

Version 5c, Last updated 2 July 2025

ab211076

CYP3A4 Activity Assay Kit (Fluorometric)

For the rapid, sensitive and accurate measurement of cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) activity in various samples.

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

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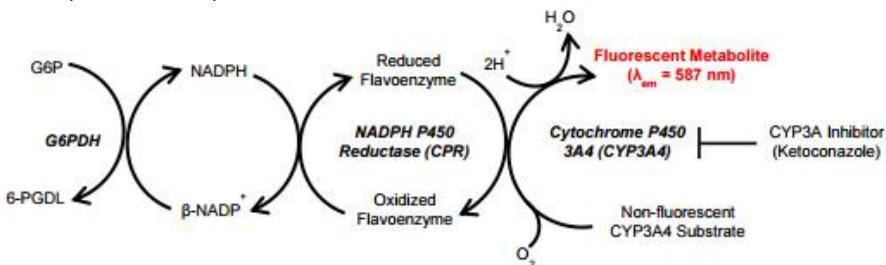
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1. Overview

CYP3A4 Activity Assay Kit (Fluorometric) (ab211076) allows rapid measurement of native or recombinant cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) activity in biological samples such as liver microsomes. The assay utilizes a non-fluorescent CYP3A4 substrate that is converted into a highly fluorescent metabolite detected in the visible range (Ex/Em = 535/587 nm), ensuring a high signal-to-background ratio with little interference by autofluorescence. CYP3A4 specific activity is calculated by running parallel reactions in the presence and absence of the potent inhibitor Ketoconazole and subtracting any residual activity detected with the inhibitor present.

The kit contains enough reagents to perform 100 sets of paired reactions (in presence / absence of inhibitor).

This kit can also be used to measure the effects of ligands on the enzyme activity



Cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4, EC 1.14.13.157) is a member of the cytochrome P450 monooxidase (CYP) family of microsomal xenobiotic metabolism enzymes. CYPs are membrane-bound hemoproteins responsible for Phase I biotransformation reactions, in which lipophilic drugs and other xenobiotic compounds are transformed to more hydrophilic products to facilitate excretion from the body.

CYP3A4 is expressed in high levels in the liver and intestines, where it catalyzes oxidation of an extraordinarily wide variety of structurally distinct ligands. More than half of all small molecule drugs commonly used by humans are metabolized by CYP3A4. Inhibition of CYP3A4-mediated metabolism is a common cause of adverse drug/drug and drug/food interactions and toxicity. In addition, for drugs whose pharmacological activity requires metabolism from a pro-drug form, CYP3A4 inhibition can lead to decreased drug efficacy.

2. Protocol Summary

Prepare Standard curve and
measure fluorescence at Ex/Em = 535/587 nm



Set up appropriate reaction wells
(background, sample, sample + compound, controls)



Add substrate mix to reaction wells



Measure fluorescence at Ex/Em = 535/587 nm
for 30-45 minutes in kinetic mode

**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.
- Reagents should be treated as possible mutagens and should be handled with care and disposed of properly. Please review the Safety Datasheet (SDS) provided with the product for information on the specific components.
- Observe good laboratory practices. Gloves, lab coat, and protective eyewear should always be worn. Never pipette by mouth. Do not eat, drink or smoke in the laboratory areas.
- All biological materials should be treated as potentially hazardous and handled as such. They should be disposed of in accordance with established safety procedures.

4. Storage and Stability

Store kit at -20°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.

Δ Note: Reconstituted recombinant human CYP3A4 protein and inhibitor should be used within 1 month.

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)
Assay Buffer 26	100 mL	-20°C	-20°C
Resorufin Standard	50 µL	-20°C	-20°C
100X NADPH Generating System I	1 vial	-20°C	-20°C
100X β-NADP ⁺ Stock	1 vial	-20°C	-20°C
CYP3A4 Substrate	1 vial	-20°C	-20°C
CYP3A4 Inhibitor	1 vial	-20°C	-20°C
Recombinant Human CYP3A4	1 vial	-20°C	-80°C

PLEASE NOTE: Assay Buffer 26 was previously labelled as Assay Buffer XXVI and CYP3A4 Assay Buffer and CYP3A4 Inhibitor as CYP3A4 Inhibitor (Ketoconazole) and CYP3A4 Inhibitor (Ketoconazole) (2 mg). The composition has not changed.

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 fluorescence at Ex/Em = 535/587 nm
- 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
- Opaque white 96-well plates with flat bottom
- Anhydrous acetonitrile (reagent grade)
- Dounce homogenizer (if using tissue)
- (Optional) Protein quantification assay to quantify CYC2C19 specific activity in terms of sample protein content. We recommend Protein Quantitation Kit (Bradford Assay) (ab102535)

For microsome preparation:

- Microsome Isolation Kit (ab206995)

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, standard 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.
- Samples generating values that are greater than the most concentrated standard should be further diluted in the appropriate sample dilution buffer.
- 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 **Assay Buffer 26:**

Ready to use as supplied. Equilibrate to room temperature before use. Store at -20°C.

9.2 **Resorufin Standard:**

Warm the resorufin Standard to room temperature and vortex prior to use. Store at -20°C, stable for at least 3 freeze/thaw cycles.

9.3 **100X NADPH Generating System I:**

Reconstitute in 440 μ L Assay Buffer 26. Pipette up and down to dissolve completely. Keep on ice while in use. Aliquot so that you have enough volume to perform the desired number of assays. Store at -20°C. Avoid freeze/thaw cycles.

9.4 **100X β -NADP⁺ Stock:**

Dissolve in 220 μ L Assay Buffer 26 and vortex thoroughly to prepare a 10 mM solution of NADP⁺ (100X stock). Aliquot so that you have enough to perform the desired number of assays. Store at -20°C. Standard is stable for at least 3 freeze/thaw cycles.

9.5 **CYP3A4 Substrate:**

Reconstitute CYP3A4 substrate in 220 μ L of dry reagent-grade acetonitrile to generate a 2 mM stock solution. Vortex until fully dissolved. Aliquot so that you have enough volume to perform the desired number of assays. Store at -20°C. Allow the vial to warm to room temperature before opening and promptly retighten cap after use to avoid absorption of airborne moisture.

Δ Note: The suggested final concentration of CYP3A4 Substrate is 2 μ M, which is $\sim K_m$ for the recombinant CYP3A4.

9.6 **CYP3A4 Inhibitor:**

The inhibitor is provided as a dried film. Reconstitute CYP3A4 inhibitor in 220 μL of dry reagent-grade acetonitrile to generate a 5 mM stock solution. Vortex until fully dissolved. Store at -20°C . Use within 2 months.

Prepare a 150 μM working solution of inhibitor (5X final concentration) by adding 30 μL of stock solution to 970 μL of Assay Buffer 26. The inhibitor working solution should be stored at -20°C and used within one week.

9.7 **Recombinant Human CYP3A4:**

Do not reconstitute until ready to use.

Reconstitute recombinant CYP3A4 protein in 460 μL of Assay Buffer 26. Add 40 μL of 100X NADPH Generating System I (Step 9.3). Mix thoroughly to ensure a homogenous solution. Aliquot CYP3A4 protein so that you have enough volume to perform the desired number of assays. Store at -80°C . Avoid freeze/thaw cycles.

Use aliquots within one month – recombinant human CYP3A4 will lose approximately 10% activity/week in storage.

Thaw aliquots rapidly at 37°C and keep on ice until use – use within 4 hours of thawing.

Δ Note: Recombinant human CYP3A4 preparation may settle and should be thoroughly mixed before dispensing.

10. Standard Preparation

- Always prepare a fresh set of standards for every use.
 - Discard working standard dilutions after use as they do not store well.
- 10.1 Prepare a 10 μM (10 pmol/ μL) standard by diluting 2 μL of the Resorufin Standard stock solution (Step 9.2) in 998 μL Assay Buffer 26. Mix well.
 - 10.2 Dilute 50 μL of the 10 pmol/ μL Resorufin standard in 450 μL Assay Buffer 26 to prepare a final 1 μM (1 pmol/ μL) Resorufin standard.
 - 10.3 Use the 1 μM Resorufin standard to prepare the standard curve dilution as described in the table in a plate or microcentrifuge tubes:

Standard#	Resorufin Standard (μL)	Assay Buffer (μL)	Final volume standard in well (μL)	End amount Resorufin in well (pmol/well)
1	0	300	100	0
2	12	288	100	4
3	24	276	100	8
4	36	264	100	12
5	48	252	100	16
6	60	240	100	20
7	90	210	100	30
8	120	180	100	40

Each dilution has enough amount of standard to set up duplicate readings (2 x 100 μL).

- 10.4 Immediately measure fluorescence in an end point mode program on a microplate reader at Ex/Em = 535/587 nm.

11. Sample Preparation

General sample information:

- We recommend performing several dilutions of your sample to ensure the readings are within the standard value range.
- Commercially available microsomal preparations (eg. donor-pooled human liver microsomes) can be used for this assay.

11.1 Microsome:

Microsomes from liver tissue or cultured cells can be prepared using Microsome Isolation Kit (ab206995).

11.2 Tissue or cell lysate:

Alternatively, you can prepare a crude enriched lysate with following the protocol:

- 11.2.1 Harvest ~50 mg tissue or 5×10^6 pelleted cells.
- 11.2.2 Wash in cold PBS.
- 11.2.3 Homogenize in 500 μ L ice-cold Assay Buffer 26 on ice (use a Dounce homogenizer for the tissue).
- 11.2.4 Incubate the homogenate on ice for 5 minutes.
- 11.2.5 Centrifuge homogenate at 15,000 \times g for 15 minutes in a cold centrifuge at 4°C.
- 11.2.6 Collect supernatant and transfer to a pre-chilled new tube.
- 11.2.7 Keep on ice.

Δ Note: To quantify CYP3A4 specific activity in terms of sample protein content, measure total protein content.

Amount of sample per reaction and dilution factor required will vary based upon the nature of the sample.

For human liver microsomes, we recommend starting with 5-10 μ g of microsomal protein per well.

For liver S9 fractions or other cellular lysates, the amount of protein required will be significantly higher. In this case, we recommend starting at 50 -100 μ g/well.

Sample	Protein amount per reaction
Human liver microsomes	5-10 µg/well
Liver S9 fractions	50 – 100 µg/well
Cellular lysates	50 – 100 µg/well

Table 1. Initial suggested sample ranges per well.

11.3 Test ligand compound:

If desired, CYP3A4 activity in presence of test ligands may be measured. Prepare as follows:

11.3.1 Dissolve test ligand compound in appropriate solvent.

11.3.2 Dilute to 5X working solution with Assay Buffer 26.

Δ Note: Many commonly-used organic solvents can severely impact CYP3A4 activity. Importantly, DMSO causes significant inhibition of CYP3A4 at final concentrations $\geq 0.1\%$ (v/v). This assay is designed to use acetonitrile at $\leq 1\%$ final concentration, which has been shown to have little impact on CYP3A4 activity.

12. Assay Procedure

- Equilibrate all materials and prepared reagents to room temperature prior to use.
- We recommend that you assay all standards, controls and samples in duplicate.
- Prepare all reagents, working standards, and samples as directed in the previous sections.
- If sample contains CYP3A5/CYP3A7 isoforms, which can contribute to CYP3A activity, azamulin can be used as inhibitor: it is 15- and 13-fold more potent as CYP3A4 inhibitor in comparison to CYP3A5 and CYP3A7, respectively.

12.1 Sample Preparation:

12.1.1 Prepare 50 μL of Sample Reaction Mix for each sample by combining 2 μL 100X NADPH Generating System I with 2 – 48 μL sample, adjusting volume to 50 μL /reaction with Assay Buffer 26. Amount of sample may vary depending on nature of sample (see Table 1).

12.2 Set up Reaction wells:

Set up Sample wells (S), Sample + Test compound (S+T), Inhibitor control (IC), Background control (BC), Enzyme control (EC), in a 96-well plate as described in the table below:

Component	S	S+T	IC	BC	EC
Sample Reaction Mix	50 μL	50 μL	50 μL	-	-
Recombinant human CYP3A4	-	-	-	-	25 μL
CYP3A4 Inhibitor (150 μM)	-	-	20 μL	-	-
Assay Buffer or Test Ligand (5X)	20 μL	20 μL	-	70 μL	45 μL
TOTAL	70 μL				

Δ Note: For measurement of CYP3A4 activity in the presence of test ligands, replace Assay Buffer 26 with 5X concentrated test ligand solution

12.3 Assay Reaction:

- 12.3.1 Incubate plate for 10 – 15 minutes at 37°C to allow CYP3A4 inhibitor and test ligands to interact with CYP3A4 in the absence of P450 catalytic turnover.
- 12.3.2 During plate incubation, prepare a CYP3A4 Substrate mixture:

Component	CYP3A4 Substrate
2 mM CYP3A4 Substrate stock solution	10
100X β -NADP ⁺ Stock	100
Assay Buffer 26	2890
TOTAL	3 mL

Δ Note: This reaction mix is sufficient for 100 reactions. It can be scaled down if necessary, depending on the number of reactions to be performed.

- 12.3.3 Start the reaction by adding 30 μ L of the CYP3A4 Substrate mixture to each well, using a multichannel pipette, giving a final reaction volume of 100 μ L/ well.

12.4 Measurement:

- 12.4.1 Without any delay, measure output at Ex/Em = 535/587 nm on a microplate reader in kinetic mode for at 30-45 minutes at 37°C.

Δ Note: Since reaction starts immediately after the addition of the CYP3A4 Substrate, it is essential to preconfigure the fluorescence microplate reader settings and use a multichannel pipette with a reagent reservoir to minimize lag time among wells.

Δ Note: Incubation time depends on the CYP3A4 activity in the samples. We recommend measuring RFU in a kinetic mode, and choosing two time points (T1 and T2) within the linear range to calculate the CYP3A4 activity of the samples.

13. Calculations

- Samples producing signals greater than that of the highest standard should be further diluted in appropriate buffer and reanalyzed, then multiply the concentration found by the appropriate dilution factor.
- Use only the linear rate for calculation.

13.1 Standard curve calculation:

- 13.1.1 Subtract the mean fluorescence value of the blank (Standard #1) from all standard and sample readings. This is the corrected fluorescence.
- 13.1.2 Average the duplicate reading for each standard.
- 13.1.3 Plot standard curve readings and draw the line of the best fit to construct the standard curve (most plate reader software or Excel can do this step). Calculate the trend line equation based on your standard curve data (use the equation that provides the most accurate fit).

13.2 Measurement of CYP3A4 in the sample:

- 13.2.1 For all reaction wells (S, S+T, IC, BC and EC), choose two time points (T1 and T2) in the linear phase of the reaction progress curves and obtain the corresponding fluorescence values at those points (RFU1 and RFU2).
- 13.2.2 Calculate ΔF as follows:

$$\Delta F = \text{RFU2} - \text{RFU1}$$

- 13.2.3 Determine the background corrected change in fluorescence intensity for each well of sample (S), sample with test compound (S+T) and Inhibitor Control (IC) by subtracting the ΔF value of the background control (BC).

Δ Note: In our experience, the CYP3A4 substrate does not undergo appreciable non-enzymatic conversion to the fluorescent product. Therefore, background control (BC) well rate calculation may yield a negative value, in which case, BC value may be ignored.

- 13.3 Calculate the specific fluorescence generated by CYP3A4 activity (C) in the samples (and/or sample with test compounds) by subtracting the inhibition control (IC) from each sample:

$$C_s = (\Delta F_s - \Delta F_{BC}) - (\Delta F_{IC} - \Delta F_{BC}) = \Delta F_s - \Delta F_{IC}$$

- 13.4 CYP3A4 metabolic activity (pmol/min/mg or $\mu\text{U}/\text{mg}$) in the sample is calculated as:

$$\text{CYP3A4 Activity} = \frac{B}{\Delta T \times P}$$

Where:

B = amount of substrate metabolized to Resorufin by CYP3A4 in sample well calculated from standard curve (pmol).

ΔT = linear phase reaction time T2 – T1 (minutes).

P = amount of protein in the well (mg).

Unit definition:

1 Unit CYP3A4 activity = amount of CYP3A4 that will generate 1.0 μmol of Resorufin per minute by hydrolysis of 1 μmol of fluorogenic substrate at pH 7.7 at 37°C.

14. Typical data

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

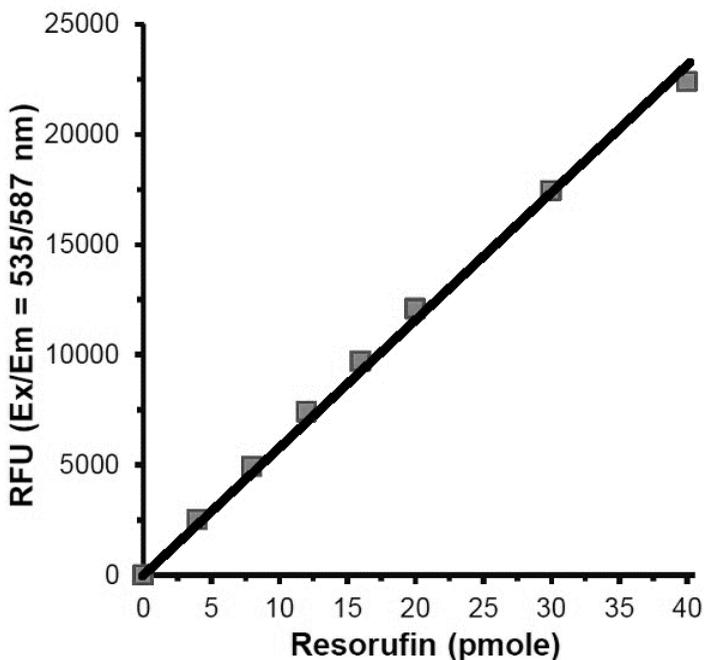


Figure 1. Typical Resorufin standard calibration curve. One mole of resorufin corresponds to the metabolism of one mole of CYP3A4 substrate.

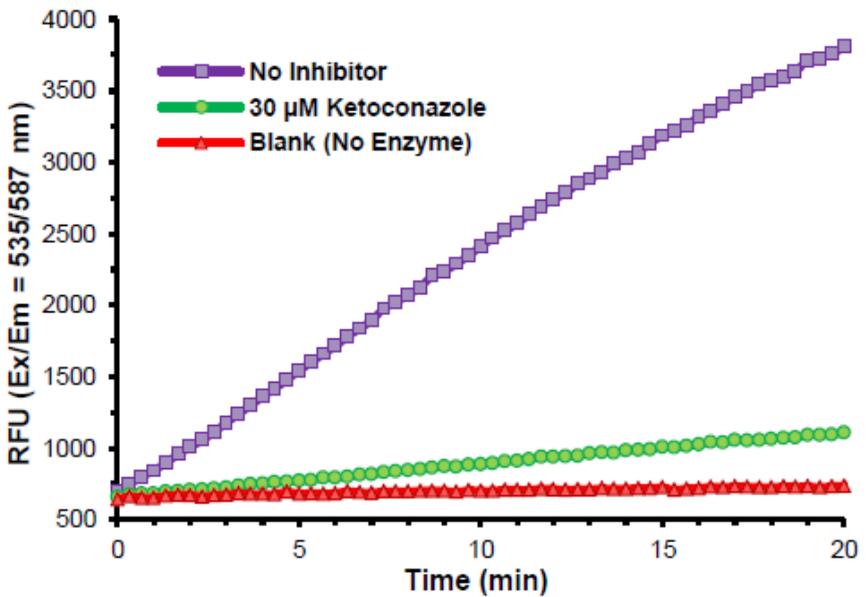


Figure 2. Reaction kinetics of fluorogenic substrate metabolism in human liver microsomes (0.05 mg/mL) at 37°C in the presence and absence of the CYP3A4 inhibitor (“no inhibitor” reaction contained a final concentration of 0.6% acetonitrile).

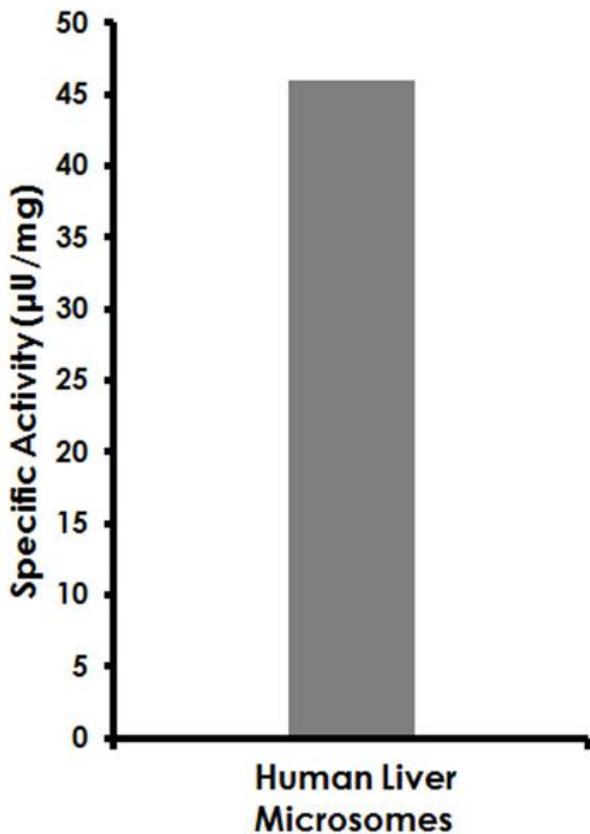


Figure 3. Specific activity of CYP3A4 in pooled human liver microsomes (0.05 mg/mL).

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
Sample with erratic readings	Samples used after multiple free/ thaw cycles	Aliquot and freeze samples if needed to use multiple times
	Use of old or inappropriately stored samples	Use fresh samples or store at - 80°C (after snap freeze in liquid nitrogen) till use
	Presence of interfering enzyme in the sample	Check protocol for interfering substances
Lower/higher readings in samples and standards	Improperly thawed components	Thaw all components completely and mix gently before use
	Allowing reagents to sit for extended times on ice	Always thaw and prepare fresh reaction mix before use
	Incorrect incubation times or temperatures	Verify correct incubation times and temperatures in protocol

Problem	Reason	Solution
Standard readings do not follow a linear pattern	Pipetting errors in standard or reaction mix	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
	Standard stock is at incorrect concentration	Always refer to dilutions described in the protocol
Unanticipated results	Measured at incorrect wavelength	Check equipment and filter setting
	Samples contain interfering substances	Troubleshoot if it interferes with the kit
	Sample readings above/ below the linear range	Concentrate/ dilute sample so it is within the linear range

16. Interferences

- If sample contains CYP3A5/CYP3A7 isoforms, which can contribute to CYP3A activity, azamulin can be used as inhibitor: it is 15- and 13-fold more potent as CYP3A4 inhibitor in comparison to CYP3A5 and CYP3A7, respectively.

17. Notes

Technical Support

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