GLA gene
galactosidase alpha

Normal Function

The GLA gene provides instructions for making an enzyme called alpha-galactosidase A. This enzyme is active in lysosomes, which are structures that act as recycling centers within cells. Lysosomes use digestive enzymes to process worn-out cell components and recycle usable parts.

Alpha-galactosidase A breaks down a molecule called globotriaosylceramide, which consists of three sugars attached to a fatty substance. This molecule is degraded as part of the normal recycling of old red blood cells (erythrocytes) and other types of cells.

Health Conditions Related to Genetic Changes

Fabry disease

More than 370 mutations in the GLA gene have been identified in people with Fabry disease. Most of these genetic changes are unique to single families. The most common type of mutation changes a single protein building block (amino acid) in alpha-galactosidase A. Other mutations delete part of the GLA gene, insert extra genetic material into the gene, or insert a premature stop signal in the gene’s instructions for making alpha-galactosidase A. Alterations in the GLA gene produce an abnormal version of the enzyme that is unable to break down globotriaosylceramide effectively. As a result, this substance builds up in the body’s cells, particularly cells lining blood vessels in the skin and cells in the kidneys, heart, and nervous system. The progressive accumulation of globotriaosylceramide damages these cells, leading to the varied signs and symptoms of Fabry disease.

Mutations that eliminate the activity of the alpha-galactosidase A enzyme lead to the severe, classic form of Fabry disease, which typically begins in childhood. Mutations that reduce but do not completely eliminate the enzyme’s activity usually cause milder, late-onset forms of the disorder.
**Chromosomal Location**

Cytogenetic Location: Xq22.1, which is the long (q) arm of the X chromosome at position 22.1

Molecular Location: base pairs 101,397,803 to 101,407,925 on the X chromosome (Homo sapiens Updated Annotation Release 109.20191205, GRCh38.p13) (NCBI)

Credit: Genome Decoration Page/NCBI

**Other Names for This Gene**

- AGAL_HUMAN
- Agalsidase alfa
- Alpha-D-galactosidase A
- alpha-D-galactoside galactohydrolase
- Alpha-galactosidase
- alpha-Galactosidase A
- ceramidetrihexosidase
- GALA
- galactosidase, alpha
- Melibiase

**Additional Information & Resources**

**Educational Resources**

- Basic Neurochemistry (sixth edition, 1999): Lysosomal Disease  
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK28215/
- Neuromuscular Disease Center, Washington University  
  https://neuromuscular.wustl.edu/sensory-pain.html#fabry

**Clinical Information from GeneReviews**

- Fabry Disease  
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1292
Scientific Articles on PubMed

- PubMed
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%28%28Agalsidase+alfa%5BTIAB%5D%29+OR+%28Alpha-D-galactosidase+A%5BTIAB%5D%29+OR+%28alpha-D-galactoside+galactohydrolase%5BTIAB%5D%29+OR+%28alpha-Galactosidase%5BTIAB%5D%29+OR+%28Melibiase%5BTIAB%5D%29+OR+%28ceramide+trihexosidase%5BTIAB%5D%29%29+AND+%28%28Genes%5BMH%5D%29+OR+%28Genetic+Phenomena%5BMH%5D%29%29+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+human%5Bmh%5D+AND+%22last+720+days%22%5Bdp%5D

Catalog of Genes and Diseases from OMIM

- GALACTOSIDASE, ALPHA
  http://omim.org/entry/300644

Research Resources

- Atlas of Genetics and Cytogenetics in Oncology and Haematology
  http://atlasgeneticsoncology.org/Genes/GC_GLA.html
- ClinVar
- HGNC Gene Symbol Report
- Monarch Initiative
  https://monarchinitiative.org/gene/NCBIGene:2717
- NCBI Gene
- UniProt
  https://www.uniprot.org/uniprot/P06280

Sources for This Summary

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12446988
  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15003450
  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15924232
 Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20301469

 Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12068024

 Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15776423

Reprinted from Genetics Home Reference:

Reviewed: March 2007
Published: January 21, 2020

Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications
U.S. National Library of Medicine
National Institutes of Health
Department of Health & Human Services