**Supplementary Material**

Protocol for Generation of Pre-Formed Fibrils from Alpha-Synuclein Monomer (available through [The Michael J. Fox Foundation Tools Catalog](https://www.michaeljfox.org/research/research-tools-catalog.html?navid=research-tools-catalog)).



**Protocol for Generating Pre-Formed Fibrils from Alpha-Synuclein Monomers**

**Overview**

This protocol is intended for research purposes only, using specially-formulated monomeric alpha-synuclein protein available for purchase at Proteos, Inc as the result of efforts by The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF). Each batch of the “Human Alpha-Synuclein Monomer Protein for Making Pre-Formed Fibrils” has undergone internal purification and quality control at Proteos in addition to external validation to confirm successful generation of pathogenic aSyn PFFs. See the Additional Reading section of this protocol for sources on methods and results from application of alpha-synuclein pre-formed fibrils (aSyn PFFs) in primary neuron cultures *in vitro* or in mice *in vivo*.

**Key Guidelines for Generating Proper aSyn PFFs**

**Recommended Quality Control Experiments for Validating aSyn PFFs**

Biochemical and biophysical quality control experiments are recommended to ensure proper PFF formation.

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| Purpose | Circumstances for Performing | Examples of Experiments | Anticipated Results |
| Verify Fibril Formation | With each new batch of PFFs | Thioflavin T Assay | Readings higher with aSyn PFFs vs monomer |
| Sedimentation Assay | More protein in the solute vs pellet |
| Electron Microscopy | Presence of many elongated fibrils |
| Visual Appearance | Solution needs to be turbid |
| Verify Fibril Size | When adopting/altering a protocol. Prior to long-term *in vivo* studies. | Electron Microscopy | Majority of fragments are ≤ 50nm |
| Dynamic Light Scattering | Majority of fragments are ≤ 50nm |
| Verify Seeding Capacity | When adopting/altering a protocol. Prior to long-term *in vivo* studies. | *In vitro* Seeding Assay | pS129 aSyn pathology develops with aSyn PFF incubation |
| When adopting/altering a protocol. | Thioflavin T Kinetics Assay | Increased rate of signal intensity with aSyn PFFs incubation |
| *In Vivo* Toxicity | When adopting/altering a protocol. Prior to long-term *in vivo* studies. | *In vivo* pilot study | pS129 aSyn pathology develops in the injected and interconnected structures after aSyn PFF injection (time points vary) |

**Step 1. Preparation of fibrils. (Timing ~30 min; 7 days for formation)**

**NOTE:** We *strongly recommend* appropriate laboratory attire and the use of gloves, face mask (VWR, 414004-670), and protective goggles for all procedures involving the use of synuclein fibrils. Use bench paper that can be thrown in biohazard trash when protocols are completed. Clean any spills with a solution of 10% SDS in water, followed by multiple successive washes in water.

**Reagents:**

* 1X Dulbecco’s PBS without Calcium and Magnesium (Invitrogen 14190136)\*
* 25-30mg/mL purified recombinant aSyn protein.\* This protocol is also applicable to aSyn containing an epitope or affinity tag (e.g. Myc or polyHis). However, additional studies may be required to ensure that the buffer is compatible with assembly of a particular modified protein.
* BCA kit (Thermoscientific, 23227) or Nanodrop device
* Thioflavin T (Sigma, T3516): 1 mM stock solution in sterile water

\* = if using the “Human Alpha-Synuclein Monomer Protein for Making Pre-Formed Fibrils” purchased from Proteos, the starting protein concentration will be ~6-7 mg/mL. In this case, you will need to replace the 1x Dulbecco’s PBS with 10x Dulbecco’s PBS.

**Equipment:**

* Benchtop centrifuge
* Eppendorf Thermomixer R
* 37ºC incubator
* Microcentrifuge lid locks (Fisher, 1415-1508)
* Gel loading tips (Fisher, 02707181)
* 0.25 mL tubes for aliquots (Fisher, 02681230)
* Tabletop ultracentrifuge (e.g. Beckman-Coulter, 361544)
* 384 well plate for thioflavin T assay (Fisher 262260)
* Plate reader with excitation filter 450 emission filter 510
* -80 ºC freezer

**Protocol:**

1. Thaw aliquot of “Human Alpha-Synuclein Monomer Protein for Making Pre-Formed Fibrils” or other recombinant aSyn monomer on ice.

2. Centrifuge at 4ºC for 10 minutes in benchtop centrifuge at highest speed (12,000-15,000 *xg*).

3. Retain only the supernatant with a pipette, avoiding any aSyn that may have pelleted. Determine the protein concentration of the sample.

**METHOD 1:** Measure protein by A280 on a nanodrop device. Use Beer’s law to measure concentration (ε for synuclein = 5960 M−1 cm−1 for human synuclein and 7450 M−1 cm−1 for mouse synuclein).

**METHOD 2:** Perform BCA protein assay on this material to determine final protein concentration. We recommend performing the assay at 3 dilutions of protein (in triplicate for each dilution) to obtain accurate measurements.

4. Assemble the pre-formed fibrils (PFFs) in 1.5 mL microcentrifuge tubes by diluting the monomeric protein into PBS for a final concentration of 5 mg/mL.

**EXAMPLE**: If the protein concentration is 25 mg/mL, add 100 µL protein to 400 µL PBS in a 1.5 mL tube. If the protein concentration is 6mg/mL (in 10 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, pH 7.6), add 44 μL of a 40 mM phosphate, 230 mM NaCl solution to 156 μL of the monomeric aSyn sample. This will result in a final buffer formulation of ~100 mM NaCl, ~7.5 mM Tris, and ~10 mM phosphate with a pH of 7.2-7.6.

**NOTE**: Because activity can decline over time when the PFFs undergo freeze-thaw cycles, we recommend that reactions not exceed 500 µL per tube.

5. Vortex tubes at high speed for 3 seconds to mix contents.

6. Place microcentrifuge lid lock on lid of tube to prevent opening of lid. Label and date tube.

7. Place in orbital shaker (e.g. Eppendorf Thermomixer R) at 37ºC.

**NOTE:** It is recommended to place the entire shaker in a 37ºC incubator since most shakers do not heat the top of the tube, resulting in condensation.

8. Shake for 7 days at 1,000 RPM. *Solution should turn turbid during this period.*

9. Pipet 25 µL aliquots in small tubes using gel loading pipet tips.

10. Freeze aliquots on dry ice and store at -80ºC or store aliquots at room temp.

**NOTE:** For the Proteos “Human Alpha-Synuclein Monomer Protein for Making Pre-Formed Fibrils”, endotoxin content is reported on the datasheet. If endotoxin units (EUs) are above 0.5 EU/mL or 0.05 EU/mg at 10mg/mL, it is recommended to remove EUs prior to fibril formation. The Pierce High Capacity Endotoxin Removal Kit is a reliable method for removing endotoxins. Please note you will lose some sample in the process and should re-measure protein levels after cleanup. This step is especially important if using monomers as the control.

**Step 2. Quality control to verify fibril formation**

11. Thaw an aliquot at room temperature and perform Thioflavin T assay to confirm presence of amyloid fibrils:

* Dilute 1mM Thioflavin T stock in PBS to 25 µM final concentration (1:40 dilution)
* Pipet 95 µL of the 25 µM Thioflavin T per well of 384 well plate.
* Pipet PFFs up and down to mix, add 2.5 µL to wells with Thioflavin T
* For controls, include 2.5 µLPBS alone and 2.5 µL monomeric aSyn.
* Incubate at room temperature for 2 minutes to 1 hour.
* Read plate (excitation 450 nm, emission 50 nm).

The presence of amyloid-like fibrils typically result in readings that are 20-100 fold higher than samples containing monomeric protein only for the human aSyn.

12. The presence of fibrils can also be assessed by sedimentation.

* Dilute 2 µL of 5mg/mL PFFs in 20 µLPBS
* Spin in ultracentrifuge (e.g. TLA-100) at 100,000 xg for 30 min at 25 ºC.
* Remove supernatant, dilute in 5X Laemlli buffer
* Add 20 µLPBS to pellet, pipet up and down several times until resuspended, dilute in 5X Laemlli buffer
* Boil samples at 95ºC for 5 min.
* Run equal volumes of supernatant and pellet fractions on 15% polyacrylamide gel
* Stain with coomassie brilliant blue to visualize bands.

Properly generated PFFs should result in equal amounts of protein in the supernatant and pellet fractions or greater amounts of protein in the pellet versus the supernatant fraction. If more protein is in the supernatant versus the pellet, PFF formation has been suboptimal.

13. Keep records of results of Thioflavin T and sedimentation assay to make batch to batch comparisons.

**NOTE:** Thioflavin T and sedimentation assays are basic biochemical analyses to verify general fibril formation. More quality control is recommended when testing a new protocol for generating PFFs or generating PFFs for the first time in one’s lab. More quality control is also recommended before commencing a long-term *in vivo* study with aSyn PFFs. For examples for additional recommended quality control experiments, see the table in Page 1.

**Step 3. Preparation of fibrils for intracerebral injection.**

**Perform ~1-2 hours prior to surgery. (Timing ~30 min).**

**NOTE**: Prior to *in vivo* or *in vitro* use, it is highly recommended that sonication parameters be established to result in fibrils of ≤ 50nm in length (as longer fibrils result in limited or absent toxicity). Fibril length can be verified using electron microscopy or dynamic light scattering, among other methods. Once appropriate sonication parameters are identified to result in fibrils of ≤ 50nm, these parameters should be strictly followed. A change in conditions such as PFF sample volume or concentration may require modified sonication parameters.

**Reagents:**

* Sterile dPBS
* **5 mg/mL aSyn PFFs** (as prepared in Step 1). Thaw at room temperature immediately before use.
* Experimental control injectate

**Equipment:**

* Fume hood
* Sonicator with 1/8” tip (Qsonica XL-2000)
* Stereotaxic surgery setup

**Protocol:**

1. Perform all sonication steps in a fume hood or biosafety cabinet. *Ensure that hood is externally ducted and does not re-circulate exhaust into the laboratory space.*
2. Thaw sufficient aliquots of 5 mg/mL PFFs at room temperature immediately before use. It is recommended to measure protein concentration again (See Step 1, Protocol Step 3) as freeze-thaw may change protein concentration.
3. Dilute PFFs to required concentration by adding PFFs to a sterile microcentrifuge tube containing the appropriate volume of sterile dPBS. *Note that PFFs are assembled in dPBS. For mouse injections, we typically use 2-2.5 mg/mL PFFs.*
4. Sonicate at power level 2 for a total of 60 pulses (~0.5 seconds each). Pause briefly between every 10-12 pulses to prevent solution from heating up excessively and to avoid frothing.

**NOTE**: We have also tested this protocol using select high-energy bath sonicators such as the Covaris and Bioruptor systems. Results so far indicate that they are also suitable for preparation of PFFs prior to addition/injection. These systems can sonicate closed tubes and are preferable where aerosol generation is a concern. However, be cautious when using bath sonication in place of probe sonication and be sure to verify fibrils are ≤ 50nm in length for proper toxicity.

1. Close cap and tap side of tube so that any liquid on the side of the tube is now at the bottom. It should appear clear and colorless, although small fragments that scatter light may still be visible.
2. Allow sonicated PFF solution to settle for 1 min. *PFF suspension is now ready for stereotaxic injection.*
3. Gently flick tube to mix contents prior to use and pipette up and down between surgical injections. It is recommended to use an aliquot for up to 4 hours during a surgical session. If an 8 hour surgical session is planned, use one aliquot in the morning and a new aliquot in the afternoon.

**NOTE**: If aSyn monomers are being used as the control, be sure endotoxin units (EUs) are near or below 0.5 EU/mL or 0.05 EU/mg for 10mg/mL protein. The Pierce High Capacity Endotoxin Removal Kit is a reliable method for removing endotoxins. Please note you may lose a good portion of your sample in the process and should re-measure protein levels after endotoxin cleanup.

**Expected results**

The amount of time required for detectable levels of aSyn pathology to develop following injection is dependent on the strain of animal used and species of recombinant aSyn PFFs. Pathogenic aSyn should be visible as phospho-aSyn (i.e. at Ser129) positive intraneuronal and neuritic inclusions in neurons. In lines that express sufficient amounts of aSyn in astrocytes, glial pathology may also be seen. PBS-treated and centrifuged, low EU aSyn monomer-treated control brains should show minimal p-aSyn-staining. Additional antibodies such as ones recognizing aSyn, or misfolded conformations of aSyn, should also detect inclusions, as will those against ubiquitin.

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