- **Tertiary Solution:** Dilute *FITC-HRP* 1:1000 and *Strep-AP* 1:1000 in *Diluent C*. For one plate, add 10µl of *FITC-HRP* and 10µl *Strep-AP* to 10ml of *Diluent C*.
- **Blue Developer Solution:** Add the *Blue Substrate Solutions* in sequential steps to 10ml of *Diluent Blue*.
For one plate:
Step 1 — Add 160µl of *S1* to 10ml of *Diluent Blue*. Mix well!
Step 2 — Add 160µl of *S2*. Mix well!
Step 3 — Add 92µl of *S3*. Mix well!
- **Red Developer Solution:** Add the *Red Substrate Solutions* in sequential steps to 10ml of *Diluent Red*.
For one plate:
Step 1 — Add 180µl of *R1* to 10ml of *Diluent Red*. Mix well!
Step 2 — Add 160µl of *R2*. Mix well!

It is recommended to make both the Blue and Red Developer Solutions within ten minutes of use and keep them protected from direct light.

Wash Buffers (not included)

For each plate prepare:

- 0.05% Tween-PBS: 100µl Tween-20 in 200ml PBS
- PBS, sterile, 100ml
- Distilled water, 100ml

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Four-day prestimulation cultures are recommended for most *in vitro* ASC measurements. Adhere strictly to sterile conditions for prestimulation culture. The *B-Poly-S™* provided with this Assay System is sufficient for stimulation of 320 million PBMC at 4 million cells/ml. Additional *B-Poly-S™* can be purchased separately, Cat. #CTL-hBPOLYS-200.
- 2 For reasons of standardization, we recommend the use of specialized serum-free media, such as CTL-Test B™, that has been specially developed for B cell ELISPOT work (Cat. # CTLTB-005). With a pretested fetal calf serum (FCS) available, R10 medium is also suitable: RPMI 1640 with 10% FCS, 1% L-glutamine, 1% Penicillin-Streptomycin, plus 1µM 2ME. With either medium, make sure it is reconstituted with fresh L-glutamine. L-glutamine is unstable at 4°C, therefore, keep stock frozen and resupplement medium with freshly-thawed L-glutamine after seven days. Prepare more culture medium than required for the prestimulation culture, as it will be needed for later washing steps and use in the ELISPOT assay. Store medium at 4°C protected from light. Before adding medium to cells, place into a CO₂ incubator with lid ajar to warm up and equilibrate the pH.

- 3 If a 24-well plate is used, plate 1ml of the cell suspension per well. For larger scale polyclonal stimulation cultures, traditional culture flasks can be used. Suggested conditions for culture flasks are approximately 3ml of 4 million/ml cell suspension per cm². For example, in a T-25 flask, we recommend 8ml of total cell suspension, for a T-75 flask, 25ml. While cells can be cultured at a range of % CO₂, we recommend 9% for optimal results.
- 4 To maximize the use of each plate, an adhesive plate-sealing sheet has been included to cover unused wells for use in subsequent assays. Use your thumbs to firmly adhere the sheet to the plate and a razor blade to cut the sheet to expose only the necessary wells.
- 5 High background can result from antibody carryover from the prestimulation culture. To avoid it, wash the cells thoroughly with medium prior to the experiment.
- 6 After *in vitro* stimulation certain Ig classes such as IgA or IgG, frequencies can be rather high, whereas *in vivo* ISC/ASC and *in vitro* ASC tend to occur in rather low frequencies. Therefore it is important to establish the frequency range and then cover it in serial dilution. For the detection of low-frequency Ig-producing cells we recommend concentrations of 1x10⁶, 5x10⁵, 2.5x10⁵, and 1.25x10⁵ cells per well. In the case of very rare Ig-secreting cells, magnetic bead-based enrichment of B cells is recommended (see Saletti et al., *Nature Protocols*, 2013, 8, 1073). For high-frequency Ig-secreting cells, continue dilution series, skip two dilutions and plate PBMC at 15,000, 10,000 and 5,000 cells per well. Keep the diluted PBMC in a CO₂ incubator with lid open until pipetting into the assay plate.
- 7 Decant plate containing the PBS just before adding the cells. While processing plates, the PVDF membrane at the bottom of the wells must remain wet.
- 8 Resuspend cells carefully before pipetting by gently flicking the tubes with lid closed, do not resuspend by pipetting as shear forces harm the cells. Plate the PBMC in 100µl of media/well using large orifice tips. Once the plate is completed, gently tap the sides to permit even sedimentation of the cells and immediately place into a 37°C humidified incubator. Do not stack plates.
- 9 Avoid shaking plates by carefully opening and closing incubator door. Do not touch plates during incubation to avoid disturbing the cells.
- 10 From this point forward, the assay will require approximately 3.5 more hours to complete. If the cell preparation prior to incubation will result in a long day, it is acceptable to incubate the detection solution overnight at 4°C.
- 11 When underdrain and gloves are wet, the underdrain may be slippery and difficult to remove. Wipe gloves and underdrain with paper towel before removing.
- 12 To completely dry plate, place in running laminar flow hood for two hours, or on the bench top for 24 hours at a 45° angle on paper towels. Do not dry the ELISPOT assay plates at temperatures exceeding 37°C as this may cause the membrane to crack. Spots may not be readily visible while the membrane is still wet and the background may appear elevated. Scan and count plates only after membranes have completely dried.
- 13 Proper image analysis equipment is recommended to capture and document the wealth of information generated by B cell ELISPOT assays. If you do not have access to a qualified ImmunoSpot® Analyzer, CTL has scanning and analysis services available and offers a trial version of ImmunoSpot® Software with the purchase of any kit. Email kitscanningservices@immunospot.com for more info.

ADDITIONAL HINTS:

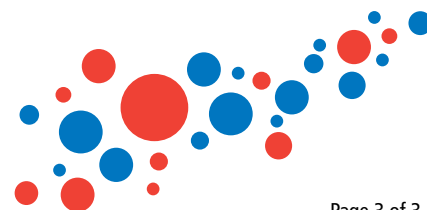
- Deviations from specified temperatures, timing requirements, number of washing steps, and specified reagent preparation volumes may alter the performance of the assay.
- Plates can be washed manually or with a suitable automated plate washer with adjusted pin length and flow rate so membranes and spots are not damaged (CTL recommends CTL 405LSR).
- To avoid damage to the PVDF membrane in the wells, do not touch the membrane with pipette tips or with the plate washer. The PVDF membrane is permeable and protected by an underdrain. Avoid direct contact between the well bottom and wet surfaces, including paper towels or any other materials that will absorb liquid.

See other side for Contents and Procedure.
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Cellular Technology Limited • 20521 Chagrin Blvd. • Shaker Hts., OH 44122-5350 USA
+1 216-791-5084 Phone • +1 888-791-4005 Toll Free US • +1 216-751-1373 Fax
kits@immunospot.com • www.immunospot.com

CTL-Europe GmbH • Hans-Boeckler-Str. 19-29, 53225 • Bonn, Germany
+49 (0) 228 8544 78-0 Phone • +49 (0) 228 8544 78-22 Fax
ctl-europe@immunospot.eu • www.immunospot.eu



B Cell ELISPOT Assay

Circulating B cells in the lymphoblastoid/plasmablast state can only secrete antibodies 5-10 days after antigen encounter *in vivo*. Such *in vivo*-activated antibody-secreting cells can be directly plated and measured in B cell ELISPOT assays. Spontaneous immunoglobulin-secreting plasmablasts that have known antigen specificity are commonly referred to as *in vivo*-specific antibody-secreting cells (*in vivo* ASCs), whereas, immunoglobulin-secreting cells that have unknown or undefined antigen specificity after *in vivo* activation are called *in vivo* ISC. Resting B memory cells, however, need to be prestimulated *in vitro* with mitogen for 4-10 days before they start secreting antibody and become detectable in B cell ELISPOT assays. The *B-Poly-S™* reagent provides optimal polyclonal stimulation of human B cells. If the antigen specificity of *in vitro* stimulated B cells is known (when tested in antigen-specific B cell ELISPOT assays), one refers to the cells as *in vitro* ASCs. If the antigen specificity of such *in vitro* stimulated B cells is not known (when tested in antigen-specific B cell ELISPOT assays) one refers to the cells as *in vitro* ISCs. This system detects all B cells producing IgM and IgA antibodies either *ex vivo*, or after *in vitro* prestimulation.

Principle of the Test

The principle for detection of all B cells that secrete IgM or IgA (ISC) is illustrated in the figure below. The membrane is coated with an *Anti-human Ig Capture Antibody* shown in dark blue. As the B cells secrete antibodies (shown in gray), these antibodies are directly captured by the membrane-bound *Anti-human Ig Capture Antibody*, irrespective of their class, subclass, or antigen-specificity. The plate-bound IgM is detected by adding *FITC-labeled Anti-human IgM Antibody* followed by the addition of *Anti-FITC Horseradish Peroxidase (FITC-HRP)* and a substrate that consists of two subcomponents (*R1* and *R2*), which generates a red precipitate or "spot." The plate-bound IgA is detected by adding *Biotinylated Anti-human IgA Antibody* followed by the addition of *Streptavidin-Alkaline Phosphatase (Strep-AP)*

and a substrate that consists of three subcomponents (*S1*, *S2*, and *S3*) which generates a blue precipitates or "spot."

For detection of *in vivo/vitro* ASC, the membrane is coated with the antigen itself, rather than the *Ig Capture Antibody*. Utilizing this method, only antigen-specific antibodies released by the *in vivo/vitro* ASC will bind to the membrane-bound antigen. These antigen-specific antibodies can then be detected using the same procedure as described for the *in vivo/vitro* ISC. Coating conditions need to be optimized for each antigen. CTL can assist you in optimizing coating conditions for various antigens.

Nomenclature for Ig Secreting B Cells

	SPONTANEOUSLY SECRETES* IG AT ISOLATION	SPONTANEOUSLY SECRETES† WITH POLYCLONAL STIMULATION
Undefined Ag Specificity	<i>In vivo</i> ISC	<i>In vitro</i> ISC
Defined Ag Specificity	<i>In vivo</i> ASC	<i>In vitro</i> ASC

*Plasmablast that underwent human stimulation less than 12 days ago

†Memory B cell that underwent polyclonal stimulation for a minimum of 4 days

