Data File 28-4041-05 AA

IMAC Sepharose High Performance

Prepacked HiTrap IMAC HP columns

Proteins and peptides that have an affinity for metal ions can be purified using immobilized metal ion affinity chromatography (IMAC), a method that has been growing in popularity and effectiveness in recent years. With the introduction of IMAC Sepharose™ High Performance (HP), IMAC has become even more powerful.

IMAC Sepharose HP is supplied free of metal ions. It is charged by the user with the transition metal ion of choice (e.g. Cu²⁺, Zn²⁺, Ni²⁺, or Co²⁺); these metal ions will bind to the covalently immobilized chelating ligand on the Sepharose. The immobilized metal ions will interact with certain amino acid residues on protein surfaces (mainly histidine, but often also cysteine and tryptophan), if the amino acid side chains are sufficiently exposed. The bound protein can be eluted either with a competitive agent such as imidazole or by lowering the pH.

Numerous characteristics make IMAC Sepharose HP a valuable addition to the GE Healthcare line of affinity chromatography media:

- possible to charge with various metal ions for optimized selectivity
- high protein binding capacity
- compatible with a wide range of additives
- available in the convenient and time-saving prepacked HiTrap™ format

IMAC Sepharose HP is an excellent choice of medium for the purification of histidine-tagged recombinant proteins. The histidine tag is globally the most used affinity tag, often found as six consecutive histidine residues on recombinant proteins. Histidine and other amino acid residues capable of metal ion interaction are also present on the surface of many non-modified proteins. The strength of binding



Fig 1. IMAC Sepharose High Performance is an uncharged IMAC medium that, once charged with the metal ion of choice, provides flexible possibilities for optimizing purifications. It is available in 25 ml and 100 ml lab packs as well as prepacked HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml and 5 ml columns.

between a protein and a metal ion is affected by several factors, including the general properties of the target protein, the presence and properties of an affinity tag on the protein, the type of metal ion used, and the pH and ionic strength of buffers. With IMAC Sepharose HP, Ni²⁺ generally provides the strongest binding of histidine-tagged proteins. However, with some histidine-tagged proteins and in many applications with untagged proteins, metal ions other than Ni²⁺ may be more suitable. It could also be worth considering that some metal ions might be problematic for a given target protein due to loss of activity, or due to potential problems with environmental or user exposure.

Since it is not always possible to predict which metal ion will be the most appropriate for purifying a given protein, the availability of uncharged IMAC Sepharose HP provides flexibility and ease in planning, testing, and optimizing a purification scheme.





Medium characteristics

IMAC Sepharose HP consists of 34-µm beads of highly cross-linked 6% agarose; its chelating ligand will be charged with metal ions by the user, allowing the medium to selectively retain target proteins.

Sepharose beads display high chemical and physical stability, permitting good flow rates. The small bead size allows high chromatographic resolution with distinctly separated peaks containing concentrated material.

The dynamic binding capacity of IMAC Sepharose HP, evaluated using Ni²⁺-charged medium and two (histidine)₆tagged proteins, was determined to be at least 40 mg of bound protein per ml of medium.

Tables 1 and 2 list the main characteristics of IMAC Sepharose HP and HiTrap IMAC HP columns, respectively.

IMAC Sepharose HP is compatible with all commonly used aqueous buffers, denaturants such as 6 M guanidine hydrochloride and 8 M urea, and a wide range of other additives. It is stable over a broad pH range. See Tables 3 and 4.

Table 1. Characteristics of IMAC Sepharose HP:

Matrix		Highly cross-linked spherical agarose, 6%		
Mean particle size		34 µm		
Metal ion capacity		~15 µmol Ni²+/ml medium		
Dynamic binding capacity*		At least 40 mg (histidine) ₆ -tagged protein/ml medium (Ni²+-charged)		
Recommended flow rate [†]		<150 cm/h		
Max backpressure		3 bar (0.3 MPa)		
Compatibility during use		See Tables 3 and 4.		
Chemical si (metal ion-s	,	0.01 M HCl, 0.1 M NaOH. Tested for 1 week at +40°C. 1 M NaOH, 70% HAc. Tested for 12 hours. 2% SDS. Tested for 1 hour. 30% 2-propanol. Tested for 30 min.		
Avoid in buffers		Chelating agents, e.g. EDTA, EGTA, citrate.		
pH stability (metal-ion-		short term (≤2 hours): 2–14 long term (≤1 week): 3–12		
Storage		20% ethanol at +4 to +30°C		
* Conditions for a	determining dynamic bindi	ng capacity:		
Sample:	1 mg/ml (histidine),-tagged pure proteins (M, 28 000 or 43 000) in binding buffer (capacity at 10% breakthrough) and/or (histidine),-tagged protein bound from <i>E. coli</i> extract)			
Column volume:	0.25 ml or 1 ml			
Flow rate:	0.25 ml/min or 1 ml/min, respectively			
Binding buffer:	20 mM sodium phosphate, 0.5 M NaCl, 5 mM imidazole, pH 7.4			
Elution buffer:	Elution buffer: 20 mM sodium phosphate, 0.5 M NaCl, 0.5 M imidazole, pH 7.4			
Note: Dynamic b	inding capacity is metal-io	on- and protein-dependent.		
[†] H ₂ O at room ter	nperature.			

Table 2. Characteristics of HiTrap IMAC HP columns.

		Highly cross-linked spherical agarose 6%		
Mean particle size		34 µm		
Metal ion capacity		~15 µmol Ni²+/ml medium		
Dynamic binding capacity*		At least 40 mg (histidine) ₆ -tagged protein/ml medium (Ni ²⁺ -charged)		
Column vol	umes	1 ml or 5 ml		
Column dimensions		i.d. × h: 0.7 × 2.5 cm (1 ml) 1.6 × 2.5 cm (5 ml)		
Recommended flow rate †		1 and 5 ml/min for 1 and 5 ml column, respectively		
Max. flow rates		4 and 20 ml/min for 1 and 5 ml column, respectively		
Max. backpressure		3 bar (0.3 MPa)		
Compatibili	ty during use	See Tables 3 and 4.		
Chemical st	ability			
	/	0.01 M HCl, 0.1 M NaOH. Tested for 1 week at +40°C. 1 M NaOH, 70% HAc. Tested for 12 hours. 2% SDS. Tested for 1 hour. 30% 2-propanol. Tested for 30 min.		
Avoid in buffers		Chelating agents, e.g. EDTA, EGTA, citrate		
pH stability (metal-ion-stripped medium)		short term (≤2 hours): 2–14 long term (≤1 week): 3–12		
Storage		20% ethanol at +4 to +30°C		
* Conditions for d	letermining dynamic bindir	ng capacity:		
Sample:	1 mg/ml (histidine) ₆ -tagged pure proteins (M, 28 000 or 43 000) in binding buffer (capacity at 10% breakthrough) and/or (histidine) ₆ -tagged protein bound from <i>E. coli</i> extract)			
Column volume:	0.25 ml or 1 ml			
Flow rate:	0.25 ml/min or 1 ml/min, respectively			
Binding buffer:	20 mM sodium phosphate, 0.5 M NaCl, 5 mM imidazole, pH 7.4			
Elution buffer: 20 mM sodium phosphate, 0.5 M NaCl, 0.5 M imidazole, pH 7.4				
Note: Dynamic bi	inding capacity is metal-io	n- and protein-dependent.		

⁺ H₂O at room temperature.

Table 3. IMAC Sepharose High Performance charged with Ni²⁺ is compatible with the following reducing and denaturing agents at least at the concentrations given.

* For best results, it is recommended to perform a blank run before including reducing agents in the sample/buffer. For details see instructions 28-2046-20 and 28-4046-23.

[†] Tested for 1 week at +40°C.

Table 4. IMAC Sepharose High Performance charged with Ni²⁺ is compatible with the following detergents, additives and buffer substances at least at the concentrations given.

2% Triton™ X-100 (nonionic detergent)

2% Tween™ 20 (nonionic detergent)

2% NP-40 (nonionic detergent) 2% cholate (anionic detergent)

1% CHAPS (zwitterionic detergent)

500 mM imidazole

20% ethanol

50% glycerol

100 mM Na₂SO₄

1.5 M NaCl

1 mM EDTA*

60 mM citrate*

50 mM sodium phosphate, pH 7.4

100 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4

100 mM Tris-acetate, pH 7.4

100 mM HEPES, pH 7.4

100 mM MOPS, pH 7.4

100 mM sodium acetate, pH 4⁺

* The strong chelator EDTA has been used successfully in some cases, at 1 mM. Generally, chelating agents should be used with caution (and only in the sample, not the buffer). Any metal-ion stripping may be counteracted by addition of a small excess of MgCl₂ before centrifugation/ filtration of the sample. Note that stripping effects may vary with the applied sample volume.

[†] Tested for 1 week at +40°C.

Operation

Packing in laboratory columns

IMAC Sepharose HP is supplied preswollen in 25 ml and 100 ml packs. The medium is easy to pack and use in laboratory columns from the Tricorn[™] and XK series (see Ordering Information). Full user instructions are supplied with each product package.

Availability in HiTrap columns

The medium is also available in the convenient HiTrap prepacked column format as HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml and 5 ml columns. These columns bring added time-saving, convenience, and reliability to the purification. The columns are simple to operate with a syringe, a pump, or chromatography systems such as ÄKTAdesign™ or FPLC™. ÄKTAdesign systems include preset method templates for HiTrap columns, which further simplifies operation and provides reproducibility. Figure 2 illustrates purification with a syringe, for which connectors are supplied with each package.

HiTrap columns are made of biocompatible polypropylene. The columns have porous top and bottom frits that allow high flow rates. They are delivered with a stopper on the inlet and a snap-off end on the outlet. Table 2 lists the main characteristics of HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml and 5 ml. Note that HiTrap IMAC HP columns cannot be opened or repacked.

Selecting metal ion

The following guidelines may be used for preliminary experiments to select the metal ion that is most useful for a given separation:

- Ni²⁺ is commonly used for histidine-tagged recombinant proteins.
- Co²⁺ is also used for purification of histidine-tagged proteins, especially when a somewhat weaker binding of the target proteins is preferred.
- For purification of untagged proteins, Cu²⁺ and Zn²⁺ ions have frequently been used. Cu²⁺ gives strong binding to a range of proteins, and some proteins will only bind to Cu²⁺. Both ions can also be used for histidine-tagged proteins.

In some special applications, Fe³⁺ and Ca²⁺ have been used. When the binding characteristics of a target protein are unknown, it is advisable to test more than one metal ion to establish the most suitable. In some instances, a weak binding to a metal ion can be exploited to achieve selective elution (higher purity) of a target protein.

The medium is charged with metal ions by passing a solution of the appropriate metal salt through the column, e.g. $0.1 \text{ M} \text{ ZnCl}_2$, NiSO_4 , CoCl_2 or CuSO_4 in distilled water. The medium should then be washed with water and binding buffer before loading the sample on the column. Detailed information about charging, stripping, cleaning, and operation is included in the instructions accompanying each product.

Scaling up

HiTrap IMAC HP columns can be easily scaled-up to increase capacity – just connect two or three 1 ml or 5 ml columns in series; note however, that the backpressure will increase.

If further capacity is needed IMAC Sepharose HP packed in Tricorn or XK columns offers a reliable alternative.





Fig 2. Using HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml with a syringe. A) Prepare buffers and sample. Remove the column's top cap and snap off the end. Charge with metal ion solution, wash with water and equilibrate. B) Load the sample and begin collecting fractions. C) Wash and elute, continue collecting fractions.





Fig 3 A-E. Purification of APB7, a (histidine)₆-tagged protein expressed in *E. coli* BL-21 on four different HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml columns charged separately with metal ions A) Cu²⁺, B) Zn²⁺, C) Co²⁺, or D) Ni²⁺. Pools selected after SDS-PAGE of individual 1 ml fractions (not shown) are indicated. E) SDS-PAGE analysis: reducing conditions on ExcelGeI[™] SDS Gradient 8–18; Coomassie[™] staining.

Applications

Screening for optimized purity using different metal ions

A successful IMAC purification depends on several factors, including both the target protein itself and the metal ion used. To achieve the highest purity and yield, screening may have to be performed to select the most suitable metal ion and purification conditions for the specific target protein. Especially for untagged target proteins, choice of metal ion could be crucial.

Note that in each of the purification examples below, the collected 1 ml fractions with purified target protein were first analyzed by SDS-PAGE (not shown), to select which fractions to pool for high purity and an acceptable yield.

Also note that, for each series of purifications shown, identical gradient elutions with imidazole were used. Importantly, the results clearly indicate that single-step elution with imidazole would also be possible and would give similar results (purity and yield) as gradient elutions, provided that the imidazole concentration during binding and wash was the appropriate in each case. Should step elution be preferred, exploratory gradient elutions, as the ones shown, can first be used to select that appropriate imidazole concentration.

Target protein expressed in E. coli

APB7, a (histidine)₆-tagged protein (M_r 28 000) expressed in *E. coli*, was purified on four different HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml columns charged separately with Cu²⁺, Zn²⁺, Co²⁺, or Ni²⁺; conditions were otherwise the same for the four purifications. Chromatograms are shown in Figures 3A–D and the SDS-PAGE analysis of the wash fractions and pooled fractions from each of these four purifications is





shown in Figure 3E. Final purity differed sligthly; yields were apparently very similar. For this specific target protein, the highest purity was achieved when the HiTrap IMAC HP column was charged with Ni^{2+} or Co^{2+} , but the differences, compared to the results with Zn^{2+} or Cu^{2+} were small.

Target protein expressed in Pichia pastoris

Another example is presented for the target protein YNR064c (M_r 33 700), expressed in *Pichia pastoris*. This (histidine)₆-tagged protein was purified in the same way as the protein above, i.e. using HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml columns charged separately with Cu²⁺, Zn²⁺, Co²⁺, or Ni²⁺; conditions were otherwise the same for the four purifications. See Figures 4A–F for the resulting chromatograms, SDS-PAGE analysis of pooled fractions and an image of the metal ion charged HiTrap IMAC HP columns.

The results show that for this (histidine)₆-tagged target protein, the highest purity was achieved with Ni^{2+} or Cu^{2+} , although Cu^{2+} , at the conditions used, apparently gave a small loss of target protein (see Figure 4E, lane 4).



Fig 4 A-E. Purification of (histidine)₆-tagged YNR064c expressed in *Pichia pastoris* on four different HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml columns charged separately with metal ions A) Cu²⁺, B) Zn²⁺, C) Co²⁺, or D) Ni²⁺. Pools selected after SDS-PAGE of individual 1 ml fractions (not shown) are indicated. E) SDS-PAGE analysis: reducing conditions on ExcelGel SDS Gradient 8–18; Coomassie staining. F) HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml columns charged with Cu²⁺, Zn²⁺, Co²⁺ and Ni²⁺, respectively.

Comparison of different IMAC media

In another study, the performance of a HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml column charged with Co²⁺ was compared with media precharged with Co²⁺ from two other suppliers*.

An E. coli extract containing (histidine), -tagged APB7 protein was used in all three purifications to compare final purity and yield. In addition, all media were packed in HiTrap 1 ml columns for a reliable comparison. Also other conditions were the same for the three purifications. The superimposed

For more information about the protocols used for product comparisons visit: www.gehealthcare.com/protocol-his

a. TALON™ Superflow (precharged with Co²⁺), packed in 1 ml HiTrap column b. HIS-Select™ Cobalt (precharged with Co²⁺), packed in 1 ml HiTrap column c. HiTrap IMAC HP, 1 ml, charged with Co²⁺ Column Sample: E. coli extract with APB7, a (histidine),-tagged protein (M, ~28 000) including 10 mM imidazole Sample volume: 10 ml 20 mM sodium phosphate, 500 mM NaCl, 10 mM imidazole, pH 7.4 20 mM sodium phosphate, 500 mM NaCl, 500 mM imidazole, pH 7.4 Binding buffer Elution buffer: Flow rate ml/min 2–60% elution buffer (10-300 mM imidazole) in 25 ml Gradient 100% elution buffer (500 mM imidazole) in 5 ml Detection Absorbance, 280 nm System ÄKTAexplorer 10 mAU TALON Superflow %B 1400 HIS-Select Cobalt HiTrap IMAC HP, Co²⁺-charged 1200 Δ 80 1000 60 800 40 600 400 20 200 30.0 60.0 0.0 10.0 20.0 40.0 ml pools B) M, 97000 66000 45000 30000 20100 14400 3 5 8 9 Lane 1 2 4 6 7 1. LMW markers 2. Start material, diluted 1:10 3. Wash, HiTrap IMAC HP, 1 ml, charged with Co2+

- 4. Eluted pool, HiTrap IMAC HP, charged with Co2+
- 5. Wash, TALON Superflow in HiTrap 1 ml
- 6. Eluted pool, TALON Superflow in HiTrap 1 ml
- 7. Wash, HIS-Select Cobalt in HiTrap 1 ml
- 8. Eluted pool, HIS-Select Cobalt in HiTrap 1 ml
- 9. LMW markers

Fig 5 A-B. Comparison of different IMAC media charged with Co²⁺. HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml charged with Co²⁺, TALON Superflow, and HIS-Select Cobalt (both precharged). Pools selected after SDS-PAGE of individual 1 ml fractions (not shown) are indicated in the superimposed chromatograms. SDS-PAGE analysis: reducing conditions on ExcelGel SDS Gradient 8-18; Coomassie staining.

chromatograms are shown in Figure 5A, and Figure 5B shows SDS-PAGE analysis of the wash fractions and pooled fractions from each of these three purifications.

For this specific (histidine)_e-tagged target protein, the results show that the yields were very similar and that the eluted pool from the Co²⁺-charged HiTrap IMAC 1 ml column contained the purest target protein.

Performance benefits

IMAC Sepharose High Performance and the prepacked HiTrap IMAC HP 1 ml and 5 ml columns provide numerous performance benefits. Whether the goal is to purify histidinetagged recombinant proteins, untagged recombinant or native proteins, the benefits of low concentration of metal ions in purified pools, high stability and protein binding capacity will translate into higher protein purity, yield, and activity, plus greater operational flexibility.

The wide interest in purifying histidine-tagged recombinant proteins makes medium stability and compatibility a key issue. Table 3 summarizes the stability of Ni²⁺-charged IMAC Sepharose HP in common reducing and denaturing agents. For best results, we recommend performing a blank run without reducing agents before applying samples and buffers containing reducing agents (see product instructions).

Table 4 summarizes the compatibility of Ni²⁺-charged IMAC Sepharose HP with a range of detergents, additives, and buffers. Little, if any change is seen in protein purity or recovery when such additives or buffer substances are used.

Low metal ion leakage means that the activity of the purified protein will be retained and the risk of precipitation will be reduced, which results in increased purity, activity, and yield of the target protein. Leakage of metal ions in the eluted target protein pool from IMAC Sepharose High Performance is generally low under normal conditions. For applications where very low leakage during purification is critical, it can be diminished even further by performing a blank run using the selected elution buffer after charging the medium with metal ions. Such treatment will remove any weakly bound metal ions that might otherwise be desorbed later during protein elution.

Summary

Whether the target protein is a histidine-tagged recombinant or an untagged protein with an affinity for metal ions, the ability to charge IMAC Sepharose HP with the metal ion of choice provides flexibility in planning, testing, and optimizing a purification scheme.

The high binding capacity of IMAC Sepharose HP means greater efficiency. More sample can be applied, and the target protein is obtained more concentrated at a lower cost/mg and in less time.

The medium's high chemical stability extends its use to other challenging purification environments. The overall high chemical stability of IMAC Sepharose HP also applies to the medium in its HiTrap column format. This prepacked column format expands the range of conditions in which the medium can be used, as well as helping maintain biological activity and increasing product yield.

IMAC Sepharose HP is easy to pack and use in laboratory columns such as Tricorn and XK columns. However, the greatest savings in time and ease-of-use come when the medium is prepacked as HiTrap IMAC HP columns. Prepacked columns also mean consistently high quality and, above all, greatly increased reproducibility.

Acknowledgement

The recombinant clones here used were obtained through cooperation with SGX Pharmaceuticals, Inc., San Diego, CA, 92121 USA (protein APB7) and Dr. Mikael Widersten, Protein Engineering & Redesign, Dept. of Biochemistry, Uppsala University, Sweden (protein YNR064c).

Ordering Information

Products	Quantity	Code no.
IMAC Sepharose High Performance	25 ml*	17-0920-06
IMAC Sepharose High Performance	100 ml*	17-0920-07
HiTrap IMAC HP	5 x 1 ml	17-0920-03
HiTrap IMAC HP	5 x 5 ml	17-0920-05

* Larger quantities are available. Please contact your local representative for more information.

Quantity	Code no.
25 ml*	17-0921-07
100 ml*	17-0921-08
5 x 1 ml	17-0921-02
5 x 5 ml	17-0921-04
1 x 20 ml	17-0921-06
25 ml*	17-5268-01
100 ml*	17-5268-02
5 x 1 ml	17-5247-01
100 x 1 ml†	17-5247-05
1 x 5 ml	17-5248-01
5 x 5 ml	17-5248-02
100 x 1 ml†	17-5248-05
5 x 5 ml	17-1408-01
100 x 5 ml†	11-0003-29
30	17-0851-01
1 x 53 ml	17-5087-01
4 x 53 ml	17-5087-02
	25 ml* 100 ml* 5 x 1 ml 5 x 5 ml 1 x 20 ml 25 ml* 100 ml* 5 x 1 ml 100 x 1 ml [†] 1 x 5 ml 100 x 1 ml [†] 5 x 5 ml 100 x 5 ml [†] 30 1 x 53 ml

Empty lab-scale columns	Quantity	/	Code no.
Tricorn 5/20 column	1		18-1163-08
Tricorn 5/50 column	1		18-1163-09
Tricorn 10/20 column	1		18-1163-13
Tricorn 10/50 column	1		18-1163-14
Tricorn 10/100 column	1		18-1163-15
XK 16/20 column	1		18-8773-01
XK 16/40 column	1		18-8774-01
XK 26/20 column	1		18-1000-72
XK 26/40 column	1		18-8768-01
Accessories	No. s	upplied	Code no.
			0000 110.
1/16" male/luer female*		2	18-1112-51
1/16" male/luer female* Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f			
2, 20 1100, 1001 1011010	emale*	2	18-1112-51
Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f	emale*	2	18-1112-51 18-1003-68
Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f	emale*	2 2 2	18-1112-51 18-1003-68 18-1017-98
Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f Union 1/16" female/M6 male*	emale*	2 2 2 6	18-1112-51 18-1003-68 18-1017-98 18-1112-57
Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f Union 1/16" female/M6 male* Union M6 female /1/16" male*	emale* nale*	2 2 2 6 5	18-1112-51 18-1003-68 18-1017-98 18-1112-57 18-3858-01
Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f Tubing connector flangeless/M6 f Union 1/16" female/M6 male* Union M6 female /1/16" male* Union luerlock female/M6 female HiTrap/HiPrep, 1/16" male connect	emale* nale*	2 2 2 6 5 2	18-1112-51 18-1003-68 18-1017-98 18-1112-57 18-3858-01 18-1027-12

* One connector included in each HiTrap package.

† Two, five, or seven stop plugs female included in HiTrap packages depending on the product. ‡ One fingertight stop plug is connected to the top of each HiTrap column at delivery.

Related literature	Quantity	Code no.
The Recombinant Protein Handbook	1	18-1142-75
Affinity Chromatography Handbook	1	18-1022-29
Affinity Chromatography Columns and	1	18-1121-86
Media Product Profile		
HiTrap Column Guide	1	18-1129-81

* Larger quantities are available. Please contact your local representative for more information.

⁺ Pack size available by special order. Please contact your local representative.

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HIS-Select is a trademark of Sigma-Aldrich Co. TALON is a trademark of Clontech Laboratories, Inc. Triton is a trademark of Union Chemicals and Plastics Co. Tween is a trademark of ICI Americas Inc. Coomassie is a trademark of ICI plc.

Purification and preparation of fusion proteins and affinity peptides comprising at least two adjacent histidine residues may require a license under US pat 5,284,933 and US pat 5,310,663, including corresponding foreign patents (assigne: Hoffman La Roche, Inc). See the instructions for further information.

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