

Userguide

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Eppendorf Biopur® – A unique dimension in biological purity

Natascha Weiß, Eppendorf AG, Hamburg, Germany

Abstract

The certified Eppendorf Biopur standard has been created to ensure the highest possible purity of laboratory consumables for applications in cell culture, IVF, diagnostics and other areas where protection against contamination is crucial. In this report, we present background information about parameters that are of critical importance for the purity of these consumables.

Introduction

Plastic consumables used in the laboratory which come into direct contact with sample material must not compromise the sample nor influence the results of analyses performed with these consumables. High purity of consumables is particularly important for applications which include living cells or nucleic acids. Many consumables can be sterilized by autoclaving, but molecules such as DNA, RNases and endotoxins are very stable and cannot be removed entirely, or inactivated, by this method. Hence, the availability of ready-to-use sterile products which are also free of molecules relevant in molecular or cell biology is advantageous. These products can be used directly, thus saving time and money while ensuring highest safety.

Twenty years ago, Eppendorf created a unique purity grade for consumables, Eppendorf Biopur, the testing criteria of which were expanded in 2012 to include the absence of DNase and PCR inhibitors. Pipette tips, Safe-Lock Tubes, twin.tec PCR plates and Combitips bearing the Eppendorf Biopur seal are produced in a process with extensive automation of all production steps. Contamination with nucleic acids, proteins or microorganisms by human contact or through other sources is thereby excluded. In addition, sterilization of products is ensured by either irradiation or ethylene oxide treatment.

Every batch is tested by an independent laboratory; only batches fulfilling all test criteria will be certified. The certificate (Fig. 1) serves to guarantee the purity of all Eppendorf Biopur products from Eppendorf, listing the threshold limits for sterility, pyrogens (endotoxins), DNA, DNase, RNase, ATP and PCR-inhibitors.

The batch specific certificates are available at www.eppendorf.com/certificates

The Eppendorf Biopur seal (Fig. 2) stands for the reliability with which the product can be used directly for all applications requiring highest purity. All products with this seal are guaranteed:

- Sterile (high energy electron radiation or treatment with ethylene oxide, SAL of 10^{-6})
- Pyrogen-free (< 0.001 EU/ml, kinetic-turbidimetric LAL-test, FDA guideline)
- ATP-free (< 5.5 fg)
- RNase-free (< 1.0×10^{-9} Kunitz units)
- DNase-free (< 1.0×10^{-6} Kunitz units) – new!
- Human DNA-free (< 2 pg; less than one human cell)
- Bacterial DNA-free (< 50 fg; less than 10 *E. coli* cells)
- PCR-inhibitor-free (less than 10 amplifiable targets) – new!

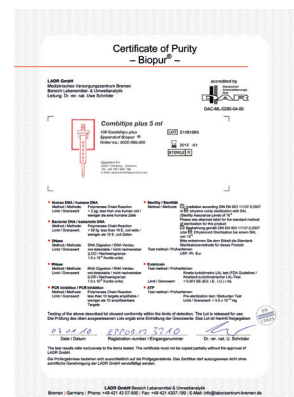


Figure 1: Eppendorf Biopur certificate
Eppendorf Biopur products are tested and certified batch by batch by an external laboratory.

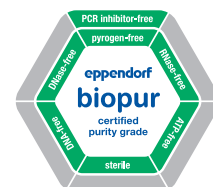


Figure 2: Eppendorf Biopur seal

Sterility

In accordance with an initiative of the European Confederation of Medical Suppliers Associations (EUCOMED), a contamination probability with viable microorganisms of 10^{-6} after a sterilization process was specified for reliable sterilization. This is equivalent to a Sterility Assurance Level (SAL) of 10^{-6} , which means: 1 microorganism surviving in a sample of 10^6 or 1 non-sterile item after sterilization of a batch of 10^6 items.

For Eppendorf Biopur products, sterility with an SAL of 10^{-6} is achieved by irradiation or treatment with ethylene oxide (EtO). The choice of sterilization dose is based on experimental determination of bioburden and on sterility tests. This process reflects the high quality of the entire production process. Following validation of the sterilization process and sterility of the product by using suitable biological indicators (*Bacillus pumilus*), the subsequent process is monitored with dosimeters, in accordance with USP XXII (United States Pharmacopoeia), DAB 10 (German Pharmacopoeia) and Ph. Eur. (European Pharmacopoeia).

Sterilization via radiation can be achieved with either beta-irradiation (accelerated electrons) or gamma irradiation (high energy electromagnetic rays). Of note, both types of irradiation, depending on the dose, may influence material composition, and thus the mechanical properties of plastic products. Eppendorf Biopur products are produced under fully automated cleanroom conditions, without human intervention. The low bioburden hereby achieved allows for the radiation dose required for sterilization to be set at a very low level.

An additional very effective sterilization method is treatment with ethylene oxide, which is frequently used for medicinal products in hospitals. The advantage of this method is the fact that the mechanical properties of the plastic are not affected. Strict adherence to the process and a sufficiently long ventilation period of the sterilized products are crucial. For sterility testing of samples, the Eppendorf products are rinsed in thioglycolate and CaSo-bouillon and incubated for 15 days. The test is performed in accordance with Ph. Eur. 2.6.1. "Sterility testing".

Pyrogens

Pyrogens (from greek: pyr, pyros = fire; genes = to arise) Pyrogens form a class of substances that cause fever when given parenterally. Endotoxins as the most important class of pyrogens are monitored in Eppendorf Biopur products by a kinetic-turbidimetric LAL-Test. LAL is the abbreviation for **L**imulus **A**moebocyte **L**ysate. This lysate of blood cells from *Limulus polyphemus* ("horseshoe crab", Figure 3) reacts very sensitively to very small amounts of the lipopolysaccharide fraction of bacterial cell envelopes of gram-negative bacteria (bacterial endotoxins). The addition of a solution containing endotoxins to a solution of the lysate produces turbidity, precipitation or gelation of the mixture.

Horseshoe crabs are used as blood donors for the collection of amoebocytes. Fortunately, the crabs do not have to be killed for this procedure. The Ph. Eur. (European Pharmacopoeia) and also the FDA developed guidelines for the use of gel tests and kinetic-turbidimetric tests with LAL in 1987 and 1988, respectively.

The LAL-Test for Eppendorf Biopur products is carried out with endotoxin standards (i.e. WHO-Standard 84/650 or Endotoxin BRS) or control standard endotoxins. To this end, the products are rinsed with endotoxin-free water, and the test is performed in accordance with the Ph. Eur. 2.6.14 "Testing for bacterial endotoxins".



Figure 3: North American horseshoe crab *Limulus polyphemus*

ATP

ATP can be used as a general indicator for the presence of a biological contamination as it is an energy-rich molecule that is part of all living cells. Eppendorf Biopur products are free of ATP which is tested via a bioburden test and therefore, they are optimally suited for the use with ATP quantification kits. These kits commonly use the enzyme luciferase from firefly organs, which catalyzes the formation and oxidation of adenylyl-luciferin with the emission of light. This bioluminescence is used as an indicator for metabolic activities or the presence of biological materials.

DNA, DNases and RNases

Contaminating nucleic acids and enzymes that cleave DNA or RNA are critical substances which can have considerable influence on experimental work in molecular biology, e.g. Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) or other amplification techniques. Contaminations of plastic consumables during production with DNA, DNases and RNases are mostly due to human contact and air-borne pollutants. These occurrences are precluded from the entire Eppendorf Biopur production process.

For testing of the Eppendorf Biopur products, these were rinsed with nucleic acid-free and nuclease-free water which was subsequently subjected to the following analyses: Determination of DNA is performed via real-time PCR. Contamination with bacterial DNA is indicated by amplification of a highly conserved 110 bp fragment from the 16S rDNA. For human DNA, a 294 bp fragment, present in more than 10^5 copies per cell, is amplified. A serial dilution of 16 pg – 2 pg of this DNA fragment serves as positive control and comparison standard (Fig. 4).

The presence of DNases or RNases is examined by incubation of the rinsing solution with a 100 bp DNA ladder or a 100 b RNA ladder, respectively, at 37 °C for 24 h and subsequent analysis via gel electrophoresis.

PCR inhibitors

There are substances which disrupt the amplification of DNA during PCR. In order to detect possible PCR inhibitors in Eppendorf Biopur products, these are rinsed with DNA-free water. This rinse is then used in a real-time PCR setup to amplify a 294 bp fragment which is present in 10^5 copies in one human cell. The C_t -values are compared to the positive control (containing 16 pg human DNA). In order to pass, the difference in C_t -values must not exceed ± 2 cycles.

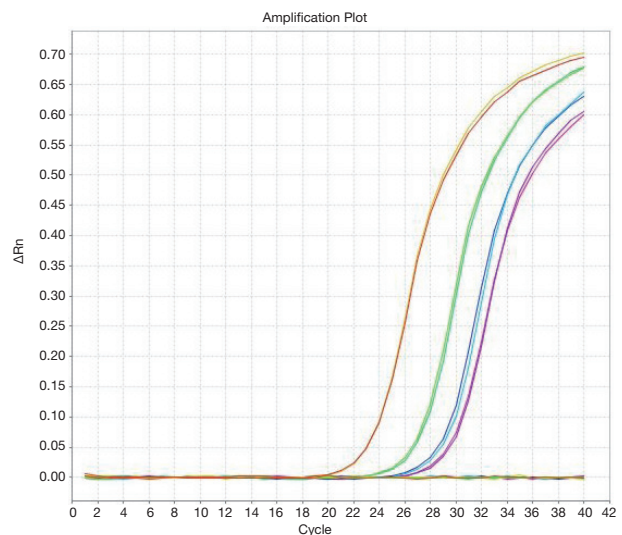


Figure 4: Real-time PCR of a serial dilution of human DNA. The figure shows 4 fluorescence double curves which correspond to the double preparations of human DNA serial dilutions (from left to right = 16, 8, 4, 2 pg L1-DNA).

Ordering information

Description		Order no. international	Order no. North America
epT.I.P.S. [®] Singles, Eppendorf Biopur [®] , individually wrapped	0.1–20 µL, 40 mm, 100 tips	0030 010.019	022491130
	2–200 µL, 53 mm, 100 tips	0030 010.035	022491148
	50–1,000 µL, 71 mm, 100 tips	0030 010.051	022491156
epT.I.P.S. [®] Racks, Eppendorf Biopur [®]	0.1–20 µL, 40 mm, 5 racks of 96 tips = 480 tips	0030 075.005	022491067
	2–200 µL, 53 mm, 5 racks of 96 tips = 480 tips	0030 075.021	022491083
	20–300 µL, 55 mm, 5 racks of 96 tips = 480 tips	0030 075.048	022491091
	50–1,000 µL, 71 mm, 5 racks of 96 tips = 480 tips	0030 075.064	022491105
	50–1,250 µL, 76 mm, 5 racks of 96 tips = 480 tips	0030 075.080	022491113
	50–1,250 µL L, 103 mm, 5 racks of 96 tips = 480 tips	0030 075.129	022494014
	500–2,500 µL, 115 mm, 5 racks of 48 tips = 240 tips	0030 075.102	022491121
	1–10 mL, 165 mm, 5 racks of 24 tips = 120 tips	0030 075.145	022491164
Eppendorf Combitips [®] plus/ Eppendorf Combitips [®] , Eppendorf Biopur [®] individually wrapped (Set of 100)	Combitips plus 0.1 mL	0030 069.404	022496000
	Combitips plus 0.2 mL	0030 069.412	022496026
	Combitips plus 0.5 mL	0030 069.420	022496042
	Combitips plus 1.0 mL	0030 069.439	022496069
	Combitips plus 2.5 mL	0030 069.447	022496085
	Combitips plus 5.0 mL	0030 069.455	022496107
	Combitips plus 10 mL	0030 069.463	022496123
	Combitips plus 25 mL	0030 069.390	022496131
	Combitips plus 50 mL	0030 069.471	022496140
	Combitips 1.25 mL	0030 048.407	022495101
	Combitips 12.5 mL	0030 048.431	022495208
	25 mL adapter (set of 7)	0030 069.498	022496158
	50 mL adapter (set of 7)	0030 069.480	022496166
Eppendorf Safe-Lock Tubes, Eppendorf Biopur [®]	0.5 mL (per 50 pcs.)	0030 121.570	022600001
	1.5 mL (per 100 pcs.)	0030 121.589	022600028
	2.0 mL (per 100 pcs.)	0030 121.597	022600044
Eppendorf twin.tec [®] <i>microbiology</i> PCR Plate 96, skirted, Eppendorf Biopur [®] , Set of 10	clear	0030 129.300	0030129300
	blue	0030 129.318	0030129318
Eppendorf twin.tec [®] <i>microbiology</i> PCR Plate 96, semi-skirted, Eppen- dorf Biopur [®] , Set of 10	clear	0030 129.326	0030129326
	blue	0030 129.334	0030129334
Eppendorf twin.tec [®] <i>microbiology</i> PCR Plate 384, Eppendorf Biopur [®] , Set of 10	clear	0030 129.342	0030129342
	blue	0030 129.350	0030129350



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Eppendorf AG · 22331 Hamburg · Germany · Tel: +49 40 53801-0 · Fax: +49 40 538 01-556 · E-mail: eppendorf@eppendorf.com

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