

Version 6b Last updated 18 March 2026

ab109906

MitoTox™ Complex IV

OXPPOS Activity

Assay Kit

For the rapid, sensitive and accurate screening of potential inhibitors of Complex IV activity *in vitro*.

This product is for research use only and is not intended for diagnostic use.

Table of Contents

1. Overview	1
2. Protocol Summary	3
3. Precautions	4
4. Storage and Stability	4
5. Limitations	5
6. Materials Supplied	5
7. Materials Required, Not Supplied	6
8. Technical Hints	7
9. Reagent Preparation	8
10. Sample preparation	8
11. Assay Procedure – SCREENING ASSAY	9
12. Assay Procedure – DOSE RESPONSE ASSAY	12
13. Data Analysis	15
14. Typical Data	16
15. Troubleshooting	17
16. FAQs	18
17. Notes	19

1. Overview

MitoTox™ Complex IV OXPHOS Activity Assay Kit (ab109906) is designed for testing the direct inhibitory effect of compounds on Complex IV activity in only 5 hours. Complex IV extracted from the provided bovine heart mitochondria (a rich source of Complex IV) is immunocaptured by specific antibodies on the plate. Complex IV activity can be observed as decrease in absorbance at OD 550 nm. The intra-assay and inter-assay variation of this assay are both < 10%.

The inhibitory effects of compounds on Complex IV activity can be tested in two different ways:

- Screening format (Figure 1, panel A): in this scenario, a maximum of up to 23 compounds can be tested at a single concentration, in triplicate, along with the appropriate blank.
- Dose response (IC₅₀) format (Figure 1, panel B): In this scenario, two compounds known to affect Complex IV activity can be tested at 11 different data points in triplicate, along the appropriate blanks.

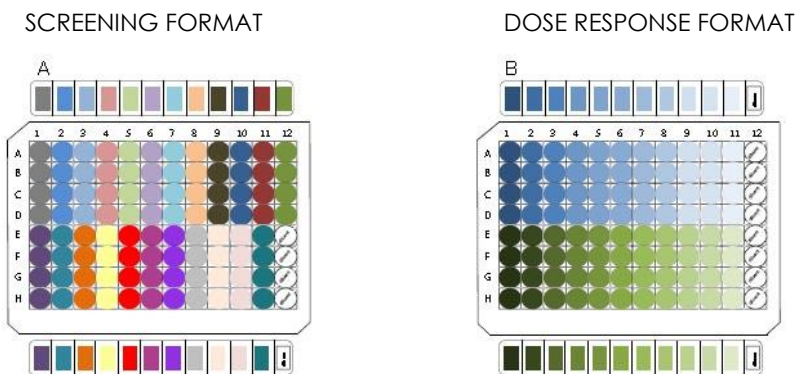
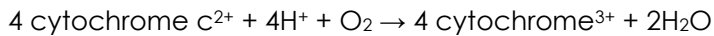


Figure 1. Schematic representation of assay set up format. Panel A: assay set up for the screening format with the plate and two 12-well troughs (depicted above and below the plate) provided in the kit. Each color represents a different compound diluted at a single concentration in activity buffer. Panel B: assay set up for the dose response format with the plate and two 12-well troughs (depicted above and below the plate) provided in the kit. Each color gradient represents a compound titration.

Testing for mitochondrial function has become a key aspect of drug discovery. Mitochondria can be affected by drug treatment, resulting into cardio- and hepatotoxic side effects that can lead to drug withdrawal from the market. Therefore, there is increasing emphasis on testing the impact on mitochondria early on in the drug development process to reduce failure rates during preclinical and clinical phases.

OXPHOS Complex IV (Cytochrome c oxidase, EC 1.9.3.1) is one of the five complexes involved in oxidative phosphorylation (OXPHOS) in mitochondria. The enzyme complex transfers electrons from reduced cytochrome c (cytochrome c^{2+}) to molecular oxygen, and concomitantly pumps protons across the inner mitochondrial membrane.



2. Protocol Summary

Add Blocking Solution to plate



Add detergent-solubilized mitochondria to plate



Add Complex IV activity solution + test compounds to plate



Measure absorbance (OD550 nm) in kinetic mode
for 60 minutes at RT*

**For kinetic mode detection, incubation time given in this summary is for guidance only*

3. Precautions

Please read these instructions carefully prior to beginning the assay.

- All kit components have been formulated and quality control tested to function successfully as a kit.
- We understand that, occasionally, experimental protocols might need to be modified to meet unique experimental circumstances. However, we cannot guarantee the performance of the product outside the conditions detailed in this protocol booklet.
- Observe good laboratory practices. Gloves, lab coat, and protective eyewear should always be worn. Never pipet by mouth. Do not eat, drink or smoke in the laboratory areas.
- If applicable, please refer to the current Safety Data Sheet (SDS) provided with this product for safety, handling, and disposal information. The most up to date and current versions are available on our website <https://www.abcam.com/en-us>.

4. Storage and Stability

Store kit at 4°C (store Bovine Heart Mitochondria and Reagent C at - 80°C) in the dark immediately upon receipt. Kit has a storage time of 1 year from receipt, providing components have not been reconstituted.

Refer to list of materials supplied for storage conditions of individual components. Observe the storage conditions for individual prepared components in the Materials Supplied section.

Aliquot components in working volumes before storing at the recommended temperature.

5. Limitations

- Assay kit intended for research use only. Not for use in diagnostic procedures.
- Do not mix or substitute reagents or materials from other kit lots or vendors. Kits are QC tested as a set of components and performance cannot be guaranteed if utilized separately or substituted.

6. Materials Supplied

Item	Quantity	Storage temperature (before prep)	Storage temperature (after prep)
1X Blocking Buffer	70 mL	4°C	4°C
1X Complex IV Mito Buffer	110 mL	4°C	4°C
Blocking powder (1.8 g)	1 vial	4°C	N/A
Detergent	20 µL	4°C	4°C
Bovine Heart Mitochondria	90 µL	-80°C	-80°C
Reagent C	2 x 1 mL	-80°C	-80°C
Pre-coated 96-well microplate	1 unit	4°C	4°C
12-channel reagent reservoirs	2 units	4°C/RT	N/A

7. Materials Required, Not Supplied

These materials are not included in the kit, but will be required to successfully perform this assay:

- Microplate reader capable of measuring absorbance at OD 550 nm
- Double distilled water (ddH₂O)
- Pipettes and pipette tips, including multi-channel pipette
- Assorted glassware for the preparation of reagents and buffer solutions
- Tubes for the preparation of reagents and buffer solutions
- Disposable single channel reservoirs
- Syringe needle
- (Optional) KCN: on the day of the assay, prepare a 0.2 M stock in ddH₂O. KCN can be prepared in advanced in 0.1M NaOH solution and stored at -20°C or -80°C. Please be aware that KCN is extremely unstable in water – do not use a KCN made in the morning in ddH₂O if running the assay in the afternoon.

8. Technical Hints

- **This kit is sold based on number of tests. A “test” simply refers to a single assay well. The number of wells that contain sample, control or standard will vary by product. Review the protocol completely to confirm this kit meets your requirements. Please contact our Technical Support staff with any questions.**
- Selected components in this kit are supplied in surplus amount to account for additional dilutions, evaporation, or instrumentation settings where higher volumes are required. They should be disposed of in accordance with established safety procedures.
- Avoid foaming or bubbles when mixing or reconstituting components.
- Avoid cross contamination of samples or reagents by changing tips between sample and reagent additions.
- Ensure plates are properly sealed or covered during incubation steps.
- Ensure all reagents and solutions are at the appropriate temperature before starting the assay.
- Make sure all necessary equipment is switched on and set at the appropriate temperature.

9. Reagent Preparation

Briefly centrifuge small vials at low speed prior to opening.

9.1 Blocking powder (1.8 g):

Dissolve 1.5 g of Blocking powder in 30 mL of 1X Blocking Buffer (Step 9.1). Mix well by pipetting up and down. Label this mixture as **Blocking Solution**. Equilibrate to room temperature before use. Store at 4°C.

10. Sample preparation

General sample information:

- Always prepare a fresh set of dilutions for every use.
- Do not use compounds that have been diluted in solvent for more than 3-6 months.

Test Compounds:

Dissolve test compounds into appropriate solvent.

The volume of the compound should not exceed 1.8% of the total volume of the activity solution in which they are diluted for the assay.

Use the following formula to calculate how much you need to add the activity solution to achieve the desired final concentration on the reaction well:

$$V_{test} = 900 \mu L \times \frac{[Compound]}{[Stock]}$$

Where:

[Compound] = desired concentration of test compound in well.

[Stock] = stock concentration of test compound.

900 μ L = total volume of Complex IV Solution/Compound.

Δ Note: See Assay Procedure section for more details

11. Assay Procedure – SCREENING ASSAY

- The 96-well microplate provided has been coated with anti-Complex IV monoclonal antibody in rows B-G. Rows A and H have been coated with a null capture monoclonal antibody to be used as background controls.
- We recommend using KCN in the screening procedure as a positive control. KCN is a well-known inhibitor of Complex IV activity. Following the assay procedure, 50% inhibition of Complex IV activity is obtained with $3.2 \pm 0.5 \mu\text{M}$ KCN.
- Do not use compounds that have been diluted in solvent for more than 3-6 months.
- The 12-well troughs included in the kit will facilitate assay set up, so that compounds can be mixed with the activity buffer prior to addition on the plate. The first trough will have compounds 1-12, whereas the second trough will have compounds 12-23 (see Figure 1).

11.1 Blocking Solution addition:

- 11.1.1 Add 300 μL Blocking Solution (Step 9.1) to each well of the 96-well plate.
- 11.1.2 Cover plate and incubate at room temperature for 1 hour.

11.2 Bovine Heart Mitochondria (BHM) solubilization and plating:

- 11.2.1 Add 10 μL of Detergent to the provided tube containing bovine heart mitochondria (BHM) (90 μL at 5.5 mg/mL).
- 11.2.2 Mix well by vortexing.
- 11.2.3 Incubate tube on ice for 30 minutes.
- 11.2.4 Centrifuge at 25,000 x g for 20 minutes at 4°C in a cold microcentrifuge.
- 11.2.5 Collect sample supernatant containing solubilized BHM and discard pellet. Keep on ice until use.
- 11.2.6 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.
- 11.2.7 Add 300 μL of Blocking Solution to each well.
- 11.2.8 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.

Δ Note: Discard Blocking Solution as it is not needed for subsequent steps in the protocol. Inadvertent use of Blocking Solution in subsequent steps will result in loss of Complex IV activity in the assay.

- 11.2.9 Dilute 20 μL of solubilized BHM (Step 11.2.5) into 22 mL of 1X Mito Buffer. Mix well by pipetting up and down.
- 11.2.10 Add 200 μL of diluted BHM (~ 909 ng mitochondria) to each well of the precoated 96-well microplate.
- 11.2.11 Cover plate and incubate for 3 hours at room temperature.

11.3 Test Compound preparation:

- 11.3.1 Prepare Complex IV Activity Solution immediately prior to use by gently mixing 2 mL of Reagent C with 22 mL of 1X Mito Buffer. (to prevent bubble formation) Label this solution **“Complex IV Activity Solution”**.
- 11.3.2 Add each compound (up to 23 different compounds) to be tested to each channel of both 12-channel reagent reservoirs. Leave 1 channel (preferably, last channel) for the addition of a solvent only control.
- 11.3.3 When mitochondria incubation time is almost complete (Step 11.2.11), add Complex IV Activity Solution to each channel of both 12-channel reagent reservoirs to a final volume of 900 μL .
- 11.3.4 Mix contents of each channel by pipetting up and down with a multichannel pipette.

11.4 Test Compound addition to plate:

- 11.4.1 Once mitochondria incubation step (Step 11.2.11) is finished, rinse the wells by adding 300 μL 1X Mito Buffer to each well.
- 11.4.2 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.
- 11.4.3 Add 300 μL of 1X Mito Buffer to each well.
- 11.4.4 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.
- 11.4.5 Using a multi-channel pipette, gently add 200 μL of Complex IV Activity Solution/Compound from each channel of the first 12-channel reagent reservoir to each well in row A, B, C, D.
- 11.4.6 Using a multi-channel pipette, add 200 μL of Complex IV Activity Solution/Compound from each channel of the

second 12-channel reagent reservoir to each well in row E, F, G, H.

Δ Note: Any bubbles in the wells should be popped with a fine needle as quickly as possible.

11.5 Measurement:

11.5.1 Measure output immediately at OD 550 nm on a microplate reader in kinetic mode, every minute, for at least 60 minutes at room temperature protected from light.

Δ Note: Ensure the limit of maximum OD is set read at 1 and Kinetic reading reads as Vmax (mOD-units per minute).

12. Assay Procedure – DOSE RESPONSE ASSAY

- The 96-well microplate provided has been coated with anti-Complex IV monoclonal antibody in rows B-G. Rows A and H have been coated with a null capture monoclonal antibody to be used as background controls.
- We recommend using KCN in the screening procedure as a positive control. KCN is a well-known of Complex IV activity. Following the assay procedure, 50% inhibition of Complex IV activity is obtained with $3.2 \pm 0.5 \mu\text{M}$ KCN.
- Do not use compounds that have been diluted in solvent for more than 3-6 months.
- The 12-well troughs included in the kit will facilitate assay set up, so that compounds can be mixed with the activity buffer prior to addition on the plate. The first trough will have dilution series of compound 1, whereas the second trough will have dilution series of compound 2 (see Figure 1).

12.1 Blocking Solution addition:

- 12.1.1 Add 300 μL Blocking Solution (Step 9.1) to each well of the 96-well plate.
- 12.1.2 Cover plate and incubate at room temperature for 1 hour.

12.2 Bovine Heart Mitochondria (BHM) solubilization and plating:

- 12.2.1 Add 10 μL of Detergent to the provided tube containing bovine heart mitochondria (BHM) (90 μL at 5.5 mg/mL).
- 12.2.2 Mix well by vortexing.
- 12.2.3 Incubate tube on ice for 30 minutes.
- 12.2.4 Centrifuge at 25,000 x g for 20 minutes at 4°C in a cold microcentrifuge.
- 12.2.5 Collect sample supernatant containing solubilized BHM and discard pellet. Keep on ice until use.
- 12.2.6 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.
- 12.2.7 Add 300 μL of 1X Blocking Buffer to each well.
- 12.2.8 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.

Δ Note: Discard Blocking Solution as it is not needed for subsequent steps in the protocol. Inadvertent use of Blocking Solution in subsequent steps will result in loss of Complex IV activity in the assay.

12.2.9 Dilute 20 μL of solubilized BHM (Step 12.2.5) into 22 mL of 1X Mito Buffer. Mix well by pipetting up and down.

12.2.10 Add 200 μL of diluted BHM (~ 909 ng mitochondria) to each well of the precoated 96-well microplate.

12.2.11 Cover plate and incubate for 3 hours at room temperature.

12.3 Test Compound preparation:

12.3.1 Prepare Complex IV Activity Solution immediately prior to use by gently mixing 2 mL of Reagent C with 22 mL of 1X Mito Buffer. (to prevent bubble formation) Label this solution "**Complex IV Activity Solution**".

12.3.2 Compound 1 dose response:

12.3.2.1 When mitochondria incubation time is almost complete (Step 12.2.11), add 900 μL of Complex IV Activity Solution to channels 2-12 of the first reagent reservoirs.

12.3.2.2 Add Compound 1 to channel 1 of the first reservoir. Add Complex IV Activity Solution to a final volume of 900 μL .

Δ Note: The volume on channel 1 might vary depending on the serial dilutions you are performed. Please take that in consideration when calculating the volume of compound and/or buffer that you need to add to the channel.

12.3.2.3 Starting with channel 1, generate serial dilutions from channel 2 till channel 11.

12.3.2.4 Add only solvent to channel 12 of the first reservoir as a control.

12.3.3 Repeat same procedure described in Step 12.3.2 for compound 2.

12.3.4 Mix contents of each channel by pipetting up and down with a multichannel pipette.

12.4 Test Compound addition to plate:

12.4.1 Once mitochondria incubation step (Step 12.2.11) is finished, rinse the wells by adding 300 μL 1X Mito Buffer to each well.

12.4.2 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.

12.4.3 Add 300 μL of 1X Mito Buffer to each well.

- 12.4.4 Empty the wells by turning the plate over and shaking out any remaining liquid. Blot the plate face down on paper towel.
- 12.4.5 Using a multi-channel pipette, gently add 200 μ L of Complex IV Activity Solution/Compound 1 from each channel of the first 12-channel reagent reservoir to each well in row A, B, C, D.
- 12.4.6 Using a multi-channel pipette, add 200 μ L of Complex IV Activity Solution/Compound 2 from each channel of the second 12-channel reagent reservoir to each well in row E, F, G, H.

Δ Note: Any bubbles in the wells should be popped with a fine needle as quickly as possible.

12.5 Measurement:

- 12.5.1 Measure output immediately at OD 550 nm on a microplate reader in kinetic mode, every minute, for at least 60 minutes at room temperature protected from light.

Δ Note: Ensure the limit of maximum OD is set read at 1 and Kinetic reading reads as Vmax (mOD-units per minute).

13. Data Analysis

- Use only the linear rate for calculation. To guarantee that Vmax (mOD-units per minute) is calculated in the linear range, confirm that the R² is close to 0.99 for every measurement in the raw graph window.
- Complex IV activity is proportional to the decrease in absorbance at OD 550 nm.

13.1 Calculation of activity of Complex IV:

- 13.1.1 Examine the linear rate of decrease in absorbance at OD 550 nm over time.
- 13.1.2 For all reaction wells, choose two time points (T1 and T2) in the linear phase of the reaction progress curves and obtain the corresponding OD values at those points (OD1 and OD2).
- 13.1.3 Calculate reaction rate (mOD/min). Most microplate analysis software can perform this function. Alternative, use the following formula:

$$\text{Reaction Rate (mOD/min)} = (\text{OD1} - \text{OD2}) / (\text{T1} - \text{T2})$$

- 13.1.4 Average the triplicate reading for each sample.
- 13.1.5 Calculate activity of Complex IV as follows:

$$\text{C IV activity} = \text{Rate sample} - \text{Rate background (row A/H)}$$

14. Typical Data

Data provided **for demonstration purposes only**. A new standard curve must be generated for each assay performed.

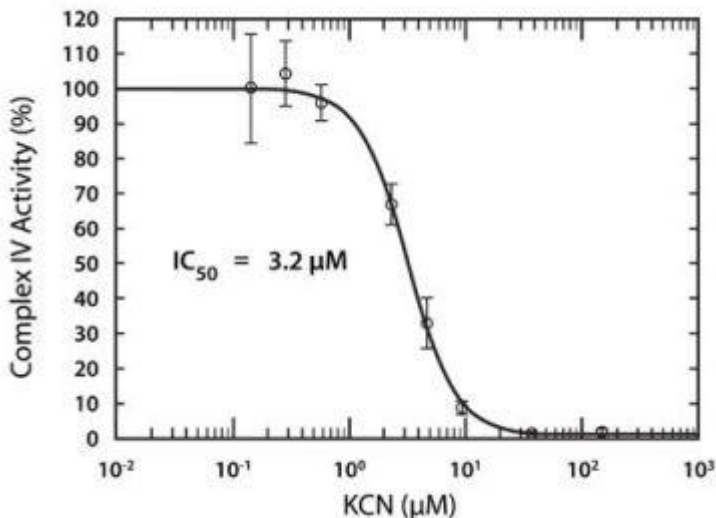


Figure 2. Typical dose response curve for KCN. Assay was performed following the Dose Response Assay Procedure using KCN, a well known Complex IV inhibitor. KCN was prepared in 0.1 M NaOH to generate a 100 mM stock. Starting with a 100 μM final concentration in well (1 μL in channel 1), 1:10 serial dilutions of KCN were generated.

15. Troubleshooting

Problem	Reason	Solution
Assay not working	Use of ice-cold buffer	Buffers must be at assay temperature
	Plate read at incorrect wavelength	Check the wavelength and filter settings of instrument
	Use of a different microplate	Colorimetric: clear plates Fluorometric: black wells/clear bottom plates Luminometric: white wells/clear bottom plates
Assay with erratic readings	Pipetting errors	Avoid pipetting small volumes (< 5 μ L) and prepare a master mix whenever possible
	Air bubbles formed in well	Pipette gently against the wall of the tubes
No signal above background in inhibitor wells	Inhibitor concentration too high	Reduce concentration of inhibitor
No inhibition seen in test compound wells	Compound is not an inhibitor	Use another compound for your test. Use a known inhibitor as positive control (KCN)

16. FAQs

Q. Why does this assay require a blocking step? None of the other MitoTox™ OXPHOS kits requires this blocking step.

A. This is because the plate requires fresh blocking to prevent non-specific binding of the enzyme to the plate. We believe this occurs because Complex IV is a highly hydrophobic enzymatic complex.

Q. I want to treat my cells with OXPHOS inhibitors and then look at the effect they have in the OXPHOS complexes activity. Can I use this kit?

A. No, we do not recommend this product.

If you treat the cells, let's say, with rotenone, and then isolate the mitochondria from rotenone-treated cells, all the rotenone present in the cells will wash off during the sample preparation procedure and there will no inhibitor present when the assay is performed.

The MitoTox™ range has been specifically designed to test normal mitochondria with inhibitor compounds *in vitro*.

Q. Can I use my own isolated mitochondria?

A. Yes, you can use mitochondria isolated from human cells for this assay. This is because the antibody used to capture Complex IV in the plate recognizes Complex IV from these species. We would still recommend to run a control reaction with the provided mitochondria from cow to ensure the assay is working.

17. Notes

Technical Support

Copyright © 2026 Abcam. All Rights Reserved. The Abcam logo is a registered trademark. All information / detail is correct at time of going to print.

For all technical or commercial enquiries please go to:

<https://www.abcam.com/en-us/contact-us>

<https://www.abcam.cn/contact-us> (China)

<https://www.abcam.co.jp/contact-us> (Japan)