

Bio Chem 2

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1 Behind the Torch of Life

1.1 Bioenergetics and Thermodynamics

Bioenergetics is the quantitative study of energy transductions. Of particular interest is the second law of thermodynamics.

Definition 1.1 (The second law of thermodynamics). *The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that the total entropy of an isolated system can never decrease over time. Isolated systems spontaneously evolve toward thermodynamic equilibrium, the state with the maximum entropy.*

In a **chemical reaction** entropy increases when the products of the reaction are less complex and more disordered than its substrates. Therefore in many biochemical reactions seem to contradict the second law as they "produce order"

To compensate the produced order by cells in their growth and division **free energy** is taken from the environment (organisms are not an isolated system) in the form of nutrients or solar light and exchanged for heat and entropy.

Definition 1.2 (Enthalpy, H). *Enthalpy (H) is the heat content of the reacting system. It reflects the number and kinds of chemical bonds in the reactants and products. When a chemical reaction releases heat, it is said to be exothermic; the heat content of the products is less than that of the reactants and ΔH has, by convention, a negative value. Reacting systems that take up heat from their surroundings are endothermic and have positive values of ΔH .*

Definition 1.3 (Entropy, S). *Entropy is a quantitative expression for the randomness or disorder in a system. When the products of a reaction are less complex and more disordered than the reactants, the reaction is said to proceed with a gain in entropy.*

Definition 1.4 (Free energy (G)). *It represents the energy available to do biological work, such as muscle contraction, active transport, and biosynthesis. The change in Gibbs free energy (ΔG) for a reaction is given by:*

$$\Delta G = \Delta H - T\Delta S$$

In biochemistry, Gibbs free energy (G) determines whether a metabolic reaction "can occur spontaneously" (but may still be unlikely because of TS) in living systems. A process is favorable if it is **Exergonic Reaction**, $\Delta G < 0$.

An important property is that variations in delta G are **additive**:

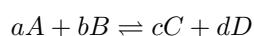
$$\Delta G_{\text{total}} = \Delta G_1 + \Delta G_2$$

This property lets us **make unfavorable reaction favorable when coupling them to a highly favorable reaction**. This is explored by various biological pathways.

Remark 1.5 (Standard transformed constants). Physical constants based on this biochemical standard state are called **standard transformed constants** and are written with a prime (such as $\Delta G'^{\circ}$ and K'_{eq}) to distinguish them from the untransformed constants used by chemists and physicists.

1.1.1 Equilibrium

By the second law of Thermodynamics, a reaction continues until equilibrium, the maximal entropy is reached. This is described by the **equilibrium constant** (K) that quantifies the ratio of **product over reactant** concentrations at equilibrium. It is defined for a general reaction:



$$K = \frac{[C]^c[D]^d}{[A]^a[B]^b}$$

$$\Delta G^\circ = -RT \ln K$$

Remark 1.6 (steady state). In biological process the equilibrium is practically never reached. Nevertheless the system reaches a steady state, where the the concentrations stays constant thanks to a net flow equal to zero.

1.1.1.1 Reaction Quotient

The **Reaction Quotient** is similar to the equilibrium constant, but it uses the actual, observed concentrations of reactants and products, rather than the equilibrium concentrations. Q is defined as:

$$Q = \frac{[C]_{\text{obs}}^c[D]_{\text{obs}}^d}{[A]_{\text{obs}}^a[B]_{\text{obs}}^b} \quad (1)$$

$$\Delta G = \Delta G^\circ + RT \ln Q \quad (2)$$

1.1.1.2 Mass Action Ratio (Q/K)

The **Mass Action Ratio** is the ratio of the reaction quotient (Q) to the equilibrium constant (K).The mass action ratio helps us understand **where a reaction is going**:

$$\Delta G = RT \ln \frac{Q}{K} \quad (3)$$

- If $Q/K < 1$, then $\Delta G < 0$, and the reaction will proceed in the forward direction to reach equilibrium.
- If $Q/K > 1$, then $\Delta G > 0$, and the reaction will proceed in the reverse direction to reach equilibrium.
- If $Q/K = 1$, then $\Delta G = 0$, and the reaction is at equilibrium.

1.1.1.3 Henderson-Hasselbach

Since in a biological context the environment is buffered at near-constant pH, the Henderson-Hasselbach equation is generally applicable to determine the ratio of the different protonation states of a compound.

$$\text{pH} = \text{pKa} + \log \left(\frac{[\text{A}^-]}{[\text{HA}]} \right)$$

1.2 Back to OCI

The reactions that do occur in cells represent a toolbox that evolution has used to construct metabolic pathways that circumvent the “impossible” reactions. Most of the reactions in living cells fall into one of five categories:

- reactions that make or break carbon–carbon bonds
- internal rearrangements, isomerizations, and eliminations
- free-radical reactions
- group transfers
- oxidation-reductions

Remark 1.7 (Covalent Bond). A covalent bond consists of a shared pair of electrons, and the bond can be broken in two general ways. In **homolytic cleavage**, each atom leaves the bond as a radical, carrying one unpaired electron. In **heterolytic cleavage** which is more common, one atom retains both bonding electrons.

Remark 1.8 (Nucleophiles and Electrophiles). Nucleophiles (functional groups rich in and capable of donating electrons) and electrophiles (electron-deficient functional groups that seek electrons).

1.2.0.1 Reactions that make or break carbon–carbon bonds

Heterolytic cleavage of C-C bonds yealds a carboanion and a carbocation. Conversely, the formation of a C-C bond involves the combination of a nucleophilic carboanion and an electrophilic carbocation. *Note, that carboanions and carbocations are generally so unstable that their formation as reaction intermediates can be energetically impossible even with the help of an enzyme.*

Therefore this reactions need assistance by functional groups containing electromotive atoms (O and N). This can alter the electronic structure of adjacent carbon atoms (**carbonyl-groups**, withdrawing electrons), stabilizing and facilitation the formation of carboanion and cation intermediates. *This can be further enhanced by the presence of metal ions such as Mg²⁺ for example.*

Aldol condensation is common way to creat C-C bonds, i.e. the aldolase reaction which converts six-carbon compounds to three-carbon compounds in glycolysis is an aldol condensation in reverse.

In a **Claisen condensation**, the carbanion is stabilized by the carbonyl of an adjacent thioester; an example is the synthesis of citrate in the citric acid cycle. Sometimes imine or certain cofactors play the role as the "electron-withdrawer".

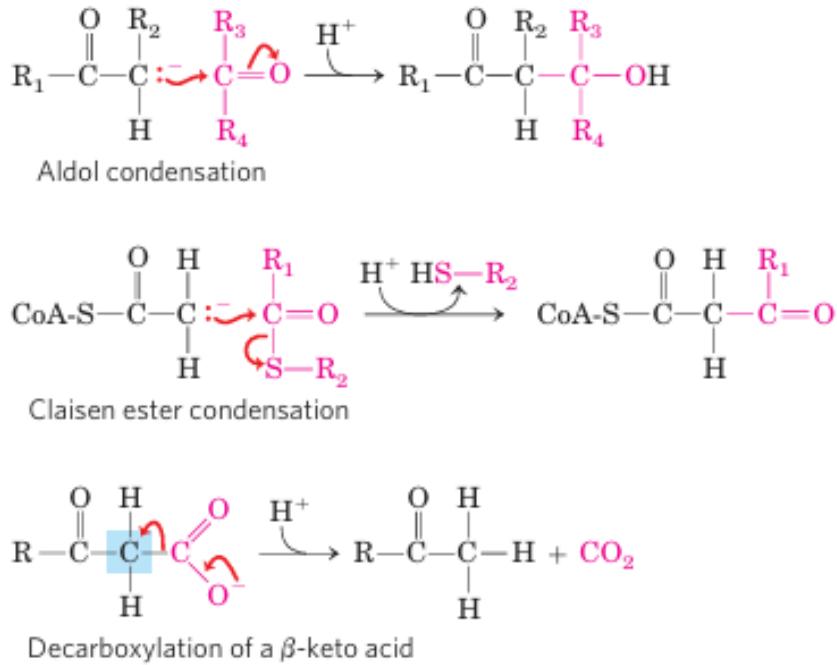


Figure 1: make or break carbon–carbon bonds

1.2.0.2 Internal rearrangements, Isomerizations, and Eliminations

In this type of reactions **electrons are redistributed altering the bonding framework** without changing the overall oxidation state of the molecule. For example different groups undergo oxidation-reduction leading to **cis-trans rearrangements** or shifting the **position of double bonds**, i.e. formation of glucose 6-phosphate in glycolysis. Here C1 is reduced and C2 is oxidized.

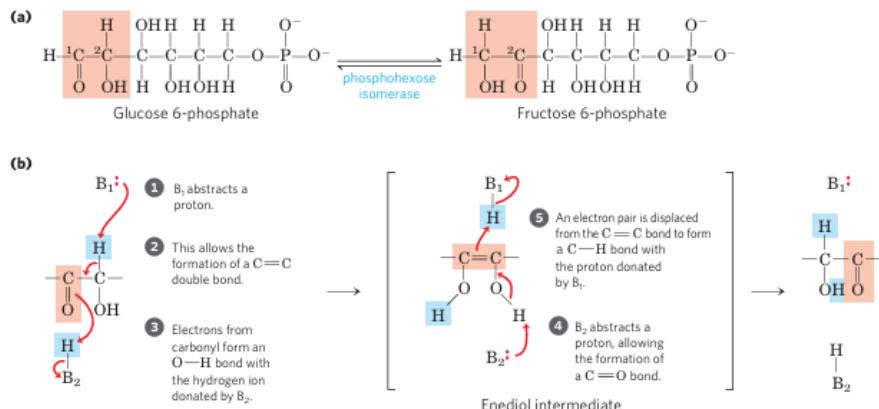


Figure 2: Isomerization and elimination reactions

An example for an **elimination** reaction is the loss of water from an alcohol resulting in a double C=C bond. *Similar reaction can result from eliminations in amines.*

1.2.0.3 Free-Radical Reactions

The homolytic cleavage of covalent bonds generate free radicals. These radicals can then trigger other reactions.

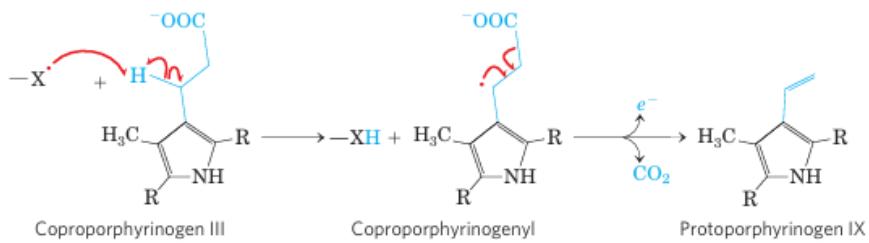


Figure 3: A free radical–initiated decarboxylation reaction

1.2.0.4 Group Transfer Reactions

The transfer of acyl, glycosyl, and phosphoryl groups from one nucleophile to another is common in living cells. Acyl group transfer generally involves the addition of a nucleophile to the carbonyl carbon of an acyl group to form a tetrahedral intermediate.

A general idea in metabolism is to attach a good leaving group to a metabolic intermediate to trigger subsequent reactions. Since nucleophilic substitutions is made more favorable by the attachment of a phosphoryl group to an otherwise poor leaving group such as -OH.

Remark 1.9 (Good leaving group). Recall that **weaker bases are better leaving groups**. One has to look how could the leaving group stabilize / balance the negative charge: **Inorganic orthophosphate** (the ionized form of H₃PO₄ at neutral pH, a mixture of H₂PO₄⁻ and HPO₄²⁻, commonly abbreviated as P_i) and inorganic pyrophosphate (P₂O₇⁴⁻, abbreviated as PP_i); **esters and anhydrides of phosphoric acid** and **thiols** are also good leaving groups.

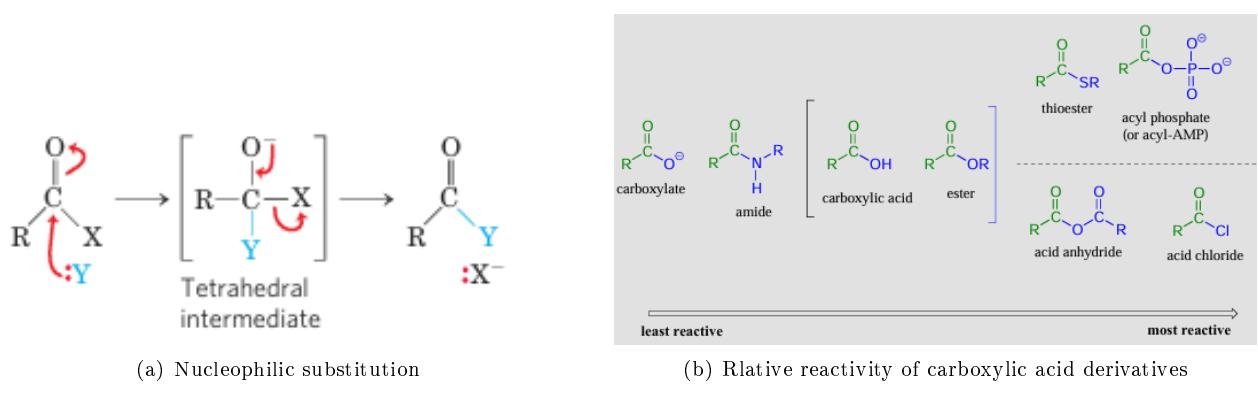


Figure 4: Group Transfer Reactions

1.2.0.5 Oxidation-Reduction Reactions

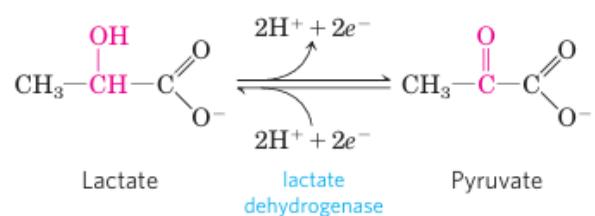
Carbon atoms can only exist in five oxidation states, depending on their binding partners. Note that **carbon is less electronegative than all atoms it is bound to, except hydrogen**. Thus all atoms that bind to carbon oxidize it except hydrogen and therefore removing a hydrogen and replacing that bond with any other atom (including carbon) is synonymous with oxydation. Recall that every oxidation must be linked to a reduction. Note that, **Oxydations generally release energy** (camp fires where wood is oxidized).

Often in biological oxidations, a compound loses two electrons and two hydrogens (2 hydrogen atoms), these reactions are called **dehydrogenations** catalyzed by **Dehydrogenase**.

Sometimes in biological oxidations a carbon becomes covalently bonded to a oxygen. The corresponding enzymes are called **Oxidase** and if the oxygen atom is derived from molecular oxygen they are called **Oxygenase**.



(a) The 5 oxidation levels of carbons



(b) lactate dehydrogenase

Figure 5: Oxidation-Reduction Reactions

1.3 Phosphoryl and ATP fun

In a phosphate transfer reaction, a phosphate group is transferred from a phosphate group donor molecule to a phosphate group acceptor molecule.

1.3.0.1 Posphate groups

Recall some important properties of phosphorus from organic chemistry:

- Phosphates are **excellent leaving groups** in biological organic reactions, which can be seen for example in the hydrolysis of ATP.
- Phosphoric acid (H_3PO_4) is triprotic, meaning that it has three acidic protons available to donate with pK_a values of 1, 6.5, 13, respectively.
- Phosphorus can break the octet rule because it is in the third row of the periodic table and thus has **d orbitals** available for bonding.
- The phosphate group is really tetrahedral, the **negative charges are delocalized** over the non-bridging oxygens, and there is some degree of protonation at physiological pH (with the exception of the phosphate di-ester group.)

Phosphate transfer enzymes generally contain a **Mg²⁺ ion bound in the active site** in a position where it can interact with non-binding phosphate oxygens on the substrate. This magnesium ion pulls the electron density away from the phosphorus atom, making it more electrophilic.

A phosphate transfer reaction can be thought of as a S_N2 reaction at a carbon center. Recall that the phosphorus can form a "**5-bond transition state**".

1.3.0.2 The phosphate enzymes

Definition 1.10 (Kinases). *Kinase (from Greek *kinein*, "to move") is an enzyme that catalyzes the transfer of phosphate groups from high-energy donor molecules, such as ATP, to specific substrates, a process known as phosphorylation.*

Definition 1.11 (Phosphatases). *Phosphatase is an enzyme that removes phosphate groups from proteins or other molecules, a process known as dephosphorylation, which often regulates cellular activity.*

Remark 1.12 (Reactions catalyzed by kinases and phosphatases are not the reverse of one another). Kinases irreversible transfer phosphate groups from ATP (or sometimes other nucleoside triphosphates) to various organic acceptor compounds, while phosphatases transfer phosphate from organic compounds to water: this are hydrolysis reactions. Kinase reactions involve an inherently "uphill" step (phosphorylation of alcohols for example) being paid with an inherently "downhill" step (cleavage of an anhydride bond in ATP). Phosphatase reactions, on the other hand, are thermodynamically "downhill", and while they require an enzyme to speed them up, they do not involve "spending" energy current the way kinases do.

1.3.0.3 ATP

ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate) is the the **energy currency** of the cell and links catabolism and anabolism. ATP is a high energy compound which can be seen when considering hydrolysis of ATP (highly exergonic), since:

- Hydrolysis relieves electrostatic repulsion between the negatively charged phosphates. One way to picture this is **an coil springing open, releasing potential energy**
- Inorganic phosphate can be stabilized by resonance hybrid.
- ADP-2 can ionize

- The products are better solvated than the reactants.

Note: that ATP-cleaving reaction are exothermic, but also have a high energy barrier, making it them very slow unless catalyzed by an enzyme. This helps us gain a tight control over the reactions in our metabolic pathways.

ATP provide energy by transferring its phosphate group and not by mere hydrolysis. Nevertheless often we say that a given reaction is coupled to ATP hydrolysis which provides the energy required for the reaction to happen. Note that **ATP hydrolysis per se only provides heat**.

In many reactions **ATP is used as a phosphate donor** to a substrate that, once phosphorylated, acquires an higher free energy.

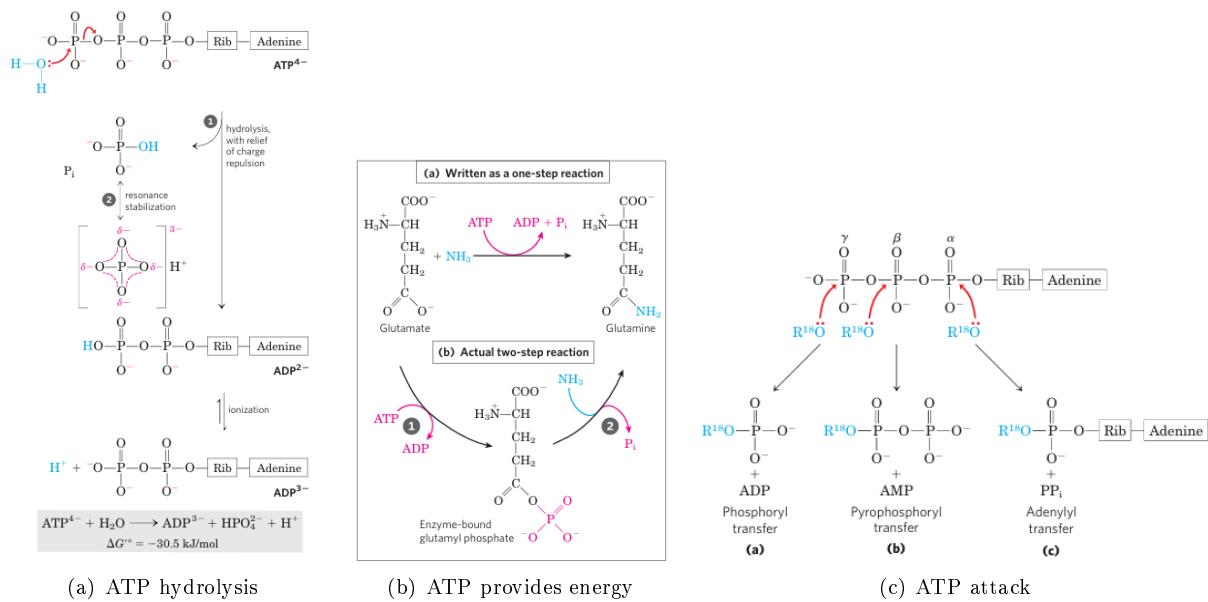
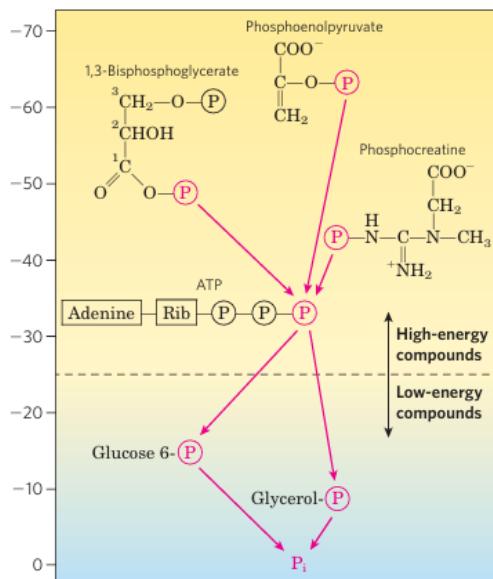


Figure 6: ATP

Note: To maintain its high group transfer potential, ATP concentration must be held far above the equilibrium concentration by energy-yielding reactions of catabolism.

Moreover, inorganic polyphosphate, present in all cells, may serve as a reservoir of phosphoryl groups with high group transfer potential.

To produce ATP we need higher energy compounds. Cells contain other metabolites with large, negative, free energies of hydrolysis, including phosphoenolpyruvate, 1,3-bisphosphoglycerate, and phosphocreatine. These high-energy compounds, like ATP, have a high phosphoryl group transfer potential. Thioesters also have high free energies of hydrolysis.



(a) High energy phosphorylated compounds

| | ΔG° | |
|---|------------------|------------|
| | (kJ/mol) | (kcal/mol) |
| Phosphoenolpyruvate | -61.9 | -14.8 |
| 1,3-Bisphosphoglycerate (→ 3-phosphoglycerate + P _i) | -49.3 | -11.8 |
| Phosphocreatine | -43.0 | -10.3 |
| ADP (→ AMP + P _i) | -32.8 | -7.8 |
| ATP (→ ADP + P _i) | -30.5 | -7.3 |
| ATP (→ AMP + PP _i) | -45.6 | -10.9 |
| AMP (→ adenosine + P _i) | -14.2 | -3.4 |
| PP _i (→ 2P _i) | -19.2 | -4.0 |
| Glucose 3-phosphate | -20.9 | -5.0 |
| Fructose 6-phosphate | -15.9 | -3.8 |
| Glucose 6-phosphate | -13.8 | -3.3 |
| Glycerol 3-phosphate | -9.2 | -2.2 |
| Acetyl-CoA | -31.4 | -7.5 |

(b) Standard free energies of Hydrolysis

Figure 7: Hydrolysis of Phosphate compounds

Remark 1.13 (Arsenate Poisoning). A toxic condition caused by exposure to arsenate (AsO_4^{3-}), in which arsenate disrupts the cellular metabolism by **mimicking inorganic phosphate**. Arsenate can uncouple oxidative phosphorylation by substituting for inorganic phosphate oxidative pathways, ATP synthesis, leading to decreased ATP production and cellular toxicity.

For example, in the presence of arsenate, the product of glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase is 1-arseno-3-phosphoglycerate, which nonenzymatically decomposes to 3-phosphoglycerate and arsenate; this substrate for the phosphoglycerate kinase is therefore bypassed, which leads in **no net glycolytic synthesis of ATP**.

1.4 Biological Oxidation-Reduction Reactions

Since we need high energy compounds to produce ATP. We have to ask us but how do we produce these Hi-NRG (NRG = energy)? **The flow of electrons can do it!**

Definition 1.14 (Electromotive force (emf)). Electrons flow from a reducing agent to an oxidizing agent due to their different electron affinities. This difference in affinities is called the electromotive force. Note that the reducing agent undergoes oxidation and the oxidizing agent undergoes reduction.

Living cells have an biological "circuit", with a relatively reduced compound such as glucose as the source of electrons. As glucose is enzymatically oxidized, the released electrons flow spontaneously through a series of electron-carrier intermediates to another chemical species, such as O₂. This **electron flow is exergonic**, because O₂ has a higher affinity for electrons than do the electron-carrier intermediates. This is exploited by the **ATP synthase** in the inner mitochondrial membrane that uses the proton-motive force to do chemical work.

1.4.0.1 Dehydrogenation = Oxidation

Dehydrogenation corresponds to oxidation, since the carbon is less electronegative than all atoms it is bound to except hydrogen. Note that not all oxidation-reduction reactions involve carbon, i.e conversion from nitrogen to ammonia.

There are different types electrons can be transferred: Directly as electrons, as hydrogen atoms, as a hydrogen ion, or through direct combination with oxygen. Since all of these 4 types occur biologically, the term **Reducing Equivalent** is used.

Electronegativity series: O > N > S > C > H

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Methane | | 8 | Acetaldehyde (aldehyde) | | 3 |
| Ethane (alkane) | | 7 | Acetone (ketone) | | 2 |
| Ethene (alkene) | | 6 | Formic acid (carboxylic acid) | | 2 |
| Ethanol (alcohol) | | 5 | Carbon monoxide | | 2 |
| Acetylene (alkyne) | | 5 | Acetic acid (carboxylic acid) | | 1 |
| Formaldehyde | | 4 | Carbon dioxide | | 0 |

Figure 8: Oxidation levels of a carbon compound in the biosphere

1.5 Electron Carriers

There are a multitude of enzymes that catalyze oxidation reactions from a variety of substrates, but most electrons end up in a **small set of univalent electron carriers**, such as NAD⁺, FAD, and Q (ubiquinone).

Definition 1.15 (Electron Carriers). *Electron Carrier are Molecules that can accept and donate electrons, facilitating the transfer of energy in redox reactions (e.g., NAD⁺, FAD).*

1.5.0.1 NADH and NADPH

These **watersoluble** coenzymes (**NAD⁺ (Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide)** and **NADP⁺ (Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide Phosphate)**) can undergo **reversible reduction of the necotinamide ring**, as a substrate undergoes oxidation (dehydrogenation) giving up **2 hydrogen atoms**.

- NAD⁺ and NADP⁺ take **2 electrons and 1 proton** while the second proton is released into solution.

In many cells and tissues, the ratio of NAD⁺ (oxidized) to NADH (reduced) is high, favoring hydride transfer from a substrate to NAD⁺ to form NADH. By contrast, NADPH is generally present at a higher concentration than NADP⁺, favoring hydride transfer from NADPH to a substrate.

This reflects the specialized metabolic roles of the two coenzymes: **NAD⁺ generally functions in oxidations—usually as part of a catabolic reaction; NADPH is the usual coenzyme in reductions—nearly always as part of an anabolic reaction.**

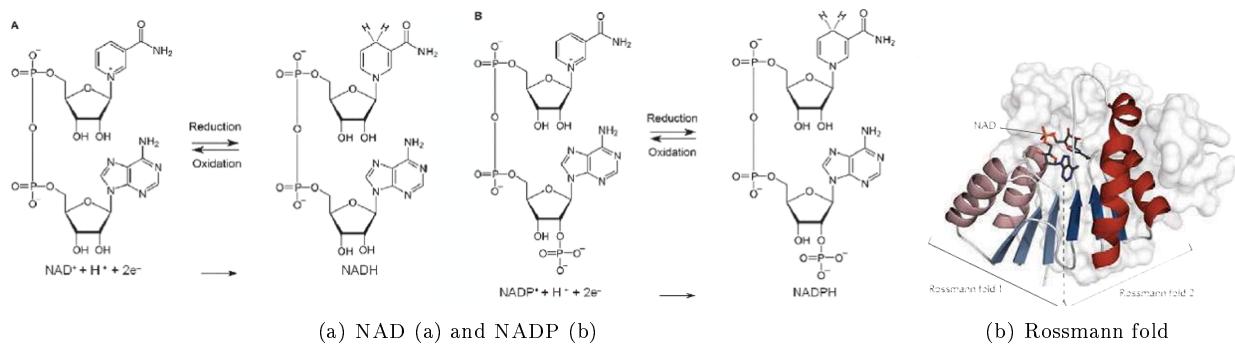


Figure 9: NADH and NADPH

Remark 1.16 (Dietary Deficiency of Niacin (Vitamin B3) cause Pellagra). NAD and NADP are derived from the Niacin (Vitamin B3), which is synthesized from tryptophan. Humans do generally not synthesize sufficient quantities of niacin, and this is especially so for individuals with diets low in tryptophan (diets based on maize for example). This leads to the disease pellagra.

But note since NAD^+ is can oxidize many thousands of molecules of glucose, since it the reduction always can be reversed. It is not necessarily to consume a lot of the vitamin, in contrary to glucose for example.

1.5.0.2 FAD and FMN

FAD (Flavin Adenine Dinucleotide) and FMN (Flavin Mononucleotide) are coenzymes that are used in oxidation-reduction reactions by **Flavoprotein**. They are **tightly bound to their enzymes**, in contrast to NAD and NADP. Moreover flavin nucleotides can also only carry one electron and one proton taking on the partially reduced form.

- FAD and FMN take **1 or 2 electrons and 1 or 2 protons** and remain tightly linked to the enzyme.

The ability to take on the partially reduced form is crucial for FAD and FMN, since they are **key elements in electron transport reactions** (e.g. **ETC Complex I and II**), where electrons are passed one at a time.

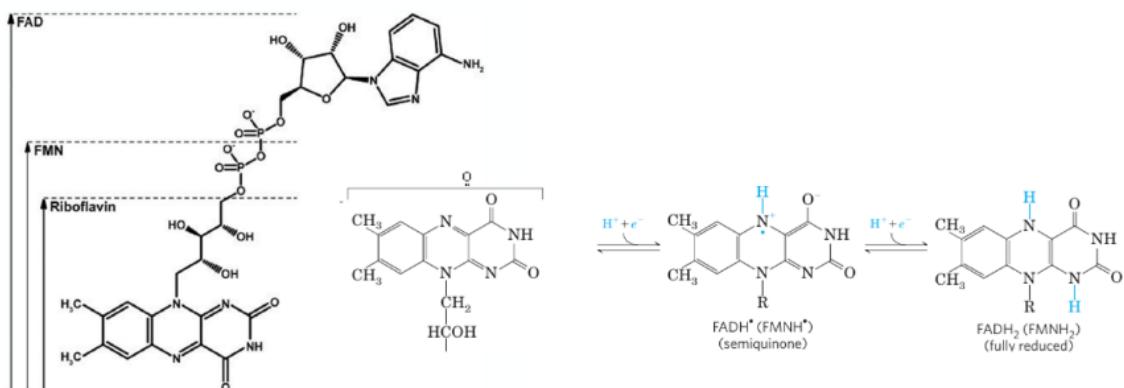


Figure 10: Flavin Nucleotides

These Flavin nucleotides are derived from the **vitamin riboflavin (B2)**

1.5.0.3 Ubiquinone, Q

Ubiquinone (Coenzyme Q) is a **lipid-soluble** electron carrier in the electron transport chain, transferring electrons between complex I/II and complex III. Ubiquinone exists in oxidized (Q), semiquinone (Q^-), and reduced (QH_2) forms.

- Coenzyme Q takes **1 electron or 2 electrons and 2 protons** and freely diffuses through the mitochondrial membrane.

2 Metabolism

Metabolism is the sum of all biochemical reactions in a living organism. The metabolism can be divided into two main pathways: catabolism and anabolism.

2.1 Catabolism \leftrightarrow Anabolism

Catabolism from greek meaning "breaking down" (Kata refers to down and bolë means to throw) is the process of breaking down complex molecules into simpler ones, **releasing/ producing energy in the form of ATP**. Examples include glycolysis, the Krebs cycle, and oxidative phosphorylation, which break down glucose and fatty acids to produce ATP. *Note catabolic pathways are mostly converging*

In contrast, **Anabolism** from Greek meaning "building up" (Ana means up or again) is the synthesis of complex molecules from simpler ones, **requiring energy**. This process is essential for growth, repair, and maintenance of cells. Examples include protein synthesis, DNA replication, and lipid biosynthesis. *Note anabolic pathways are mostly diverging*

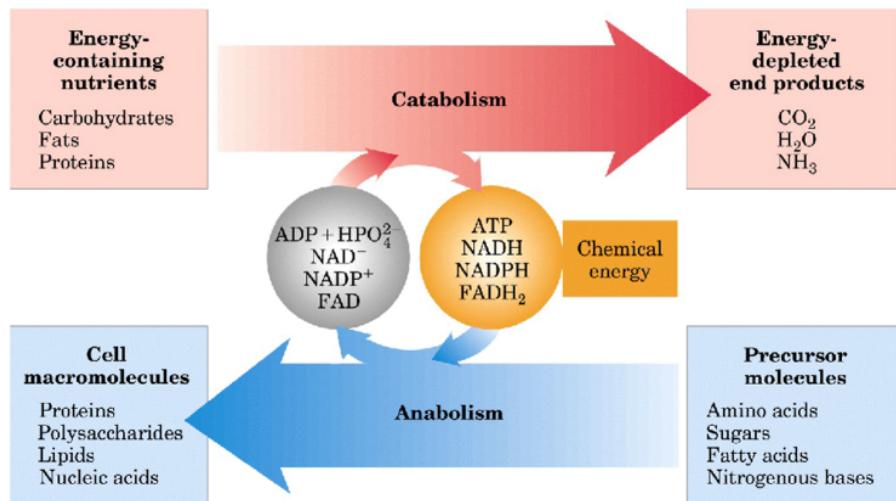


Figure 11: Catabolism \leftrightarrow Anabolism

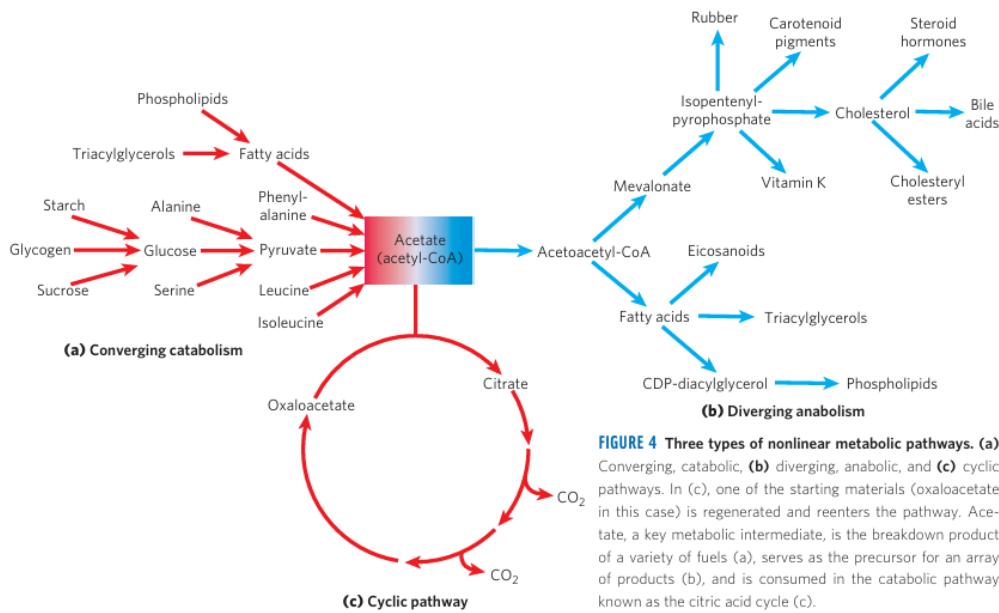


FIGURE 4 Three types of nonlinear metabolic pathways. **(a)** Converging, catabolic; **(b)** diverging, anabolic, and **(c)** cyclic pathways. In **(c)**, one of the starting materials (oxaloacetate in this case) is regenerated and reenters the pathway. Acetate, a key metabolic intermediate, is the breakdown product of a variety of fuels **(a)**, serves as the precursor for an array of products **(b)**, and is consumed in the catabolic pathway known as the citric acid cycle **(c)**.

Figure 12: Three types of nonlinear metabolic pathways

2.2 Thermodynamic in Biological pathways

Definition 2.1 (The second law of thermodynamics). *The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that the total entropy of an isolated system can never decrease over time. Isolated systems spontaneously evolve toward thermodynamic equilibrium, the state with the maximum Entropy.*

In a **chemical reaction** entropy increases when the products of the reaction are less complex and more disordered than its substrates. Therefore in many biochemical reactions seem to contradict the second law as they "produce order"

To compensate the produced order by cells in their growth and division **free energy** is taken from the environment in the form of nutrients or solar light and exchanged for heat and entropy.

Definition 2.2 (Free energy (G)). *In biochemistry, Gibbs free energy (G) determines whether a metabolic reaction "can occur spontaneously" (but may still be unlikely because of TS) in living systems. A process is favorable if it is **Exergonic Reaction**, $\Delta G < 0$.*

It represents the energy available to do biological work, such as muscle contraction, active transport, and biosynthesis. The change in Gibbs free energy (ΔG) for a reaction is given by:

$$\Delta G = \Delta H - T\Delta S$$

An important property is that variations in delta G are **additive**:

$$\Delta G_{\text{total}} = \Delta G_1 + \Delta G_2$$

This property lets us **make unfavorable reaction favorable when coupling them to a highly favorable reaction**. These **Coupled Reactions** are explored by various biological pathways.

3 Catabolism

The catabolism of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates can be divided into 3 stages:

- Stage 1: Oxidation of fatty acids, glucose, and some amino acids yield acetyl-CoA.
- Stage 2: Oxidation of acetyl groups in the citric acid cycle includes 4 steps in which electrons are abstracted.
- Stage 3: Electrons carried by NADH and FADH₂ are funneled into a chain of mitochondrial (in bacteria plasma membrane-bound) electron carriers - the respiratory chain -ultimately reducing O₂ to H₂O. This electron flow drives the production of ATP.

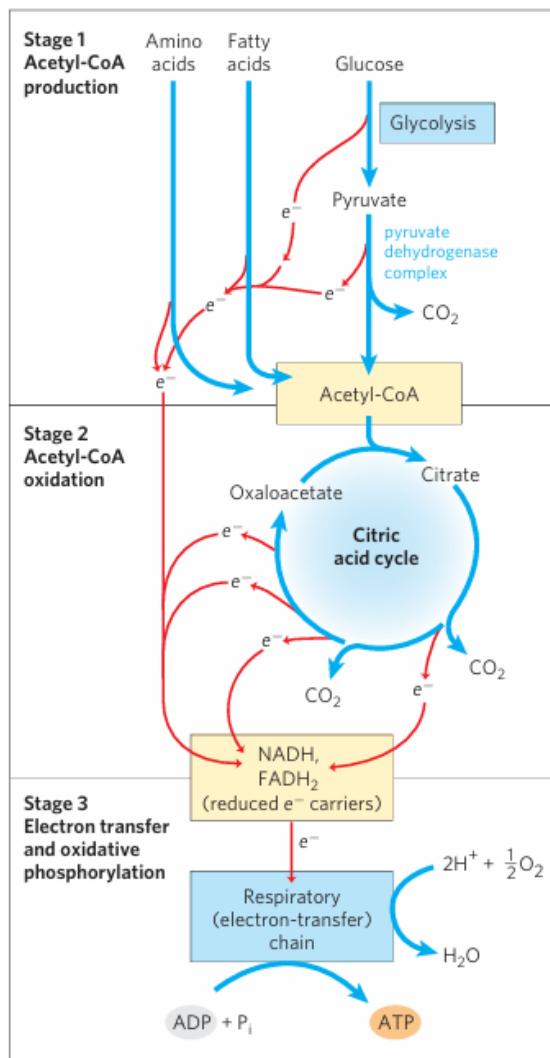


Figure 13: 3 stages of cellular respiration

3.1 Glycolysis

D-Glucose is the major nutrient for a wide range of organisms. It can be stored by cells in the form of polymers and used upon need to generate ATP.

In glycolysis (from the Greek *glycus*, "sugar", and *lysis*, "splitting") a molecule of **glucose** is degraded in a series of enzyme-catalyzed reactions to **two** molecules of **pyruvate**.

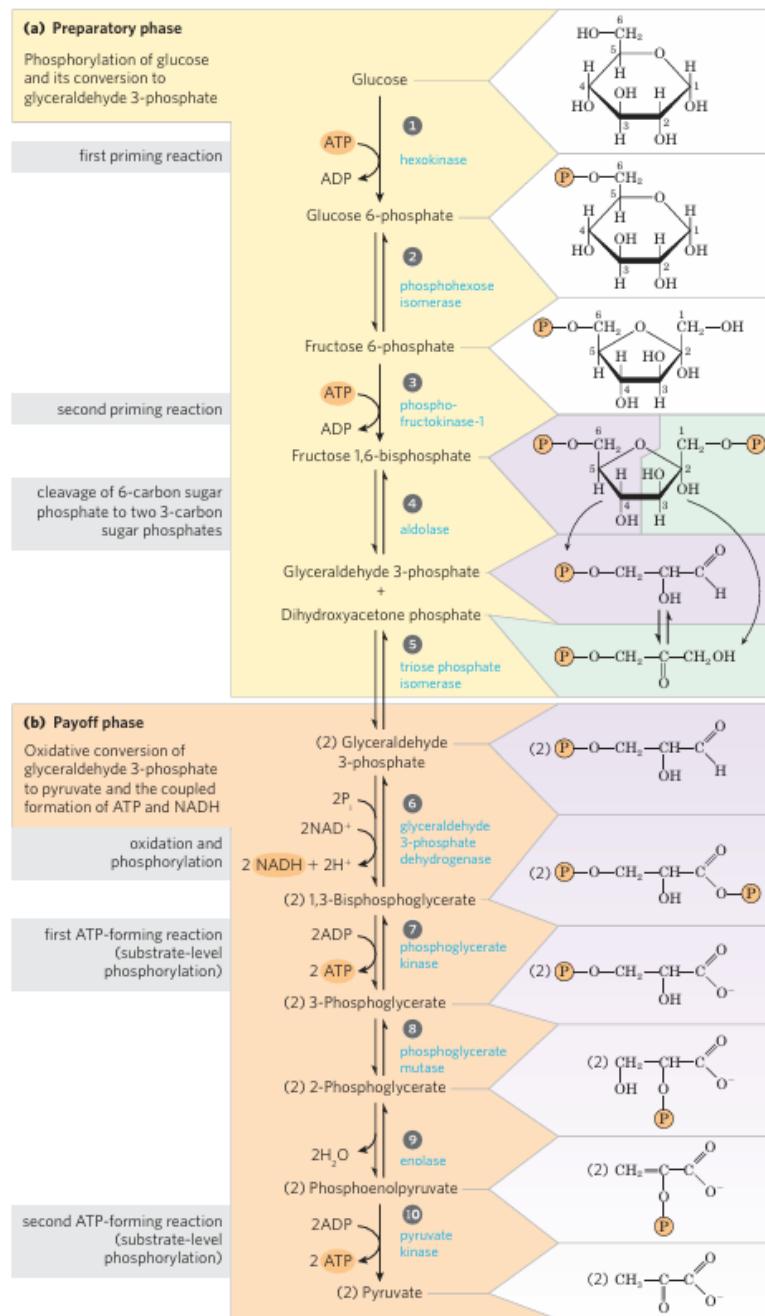


Figure 14: Glycolysis

- $\text{Glucose} + 2\text{ADP} + 2\text{NAD}^+ + 2\text{Pi} \Rightarrow 2 \text{ Pyruvate} + 2\text{ATP} + 2\text{NADH} + 2 \text{ H}^+ + 2 \text{ H}_2\text{O}$

3.1.0.1 Carbon labeling

Note when labeling GA3P the number do not correspond to the same numbers from the fructose compound. *One always follows the normal rules*

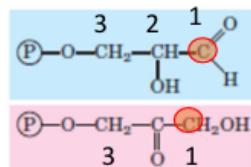
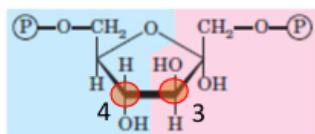


Figure 15: Carbon labeling

Glycolysis can be divided in two stages the preparation phase and the payoff phase.

3.1.1 Stage 1, Preparation Phase

In the preparation phase glucose gets **trapped** inside the cell, "activated", and **broken down** into smaller components.

3.1.1.1 Step1: Phosphorylation of Glucose

D-Glucose moves into the cell with the help of a **membrane transporter**. Once in the cytoplasma it undergoes phosphorylation by **hexokinase** to produce **Glucose 6-phosphate**. This has two consequences:

- **No backsies:** Glucose 6-phosphate is structurally different and thus can not be transported out by the same membrane transporter.
- **More reactive:** The substitution of the hydroxy group with the phosphate group (2 additional charges, etc.) makes the molecule more reactive. But this has to be paid by the **investment** of 1 ATP molecule.

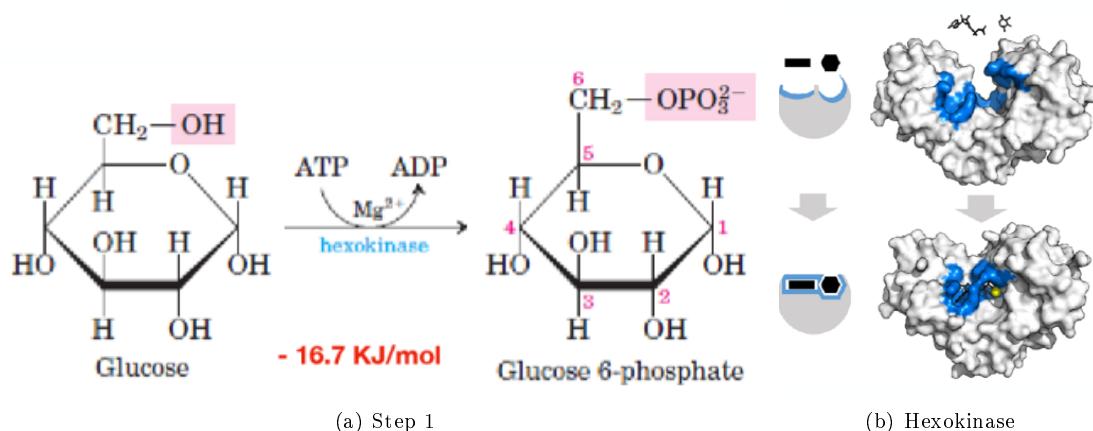


Figure 16: Phosphorylation of Glucose

Remark 3.1 (Hexokinase (HK)). Hexokinase is an enzyme that phosphorylates hexoses (like glucose) using ATP. Like most kinases it requires the presence of the cofactor Mg²⁺ in the active site.

The movement of Glucose into HK active site causes a conformational change whereby two HK lobes rotate by 12 degrees (10 \AA) creating an **induced fit**. This makes the **carbon 6 oriented towards ATP** and squeezes out water molecules. (see fig. 16(b))

3.1.1.2 Step2: Isomerization

In the second step, the enzyme **phospho-glucose isomerase** also transforms aldose (glucose) into ketose (fructose). This is done to create more symmetry in preparation for step 3.

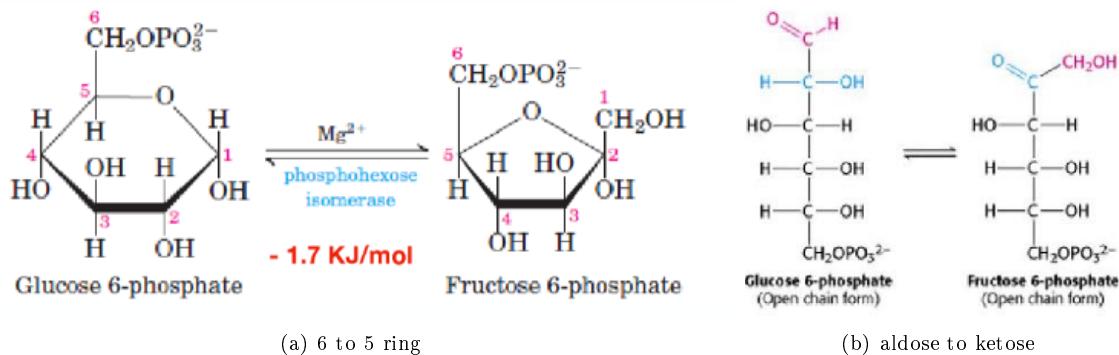


Figure 17: Isomerization

3.1.1.3 Step3: Second phosphorylation

The enzyme **phospho-fructo kinase-1 (PFK-1)** turns Fructose 6-phosphate into Fructose 1,6-biphosphate, completing the symmetry and making the compound even more reactive. This is again paid with the **investment of 1 ATP**. (see fig. 18(a))

Note, that **this step commits the sugar to glycolysis**. This is why **PFK-1 is a highly regulated enzyme** where its activity is modified according to cellular concentration of ATP, ADP, and AMP. (ATP inhibits - AMP stimulates).

3.1.1.4 Step4: Breakdown of Fructose 1,6-biphosphate

Aldolase catalyses the breakdown of Fructose 1,6-biphosphate into 2 different three-carbon molecules (**GA3P** and **DHAP**). GA3P feeds directly in the glycolytic pathway without any further change while DHAP needs

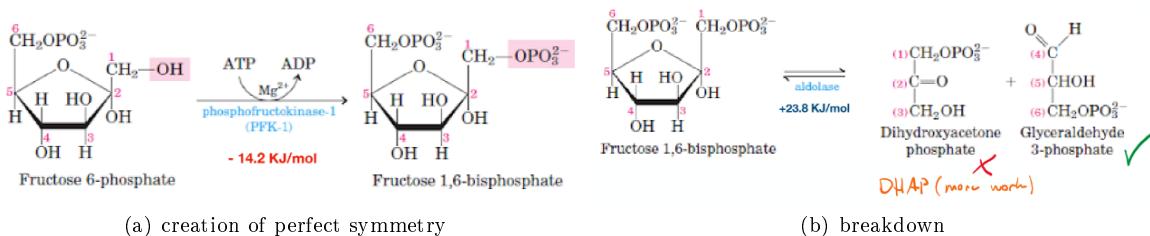


Figure 18: Step3 and Step4

to be first transformed. This is archived by Step5.

3.1.1.5 Step5: Isomerisation of DHAP to GA3P

Triose phosphate isomerase (TPI or TIM) catalyses the rapid and reversible conversion of DAHP to GA3P, ketone to aldehyde. This happens via an intramolecular redox reaction where **an hydrogen is transferred from C1 to C2**.

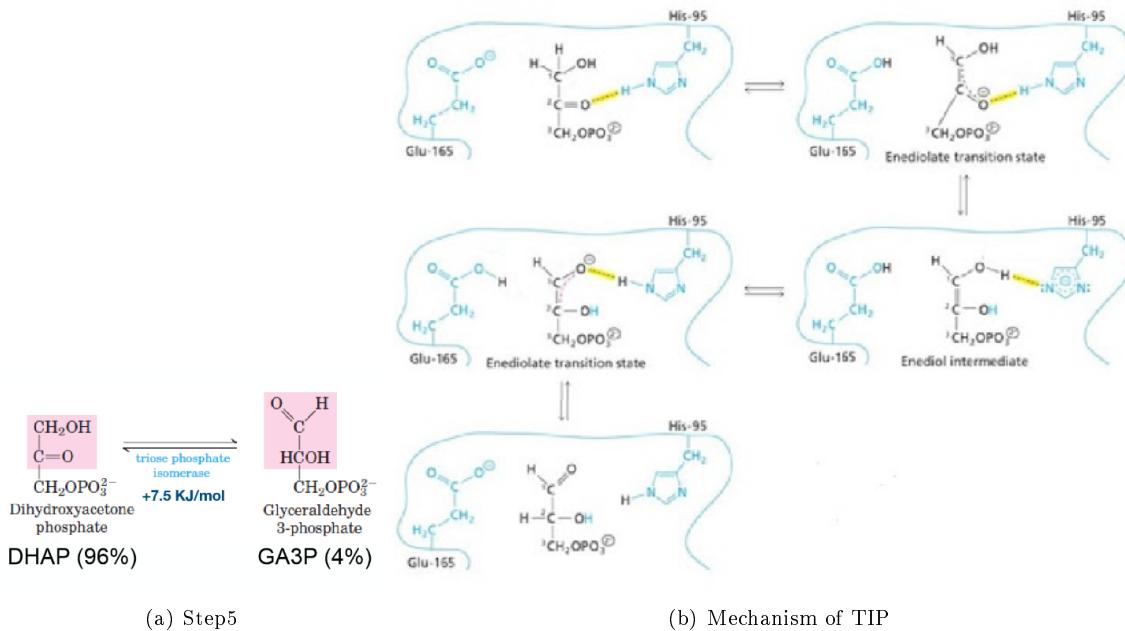


Figure 19: Isomerisation of DHAP to GA3P

Even though TIP increases the rate by 10 billion fold the equilibrium still lies on the unwanted side of DHAP (the **reaction is unfavorable**). But since the reaction is coupled to endergonic reactions (GA3P is always directly used), the **reaction shifts to the side of the product GA3P**.

3.1.2 Stage 2, Payoff Phase

In the payoff phase the components from the stage 1 get **oxidized** in order to produce ATP, NADH, and pyruvate.

3.1.2.1 Step6: Conversion of GA3P to 1,3-BPG

GA3P is converted into 1,3-biphosphoglycerate (1,3-BPG) by the enzyme glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase (**GAPDH**). Note this reaction produces NADH, which can later be oxidized.

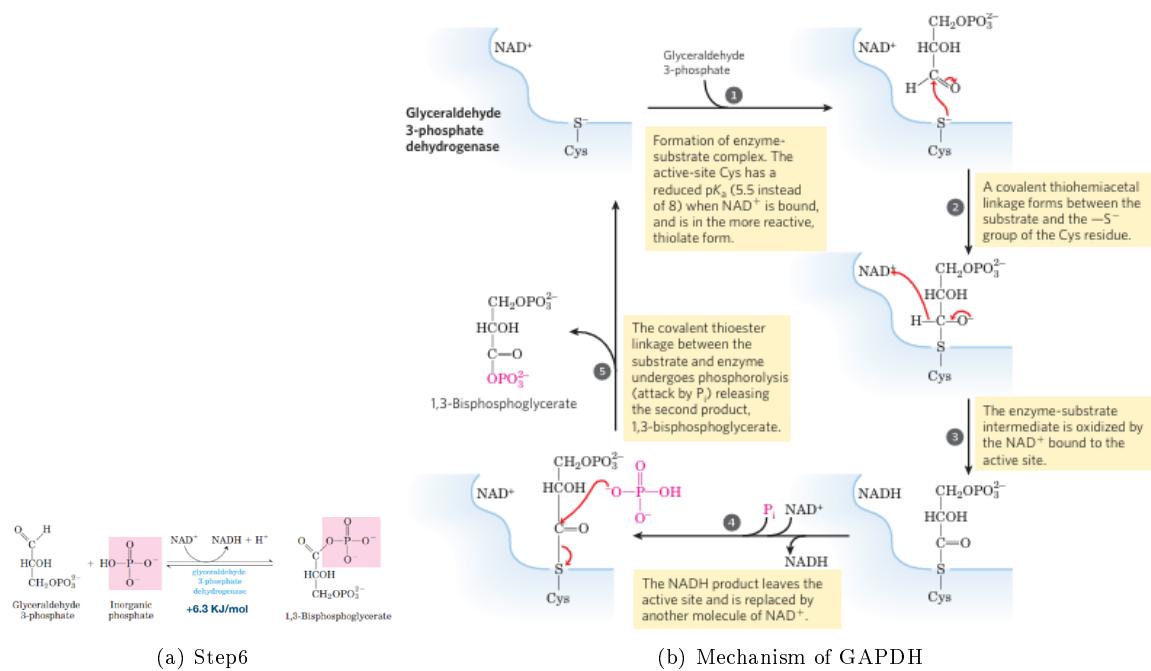


Figure 20: Conversion of GA3P to 1,3-BPG

3.1.2.2 Step7: Phosphotransfer from 1,3-BPG to ADP

Step7 is the **break-even point**. 1, 3-BPG is used as a phosphate doner to ADP. This reaction is catalyzed by **glycerophosphate kinase** and produces 3-Phosphoglycerate and ATP. (see fig. 21(a))

3.1.2.3 Step8: Conversion to 2-Phosphoglycerate

Phosphoglycate mutase catalyses the transfer of the phosphate group from C3 of 3-phosphoglycerate to C2 to form 2-phosphoglycerate.

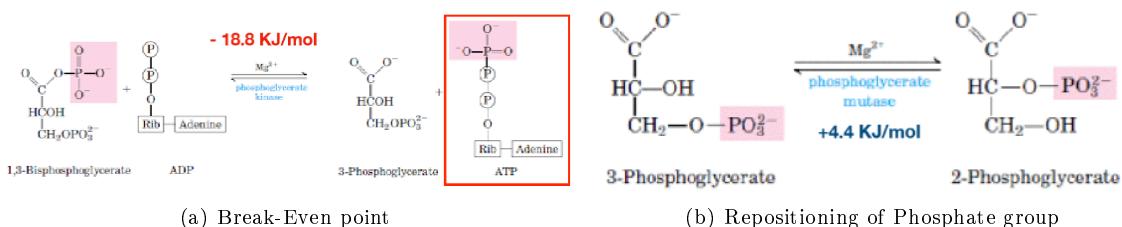


Figure 21: Step7 and Step8

3.1.2.4 Step9: Conversion to Phosphoenolpyruvate (PEP)

Enolase converts 2-phosphoglycerate into phosphoenolpyruvate (PEP). This **dehydration reaction increases the phosphoryltransfer potential** of the molecule.

3.1.2.5 Step10: Conversion to Pyruvate

The phosphoryltransfer potential of **PEP** is exploited to create ATP and pyruvate. The enzyme **pyruvate kinase** catalyses the phosphoric transfer. At this point we have gained a **total of 2 ATP and 2 NADH**.

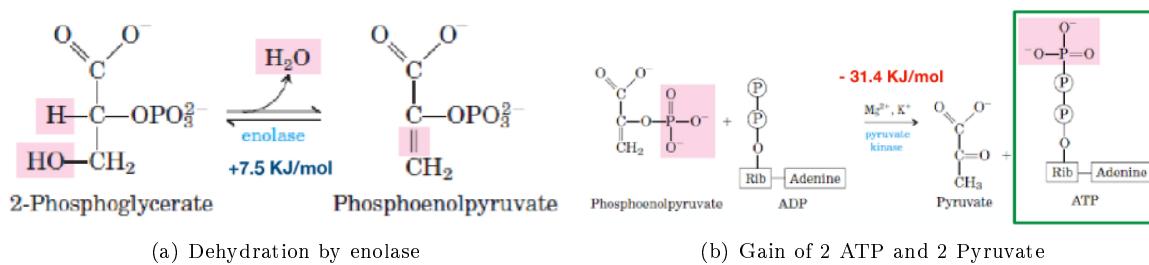


Figure 22: Step9 and Step10

3.1.3 The fates of Pyruvate

Pyruvate is a three-carbon molecule that is the end product of glycolysis.

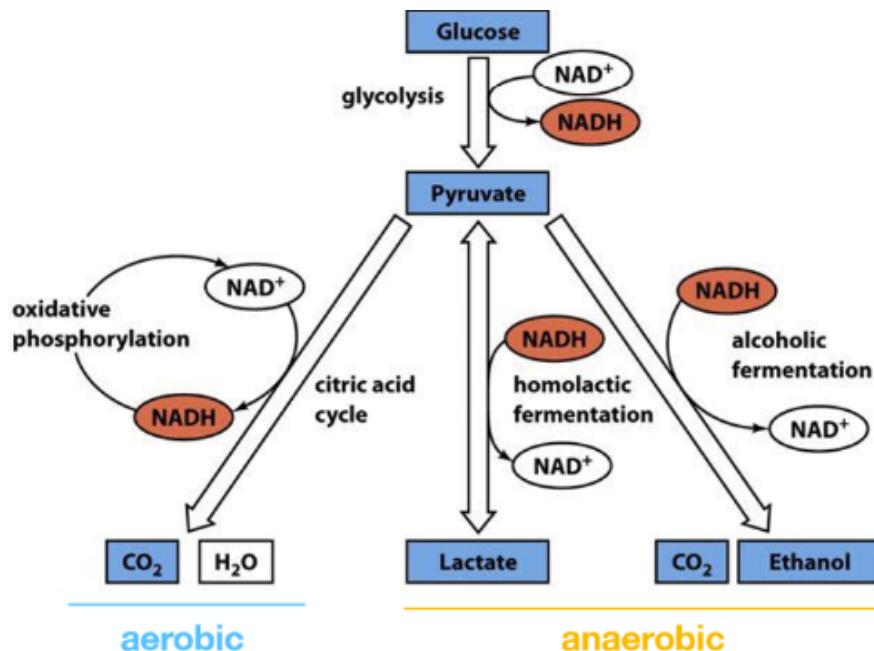


Figure 23: The fates of Pyruvate

Definition 3.2 (Facultative Anaerobic Organism). A Facultative Anaerobic Organism is able to produce ATP by anaerobic respiration if oxygen is present, but is also capable of switching to fermentation if oxygen is absent. For example *E.coli* or some muscle cells (temporarily in humans).

Remark 3.3 (Soy Sauce). Soy sauce is produced by fermenting a salted mixture of soy beans. Soybeans contain starch which will be broken down to glucose and then degraded via glycolysis to pyruvate. And the fermentation is carried out in the absence of oxygen. However if oxygen were present pyruvate would be oxidized to acetyl-CoA entering the citric acid cycle. But some acetyl-CoA would get hydrolyzed to acetic acid (vinegar) which would result in an undesired strong vinegar taste.

3.1.3.1 Ethanol Fermentation

Yeast and several bacteria utilise ethanol (alcoholic) fermentation to regenerate NAD⁺ and to transform pyruvate into **ethanol and carbon dioxide**.

In a first step **pyruvate decarboxylase** catalyses a decarboxylation reaction. The enzymes needs the **coenzyme TPP**, a vitamin B1 derivative, and cofactor Mg²⁺

- Note, that the **C3 & C4 carbons of glucose will be cut away** in form of CO₂.

In the second step **alcohol dehydrogenase** will regenerate NAD⁺ in reducing acetaldehyde to ethanol. Note alcohol dehydrogenase contains a **zinc ion** in the active site to help polarize the carbonyl double bond that promotes hydride transfer from NADH.

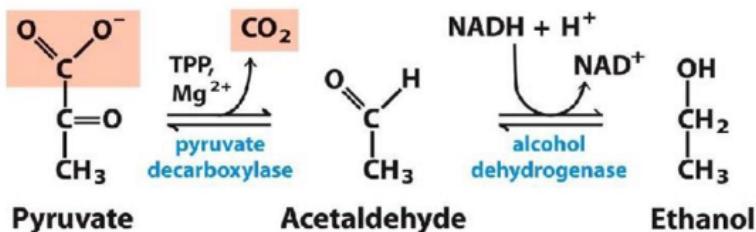


Figure 24: Ethanol Fermentation

- Glucose + 2ADP + 2Pi => 2 Ethanol + **2ATP** + 2 CO₂ + 2 H₂O

3.1.3.2 Lactic Fermentation

Many prokaryotic and eukaryotic organisms can use lactic fermentation. Like ethanol fermentation it is necessary to regenerate NAD⁺. Lactic fermentation is catalysed by **lactate dehydrogenase (LDH)**.

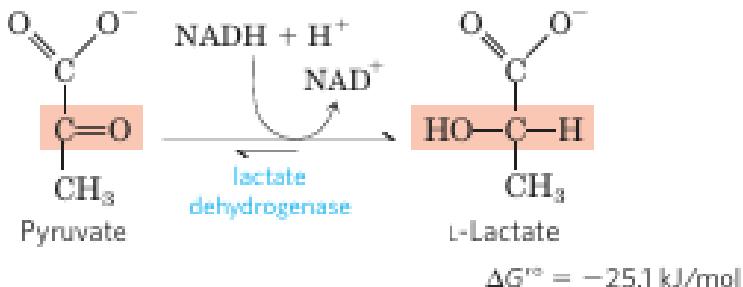


Figure 25: Lactic Fermentation

Remark 3.4 (Cancer, PET scan). Cancer cells often rely on aerobic glycolysis, known as the **Warburg effect**, where they preferentially use glycolysis followed by lactic acid fermentation, even in the presence of oxygen. This allows them to rapidly generate ATP and biosynthetic precursors for growth. Positron Emission Tomography (PET scans) exploit this metabolic shift by using **fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG)**, a radiolabeled glucose analog. Since cancer cells have a higher glucose uptake due to increased glycolysis, they accumulate FDG, which emits positrons detectable by **PET imaging**.

3.2 TCA cycle

In aerobic organisms, glucose and other sugars, fatty acids, and most amino acids are ultimately oxidized to CO₂ and H₂O via the citric cycle and the respiratory chain.

Remark 3.5 (TCA cycle). The TCA cycle (TCA = tricarboxylic acid) is also called **Krebs cycle** or **citric acid cycle**

Before entering the citric acid cycle, the carbon skeleton of sugars and fatty acids are degraded to the acetyl group of acetyl-CoA

3.2.0.1 Pyruvate \Rightarrow Acetyl-CoA

Remark 3.6 (pyruvate translocase). Once produced in the cytosol, pyruvate migrates into the mitochondrial matrix through the action of pyruvate translocases that mediate the transport of pyruvate across mitochondrial membranes.

In the mitochondria pyruvate is converted to acetyl-CoA in order to enter the TCA cycle. This is done by the **pyruvate dehydrogenase complex** which catalyses an **oxidative decarboxylation**, an **irreversible** oxidation process in which the carbonyl group is removed from pyruvate as a molecule of CO₂.

The combined dehydrogenation and decarboxylation of pyruvate requires the sequential action of 3 different enzymes:

- E1 - Pyruvate dehydrogenase: Catalyses the redox-decarboxylation reaction.
- E2 - Dihydrolipoyl transacetylase: Catalyses the transfer of the acetyl group.
- E3 - Dihydrolipoyl dehydrogenase: Reforms the oxidised version of lipoamide.

Moreover 5 different co-enzymes are acting across the 5 different steps (see fig. 26(b)):

- Step 1: Pyruvate reacts with the coenzyme **glstpp** bound to E1, and undergoes decarboxylation to the hydroxyethyl derivative.
- Step 2: E1 also carries out step 2, transferring 2 electrons and then the acetyl group (oxidized form of hydrocyenthanyl group) from TPP to the oxidized and then reduced form of the coenzyme **lipoyllysine** of E2. This reduces the disulfid bond of lipoyllysine and binds the acetyl group covalently as a thioester. *Note that lipoyllysine has two thiol groups that can undergo reversible oxidation to a disulfid bond, similar to that between two Cys residues in a protein. Therefore it can serve as both electron carrier and as an acyl carrier.*
- Step 3: The acetate is **trans-estriified** to the SH group of **CoA-SH**.
- Step 4: Iionic acid is oxidised to reform the S-S bond and 2 hydrate groups are transferred to **FAD**, the coenzyme bound to E3. FAD is reduced to FADH₂.
- Step 5: FAD is regenerated, transferring electrons to the coenzyme **NAD⁺** to produce NADH and H⁺.

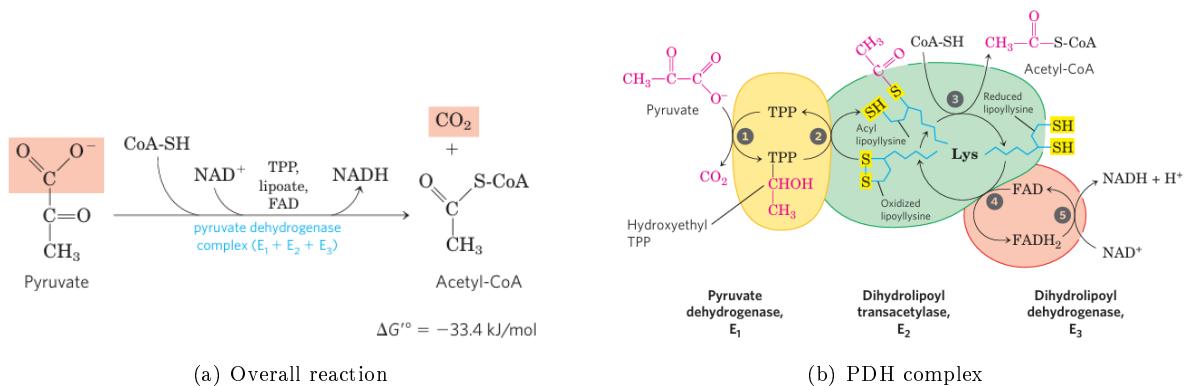


Figure 26: Pyruvate + CoA-SH + NAD⁺ \Rightarrow Acetyl-CoA + CO₂ + NADH + H⁺

Remark 3.7 (pyruvate dehydrogenase complex (PDH complex or PDC)). PDH complex is a classic, much-studied example of a multi-enzyme complex in which a series of chemical intermediates remain bound to the enzyme molecules as a substrate is transformed into the final product. It has **3 important enzymes** and uses **5 different co-enzymes**, four derived from vitamins, participate in the reaction mechanism.

Moreover, the **PDH complex is the prototype** for two other important exzmae compexes: α -ketogutarate dehydrogenase, of the TCA cylce, and α -keto acid dehydrogenase, of the oxidative pathway of several amino acids.

Note that the number of copies of each enzyme varies and therefore also the size of the complex.

While cytosolic pyruvate can be converted back to glucose, onece produced in the mitochondrial matrix Acetyl-CoA is **committed** towards the TCA cycle or lipid synthesis. Therefore PDC is catalysis a **key and irreversible step** in the glucose metabolism. Thus **PDC is tightly regulated**.

- Acetyl-CoA and NADH, two products, **inhibit** (allosterically) **E2 and E3** respectively.

Under resting conditions, the energy charge of the cell is high (high acetyl-CoA, NADH, ATP). These molecules promote the activity of **PDC kinases (PDKs)** that phosphorylate and inactivate E1.

Under exercising conditions the energy charge of the cell is low and PDKs are inhibited, also **Ca⁺⁺ influx** in the mitochondria is increased, which activates **PDC phosphatases (PDPs)** that dephosphorylate and activate E1.

- E1 is inhibited by PDKs under resting conditions and activated by PDPs under exercising conditions.

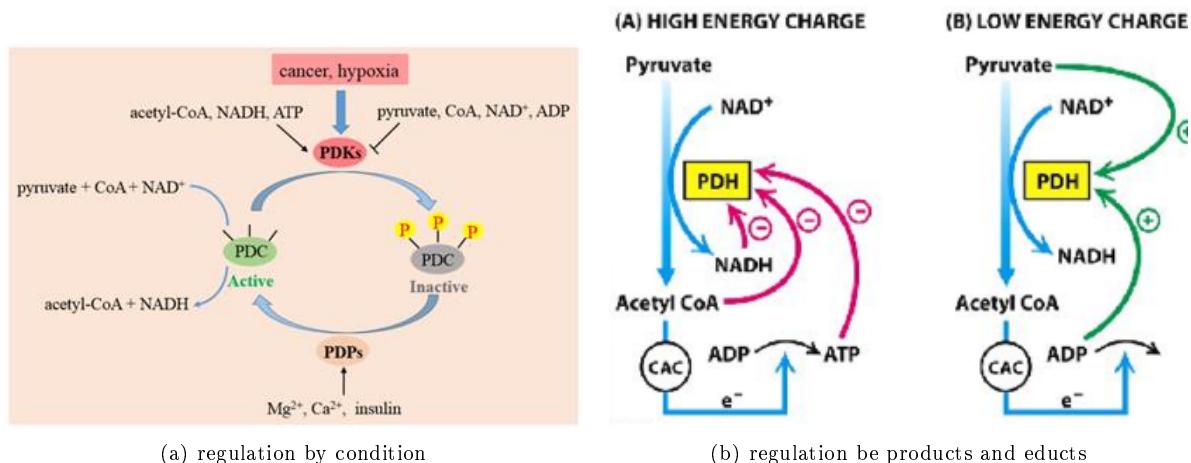


Figure 27: Regulation of PDC/PDH

3.2.1 TCA cylce steps

The TCA cylce is a game of decarboxylation, generating energy by reduction of electron carriers. The formula:

- $\text{Acteyl-CoA} + \text{GDP} + \text{Pi} + 3 \text{ NAD}^+ + \text{FAD} \Rightarrow 2 \text{ CO}_2 + 3 \text{ NADH} + \text{FADH}_2 + \text{GTP} + \text{CoA-SH}$

In the bigger picture, this is were the CO₂ is produced that we breve out.

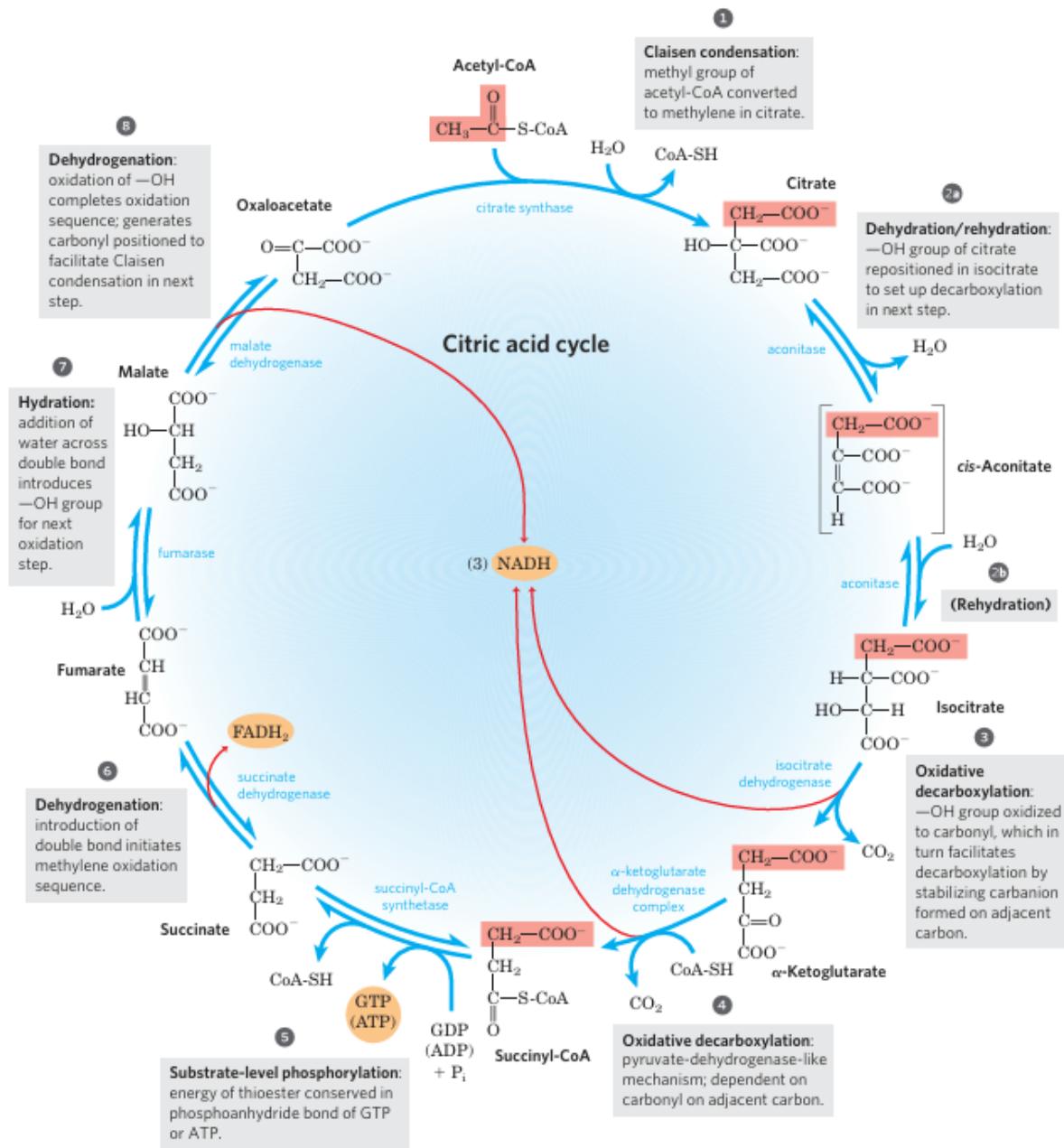


Figure 28: Overview of the TCA cycle: The carbons shaded in red are those derived from the acetate of acetyl-CoA in the first turn.

Remark 3.8 (What happens to 3-14C-pyruvate). The Resulting Acetyl-CoA will be labeled at C2 (methyl group). Therfore, at the end of the first cycle: Oxaloacetate will be labelled in C2 or C3 (because of symmetry in succinate). After two more cycles, half of the label will be released. (the label of C2 ends up at the second cycle at C2 or C3, while the lable on C3 ends up at C4, which is released in the following clycle) But il will take an infinite number of cycles to release all the label.

3.2.1.1 Step1: Formation of Citrate

In the first step the **acetyl group** is transferred to **oxalacetate** to produce citrate. The reaction consists of two phases: (1) oxalacetate is condensed to acetyl-CoA to form citryl-CoA; (2) citryl-CoA is hydrolyzed to form citrate and CoA-SH. Whereby **phase 2 is highly exergonic** and therefore drives the entire reaction.

Remark 3.9 (Citrate synthase). Step 1 is carried out by citrate synthase. Citrate synthase is a **dimer**. It first binds oxalacetate into its active site, which causes a conformational change from open to closed conformation. By doing so oxalacetate binding induces the formation of the acetyl-CoA binding site and shifts the catalytic residue into proper position.

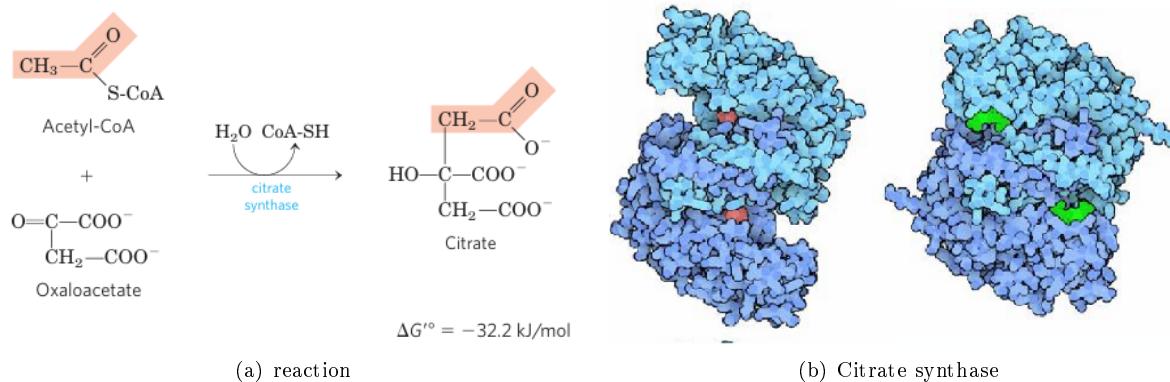


Figure 29: Formation of Citrate

3.2.1.2 Step2: Formation of Isocitrate

Citrate is converted into isocitrate. In this reaction an hydroxyl group is moved from the third carbon of citrate to an adjacent carbon via a dehydration/hydration reaction.

Remark 3.10 (Aconitase enzyme). Aconitase enzyme catalyzed this dehydration/hydration reaction. It contains a **Iron-Sulfur center**. 3 Cys residues of the enzyme bind 3 Fe atoms, the 4th is bound to one of the carboxyl groups of citrate and (non covalently) with a citrate hydroxyl group. **The Iron-Sulfur center acts in both substrate binding and catalysis.**

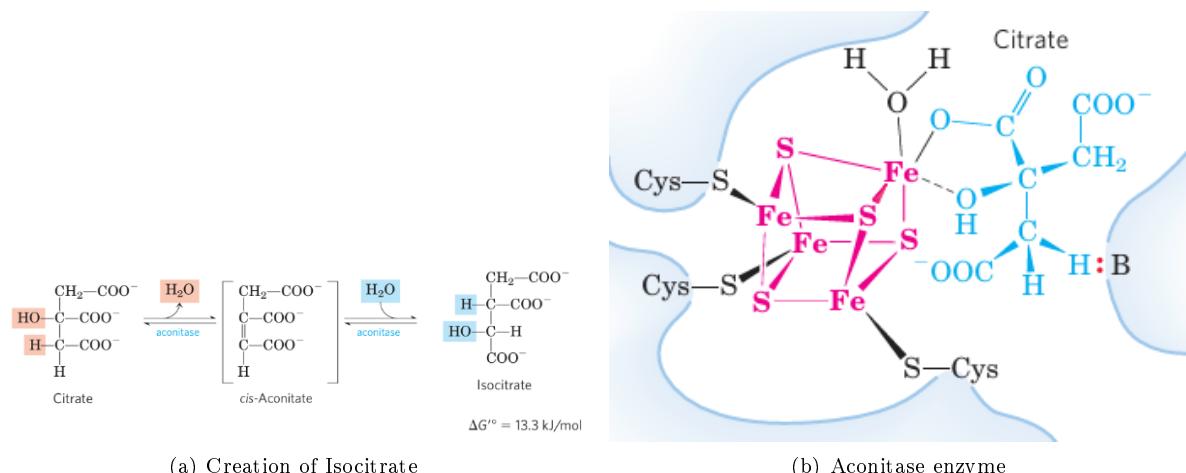


Figure 30: Formation of Isocitrate via cis-Aconitate

3.2.1.3 Step3: Decarboxylation of Isocitrate

Once isocitrate is formed, it is ready to undergo the **first oxidative decarboxylation reaction** of the citric acid cycle. This step is catalyzed by **isocitrate dehydrogenase** which yields α -ketoglutarate, CO_2 and NADH

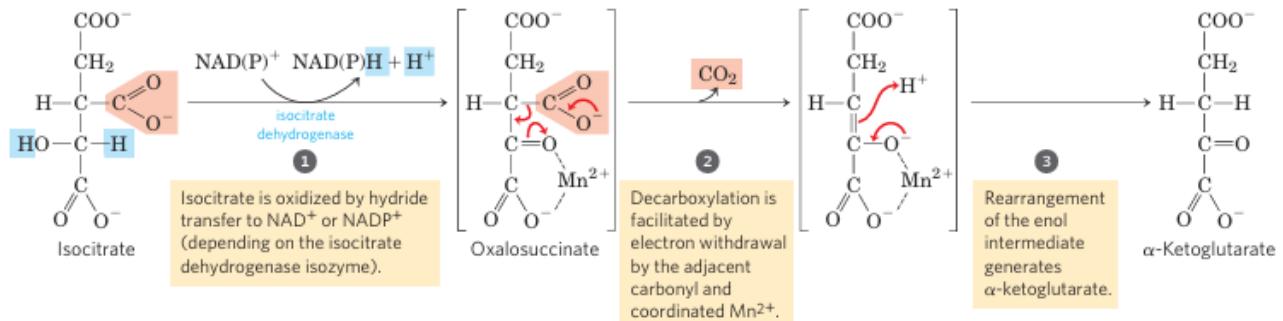


Figure 31: formation of α -ketoglutarate by isocitrate dehydrogenase

3.2.1.4 Step4 Decarboxylation of α -ketoglutarate

This is the **second oxidative decarboxylation reaction** in the TCA cycle. α -ketoglutarate is converted to succinyl-CoA with concomitant production of CO_2 and NADH. Note that the energy of the oxydation is conserved in the thioester bond.

Remark 3.11 (α -ketoglutarate dehydrogenase complex). α -ketoglutarate dehydrogenase complex is build very similar to the pyruvate dehydrogenase complex. Like PDC it has 3 has 3 important enzymes:

- E1: α -ketoglutarate dehydrogenase with TPP as a cofactor
- E2: dihydrolipyl succinyltransferase with lipoic acid as a cofactor
- E3: dihydrolipyl dehydrogenase with FAD as cofactor.

This is a clear case of **divergent evolution**.

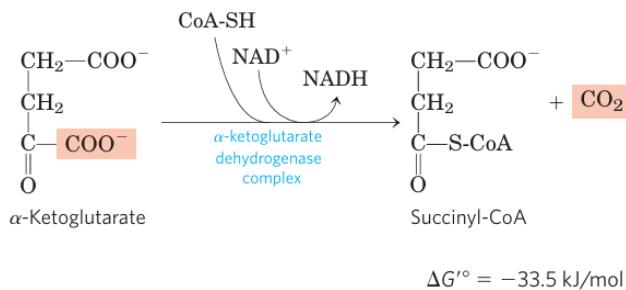


Figure 32: oxidation of α -Ketoglutarate to Succinyl-CoA and CO_2

3.2.1.5 Step5: Conversion of Succinyl-CoA to Succinate

The unstable and high energy thioester bond of succinyl-CoA is cleaved to release the CoA-SH unit. This releases free energy that is used to produce GTP from GDP. This reaction is catalyzed by **succinyl CoA synthetases**.

The reaction has 3 phases as illustrated by fig. 33(b):

- i) A phosphate group substitutes CoA to form succinyl phosphate (a high energy acyl phosphate).
- ii) Succinyl phosphate donates the phosphate to a His residue in the enzyme (Succinat is formed).
- iii) The phosphate group is transferred from the high energy phosphorylated histidine to GDP to form GTP.

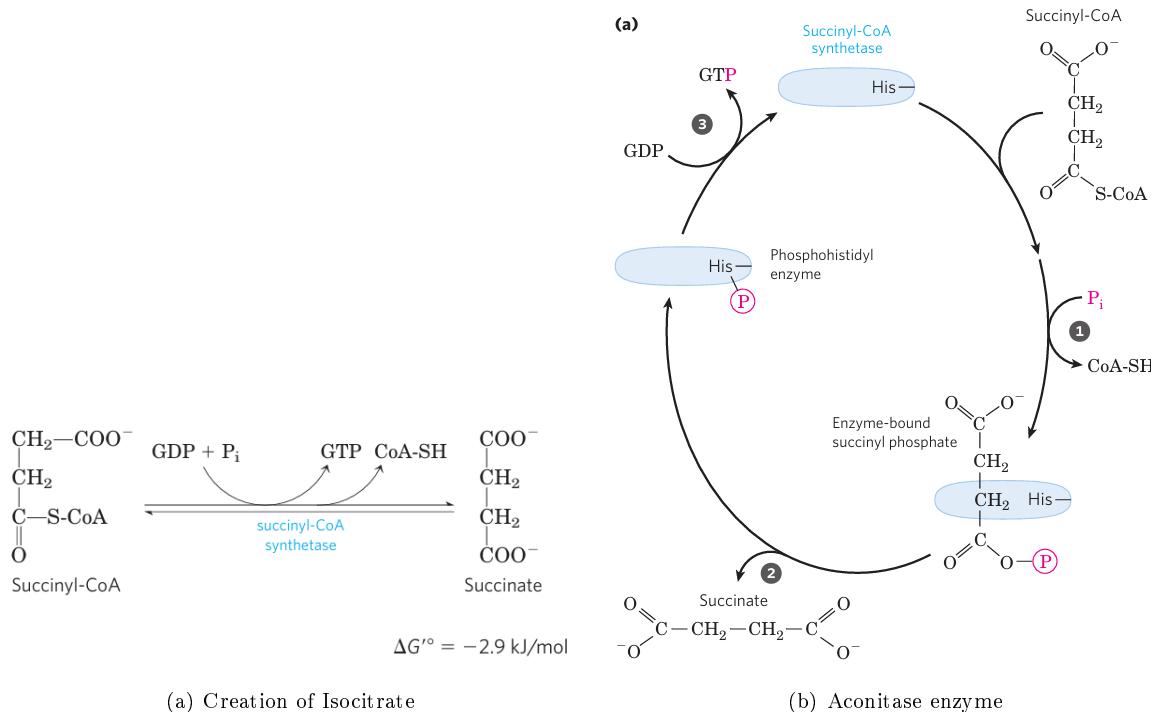


Figure 33: Conversion of Succinyl-CoA to Succinate

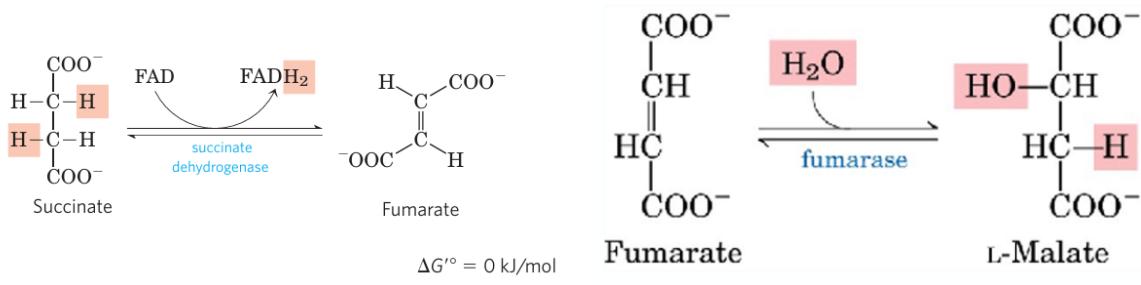
3.2.1.6 Step6: Formation of Fumerate

In step 6, succinate is oxidised to fumarate by succinate dehydrogenase. This is coupled to the reduction of FAD to FADH₂. See fig. 34(a)

Remark 3.12 (succinate dehydrogenase). Succinate dehydrogenase is bound to the inner mitochondrial membrane and its FADH₂ passes electrons to the electron transport chain.

3.2.1.7 Step7: Formation of Malate

Fumerase catalyses the hydration of fumerate into malate. Note that the water molecule attacks only at a specific site, thus only the L-isomer of malate is formed.



(a) Oxidation of Succinate to Fumarate

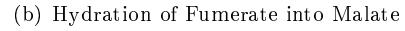


Figure 34: Step 6 and 7

3.2.1.8 Step8: Regeneration of Oxaloacetate

Finally, **malate dehydrogenase** regenerates oxaloacetate by oxidation of malate. This reaction is coupled with the reduction of NAD⁺ to NADH. This process is highly **endergonic** and needs to be coupled with other exergonic steps.

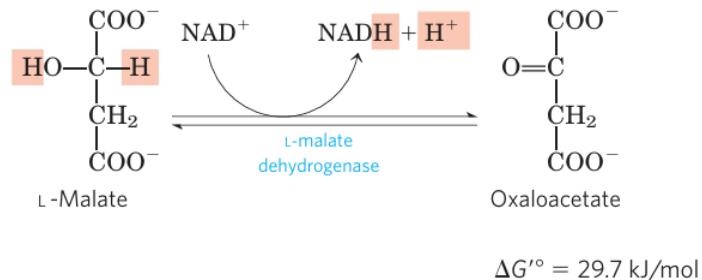


Figure 35: Oxidation of Malate to Oxaloacetate

3.3 Fatty Acid Oxidation

Adipose tissue cells (**adipocytes**) are specialised cells that store energy in the form of **triglycerides**. *Lipids are a form to long-time store energy, which will be used in moments with little glucose.* Upon demand triglycerides are hydrolysed to glycerol and fatty acids that are transported to target tissues.

Following this step **fatty acids** can be **activated (bound to CoA, see. fig. 38(a))** and transported to the mitochondrial matrix of cells. In the mitochondrial matrix they iteratively undergo a series of **4 reactions** that shorten the acyl chain by 2 carbons and release acetyl-CoA (that can feed in the TCA cycle)

This entire process is known as **fatty acid oxidation**.

Dietary fats are absorbed in the **small intestine**. **bile acids** are released and act as biological detergents, resuspending triglycerides into fine micelles. In this form triglycerides are accessible to water-soluble lipases in the intestine lumen.

The products of this lipase are then absorbed by the intestine mucosa and converted back to triglycerides. They are then transported through the bloodstream and finally stored in dedicated adipose cells that have the specialized organelles named **lipid droplets**.

Remark 3.13 (Triacylglycerols better than Polysaccharides). Triacylglycerols contain **more energy per gram than polysaccharides**. Moreover, they are unhydrated, thus the organism does not have to carry the water along.

extra weight in form of water as with stored polysaccharides. Additionally in some animals, such as seals, fats stores under the skin serve as insulation against cold temperatures.

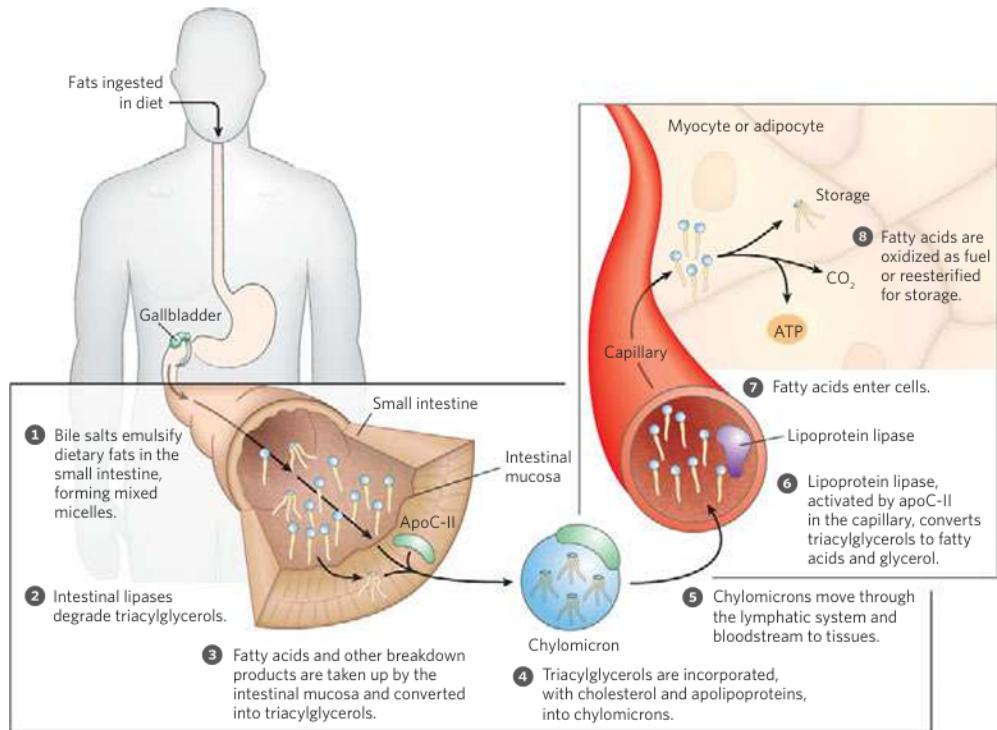
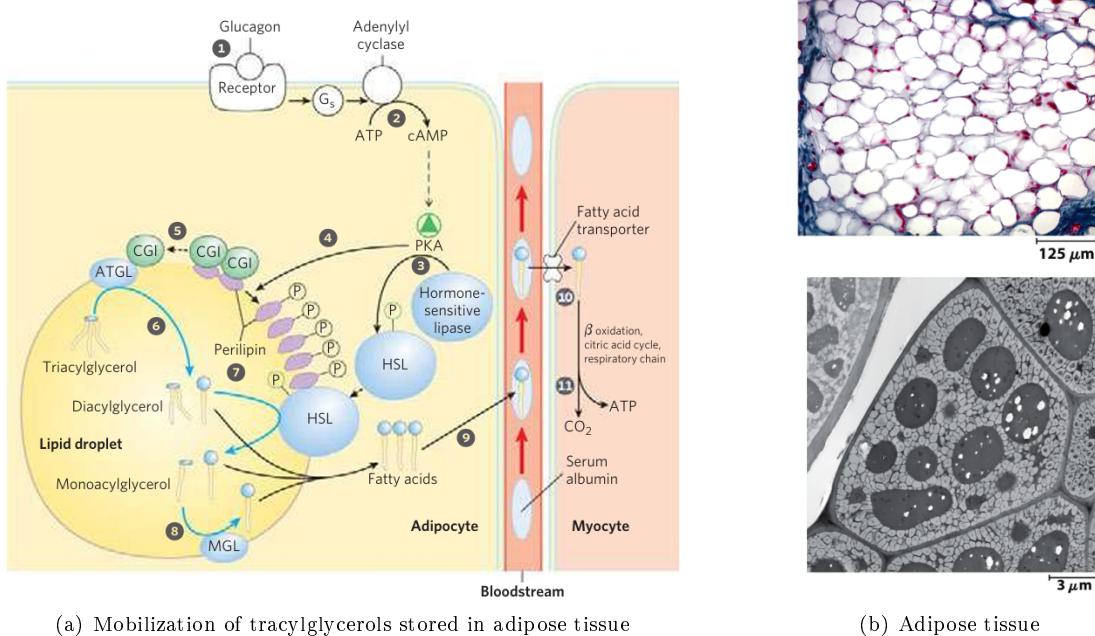


Figure 36: Processing of dietary lipids in vertebrates

When blood glucose levels are low, some hormones (**glucagon/adrenaline**) are released. They activated **adenylyl cyclase on the surface of adipocytes**. This leads to the production of **cAMP** which activates **protein kinase A (PKA)**, which triggers intracellular triglyceride lipase to produce fatty acids and glycerol. The products are released into the bloodstream, where they are transported with the serum protein **Albumin** to muscle cells (**myocytes**) where they are then oxidized for the production of ATP.



(a) Mobilization of triglycerols stored in adipose tissue

(b) Adipose tissue

Figure 37:

3.3.0.1 What about glycerol?

95% of the energy derived from triglycerides comes from the oxidation of the fatty acid chain, where **5% comes from glycerol**.

Glycerol, released by triglyceride lipases, is phosphorylated to glycerol 3-phosphate by **glycerol kinase** using 1 ATP. Then glycerol is oxidized by the enzyme glycerol 3-phosphate dehydrogenase to **DHAP**, thus entering the glycolytic pathway.

Remark 3.14 (How much ATP do we get from glycerol in the glycolytic pathway?). First we have to invest 1 ATP to produce DHAP entering the glycolytic pathway. We enter the payoff phase of glycolysis where we produce 2 ATP. Giving us a net of 1 ATP produced, additionally we still have the energy of 1 pyruvate and 2 NADH.

3.3.0.2 Transport into the Mitochondria

The transport into the mitochondria is the rate-limiting step in β -oxidation.

Fatty acid oxidation takes place in the mitochondrial matrix. Therefore fatty acids have to be transported into the mitochondria to be oxidized. For this purpose, they are again activated, linked to CoA. This is done by the enzyme **fatty acyl-CoA synthetases**

Fatty acyl-CoA synthetases have a **two phase mechanism** (see fig. 38(a)):

- i) The fatty acid made reactive by forming a complex with AMP, producing PPi and using ATP.
- ii) AMP is then exchanged with CoA-SH, in a nucleophilic attack, forming fatty acyl-CoA.

Note that PPi is immediately dissociated into phosphate molecules by **inorganic pyrophosphatase**.

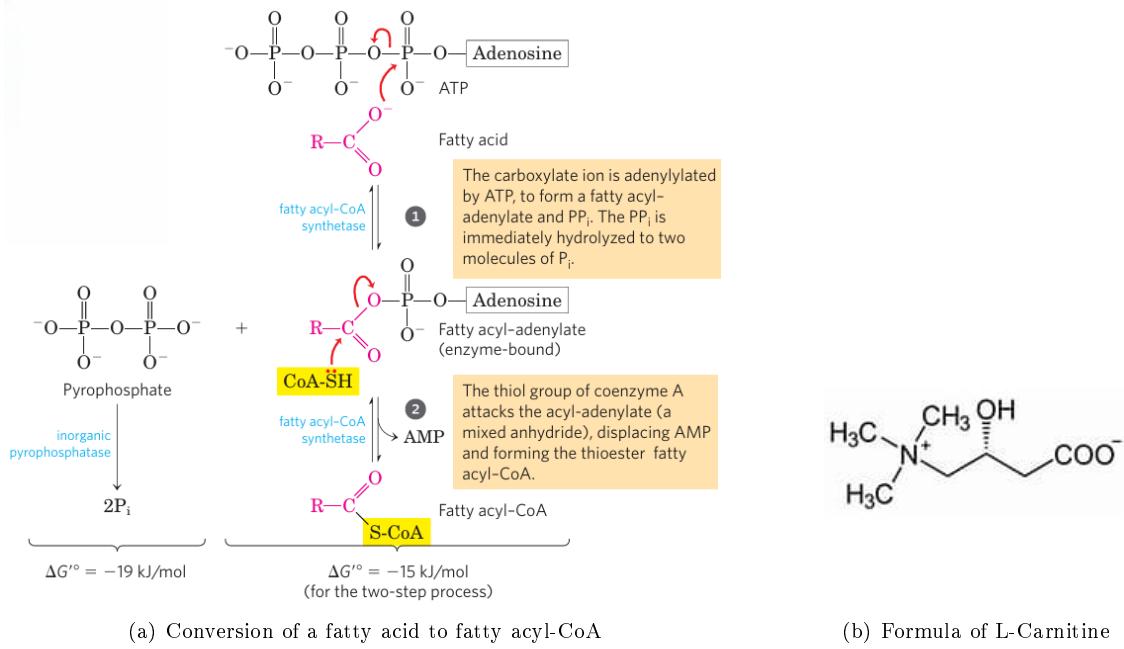


Figure 38:

Once formed in the cytosolic environment, fatty acyl-CoA crosses the mitochondrial membrane transiently exchanging its CoA with carnitine and exploiting the **acyl-carnitine transporter**.

- Carnitine acyltransferase I is located at the outer membrane and catalyzes the exchange of CoA with carnitine.
- Carnitine acyltransferase II is located in the inner membrane and exchanges the carnitine for CoA.

Definition 3.15 (Carnitine). Carnitine (see. fig 38(b)) is a quaternary ammonium compound. Carnitine forms a temporary conjugate with acyl groups (as acyl-carnitine), enabling them to cross the inner mitochondrial membrane via the carnitine shuttle system.

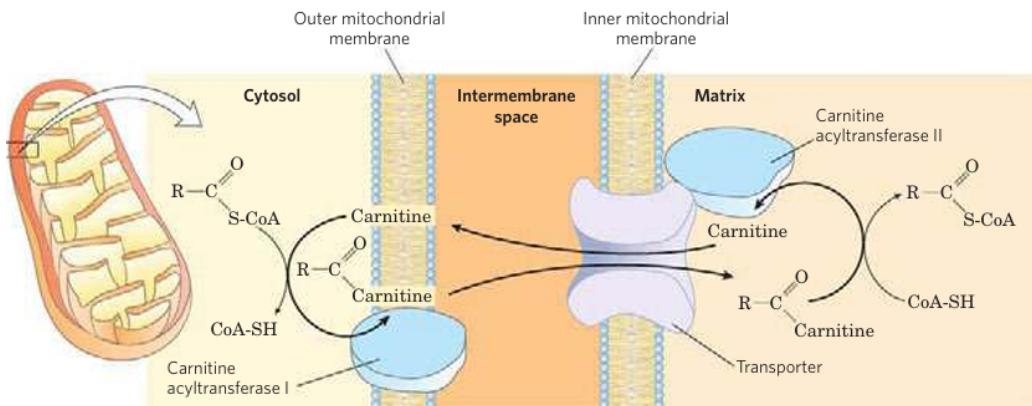


Figure 39: Fatty acid entry into mitochondria via acyl-carnitine/carnitine transporter

Remark 3.16 (Primary Carnitine deficiency). Primary carnitine deficiency is an autosomal recessive disorder affecting transport of carnitine. Since carnitine is essential for the transport of long-chain fatty acyl-CoA into the mitochondria, this disorder results in reduced fatty acid-derived energy production, leading to symptoms such as **fatigue**. Moreover, impaired import of fatty acids into mitochondria causes their accumulation in the cytoplasm (**lipotoxicity**), which can disrupt organ function. In the heart, this may result in cardiomyopathy.

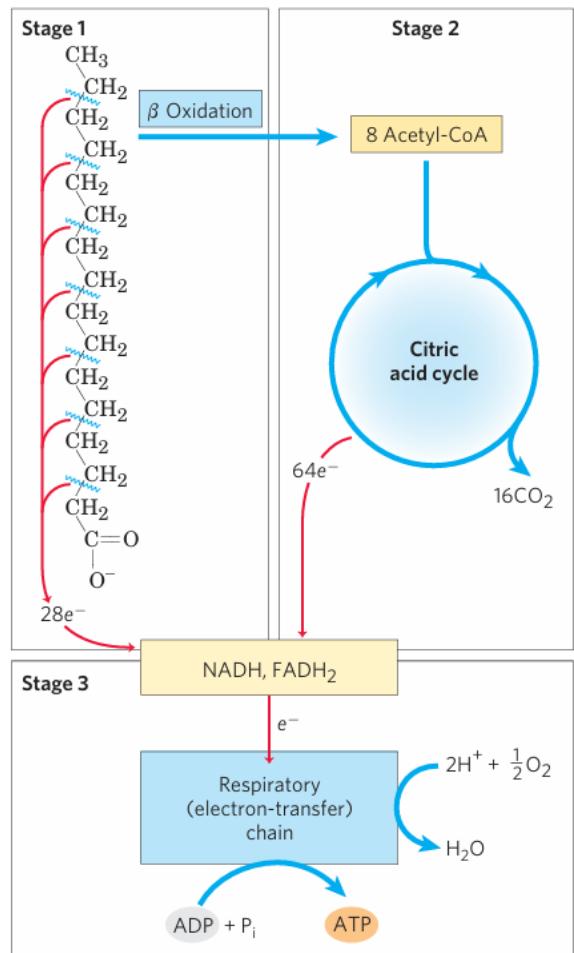
3.3.1 Beta oxidation

There are 3 stages in the oxidation of FAs (see fig. 40(a)). The β -oxidation is the first stage, where, in the mitochondrial matrix, fatty acetyl-CoA is progressively oxidised by an iterative sequence of four reactions that produce acetic units in the form of acetyl-CoA

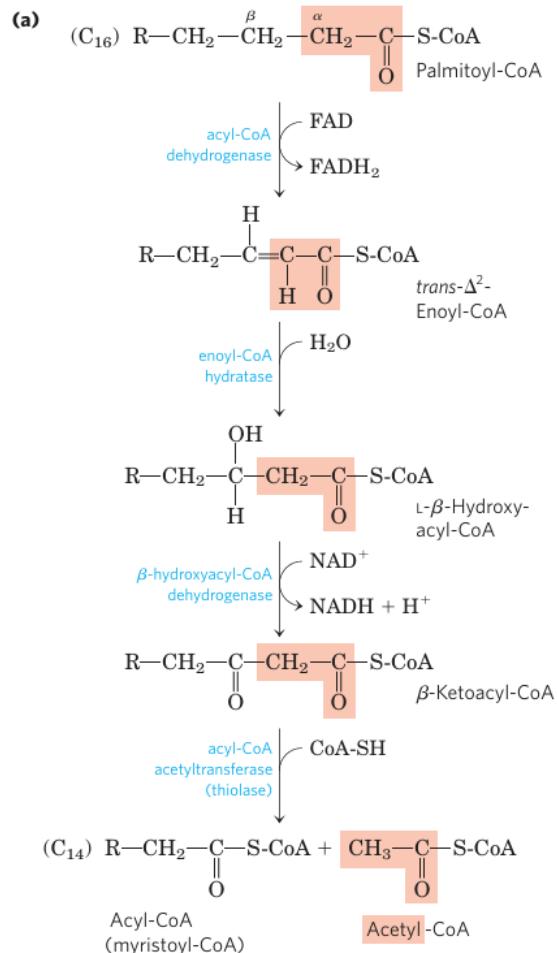
The acetyl-CoA units formed in stage 1 can then be feed in the TAC cycle (stage 2). Finally, the electrons subtracted in these oxidative reactions are used to produce ATP in the ETC.

There are 4 reactions involved in β -oxidation (see fig. 40(b)):

- i) Dehydrogenation produces a double bond between the α - and β -carbon (C2 and C3). This is catalyzed by **acyl-CoA dehydrogenase** (similar to succinate dehydrogenase from TCA cycle) and produces **2 FADH₂**.
- ii) Hydration, adding water to the α - β double bond. The hydroxy group is added to C3, producing β -Hydroxyacyl-CoA. This is done by **enoyl-CoA hydratase**
- iii) Dehydrogenation, oxidizing the alcohol group to a keton, produces β -Ketoacyl-CoA. This is done by **β -hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase**, whose action is homologous to that of malate dehydrogenase in the TCA cycle. The electrons are transferred to NAD⁺ creating **NADH**
- iv) Finally the can is shortened by a thiolase which **detaches Acetyl-CoA** and creates a by 2 carbon shorter Acyl-CoA. This is catalyzed by **acyl-CoA acetyl transferase**.



(a) Stages of FA oxidation



(b) β -oxidation pathway

Figure 40: FA oxidation overview

Remark 3.17 (Unsaturated FAs). In the case of unsaturated fatty acids, two more enzymes are required (see fig. 41(a)):

- **Enoyl-CoA isomerase** that converts the **cis-isomer into a trans-isomer** or **shift the double bond** to the right position (C₂=C₃), which can be used by enoyl hydratase. (Obviously only for FA containing cis double bonds)
- For **polyunsaturated FAs (2)** **2,4-dienoyl-CoA reductase** has to be used. It reduces 2 double bonds to one, **consuming an NADPH**. Following this step, the **enoyl-CoA isomerase** can act on the substrate and make it degradable by β -oxidation.

Remark 3.18 (Odd-number FAs). Although the vast majority of FA are constituted by an even number of carbons. Odd-number FAs exist and need to be degraded in the same way, but at the **last iteration** of β -oxidation, they yield **propionyl-CoA** instead of acetyl-CoA.

The enzyme **propionyl-CoA carboxylase** is used to produce D-methylmalonyl-CoA, which can be converted through two further reactions to succinyl-CoA. **Succinyl-CoA** can then enter the TCA cycle. See fig. 41(b)

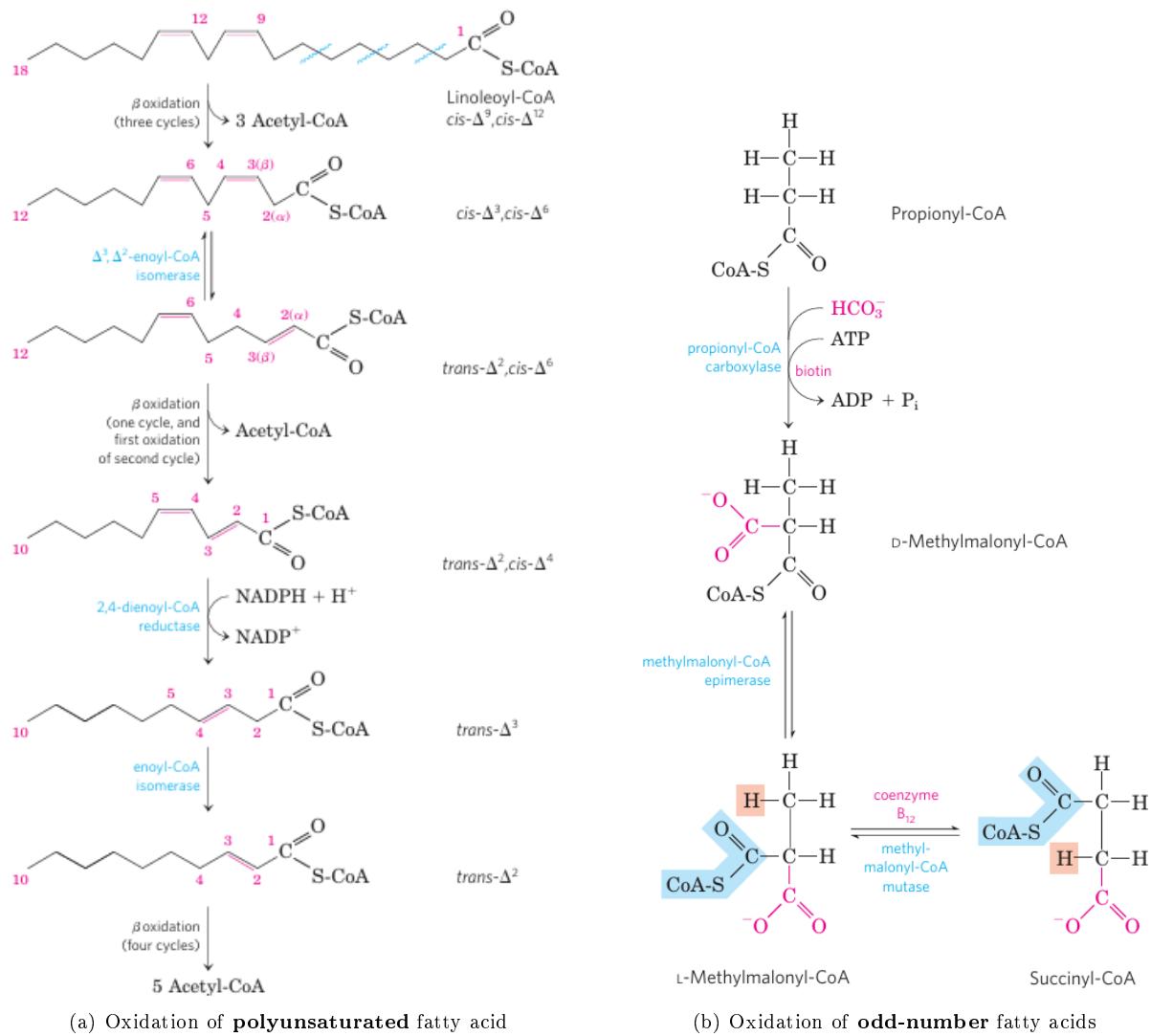


Figure 41: FA oxidation overview

3.3.1.1 Calculate amount of ATP from a FA of given length

- Assuming the FA is fully saturated and consists of n carbons (even number):

Number of β -oxidation cycles:

$$\frac{n}{2} - 1$$

Each β -oxidation cycle produces:

- 1 NADH \rightarrow 2.5 ATP
- 1 FADH₂ \rightarrow 1.5 ATP
- 1 Acetyl-CoA (last cycle gives 2) \rightarrow 10 ATP via TCA

Each acetyl-CoA entering the citric acid (TCA) cycle generates:

- $3 \text{ NADH} \rightarrow 3 \times 2.5 = 7.5 \text{ ATP}$
- $1 \text{ FADH}_2 \rightarrow 1 \times 1.5 = 1.5 \text{ ATP}$
- $1 \text{ GTP} (\text{equivalent to ATP}) \rightarrow 1 \text{ ATP}$

Activation of FA to Co-A costs 2 ATP Total ATP yield:

$$\text{ATP}_{\text{total}} = \left(\frac{n}{2} - 1\right) \cdot (2.5 + 1.5) + \frac{n}{2} \cdot 10 - 2$$

- If we have an odd number of carbons.

Account for Propionyl-CoA / Succinyl-CoA

- $1 \text{ NADH} \rightarrow 2.5 \text{ ATP}$
- $1 \text{ FADH}_2 \rightarrow 1.5 \text{ ATP}$
- $1 \text{ GTP} \rightarrow 1 \text{ ATP}$

$$\text{ATP}_{\text{total}} = \left(\left\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \right\rfloor - 1\right) \cdot 4 + \left\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \right\rfloor \cdot 10 + 5 - 2$$

- ATP Yield from a Polyunsaturated Fatty Acid

$$\text{ATP}_{\text{total}} = \left(\frac{n}{2} - 1\right) \cdot 4 + \left(\frac{n}{2} \cdot 10\right) - (p \cdot 1) - (q \cdot 2.5) - 2$$

Where:

- p : Number of double bond "islands"; each skips FADH₂ production (-1 ATP).
- q : Sum (nb of connected dole bonds in 1 island - 1); each consumes 1 NADPH (-2.5 ATP).

3.4 Amino Acid Catabolism

Amino acids that are derived from the degradation of proteins are the third class of biomolecules (after carbohydrates and fatty acids) that significantly contribute to the cellular energy metabolism.

In animals amino acids are oxidised in three different matabolic conditions:

- During protein turnover some amino acids can be oxidized, if they are not required for the synthesis of other proteins.
- In a protein rich diet, food-derived amino acids can exceed the needs for protein biosynthesis. Note there is no way to store amino acids.
- In starvation when carbohydrates are not available. AA from endogenous (produced within the body) proteins are used as an energy source.

Amino acids are split into a carbon skeleton and an amino group (which contains nitrogen). The carbon skeleton can be used for energy production or biosynthesis. The amino group, however, is converted into ammonia (NH₃), which is toxic to our cells.

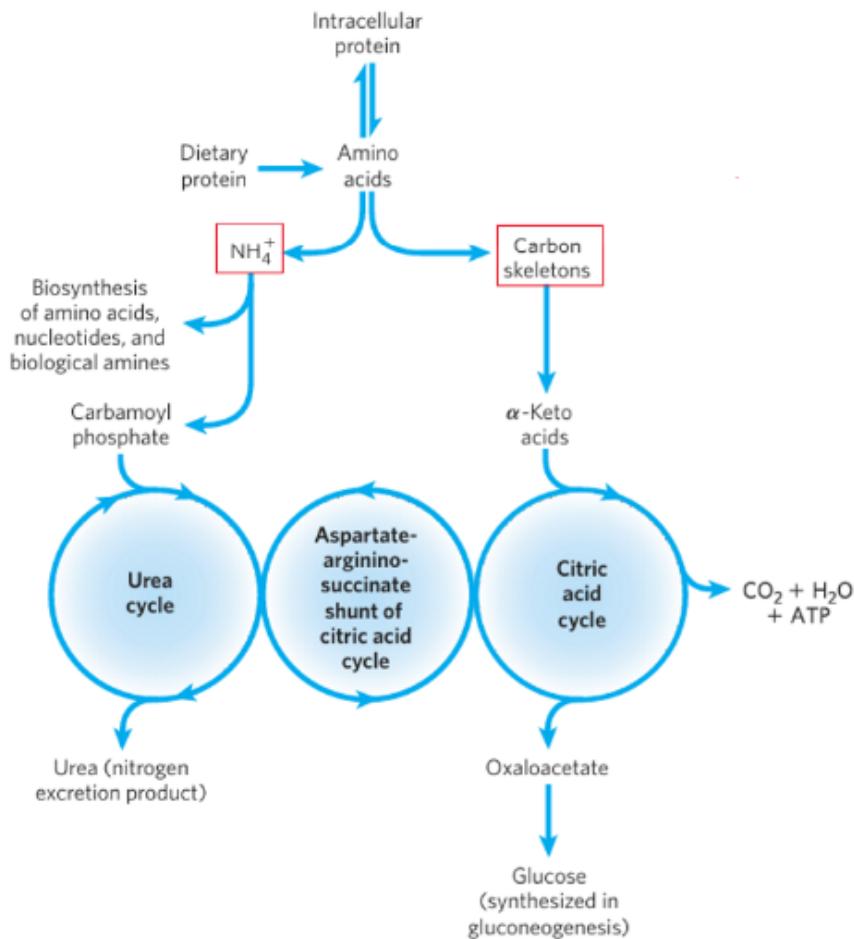


Figure 42: Overview of amino acid catabolism in mammals

3.4.1 AA oxidation and Urea production

The first step is the detachment of the α amino group. This is catalyzed by **amino transferase** that transfers the amino group to the α -ketoglutarate to form a α -keto acid.

The amino transferase requires the **cofactor pyridoxal phosphate (PLP)**, a derivative of Vitamine B6. PLP acts as a **transitory transporter of amino groups**.

One formed in the cytoplasm, glutamate is transported in the mitochondria where it undergoes **oxidative deamination** catalyzed by **glutamate dehydrogenase** that oxidizes glutamate back to α -ketoglutarate and creates NH_4^+ . This reaction is coupled to the reduction of NAD(P)H to NAD(P) .

Glutamate dehydrogenase is tightly controlled by the energy charge. GTP (indicating high energy charge) acts as an inhibitor and ADP (indicating low energy charge) acts as a simulator.

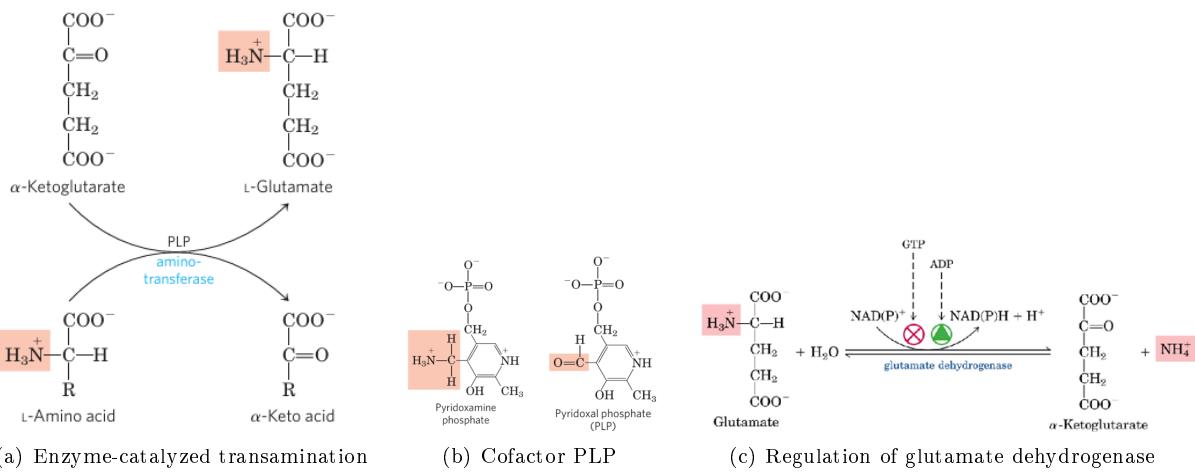


Figure 43: Amino acid oxidation and urea production

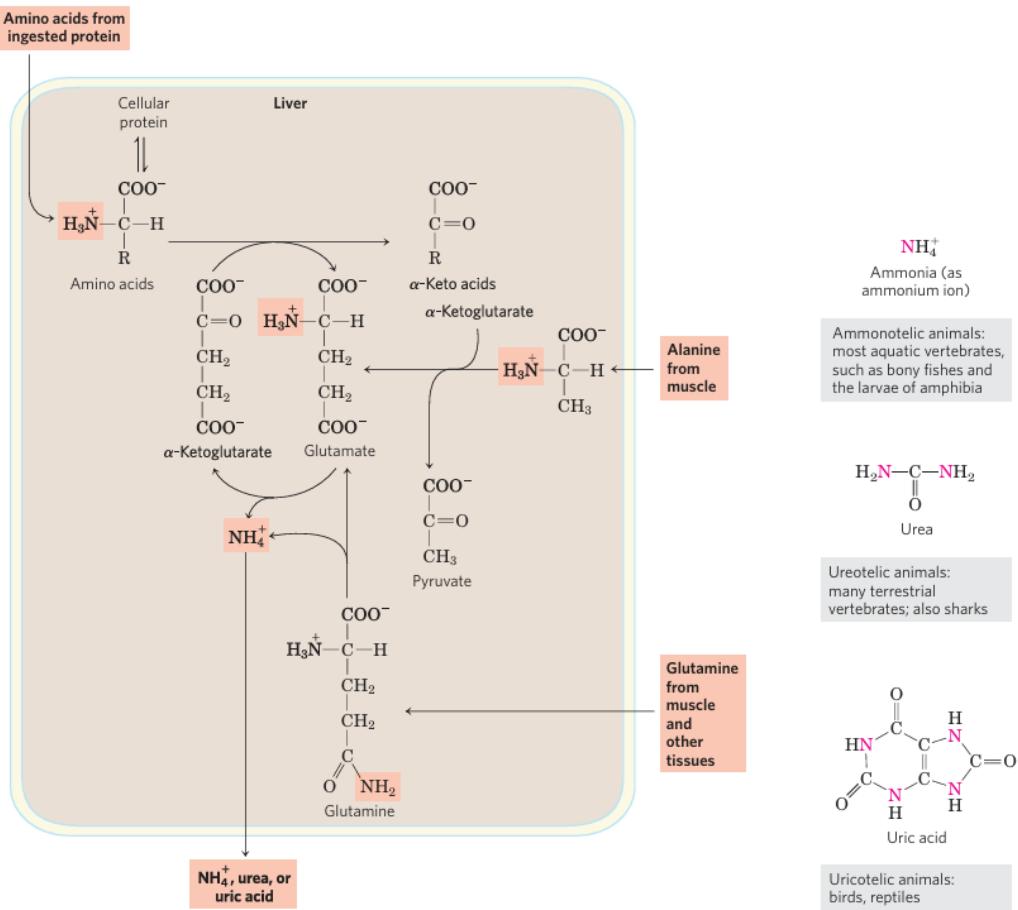


Figure 44: Amino group catabolism

3.4.1.1 Ammonia transport

Ammonia is toxic for most tissues. Thus, in order to be transported to the liver where it is converted into urea, it needs to be incorporated into a non-toxic compound.

In most tissues ammonia is therefore complexed to glutamate to produce glutamine. This is done by the enzyme **glutamine synthetase** and requires **ATP**. See fig. 45(a)

Note this a perfect example how ATP hydrolysis can foster otherwise unfavorable reactions.

Once in the liver mitochondria this is reversed by **glutaminase**.

In the **muscle** and other tissues where amino acids are intensively used for the production of energy, the **amino group can be transferred to pyruvate** to form alanine. Which can be transported to the liver. See fig. 45(b)

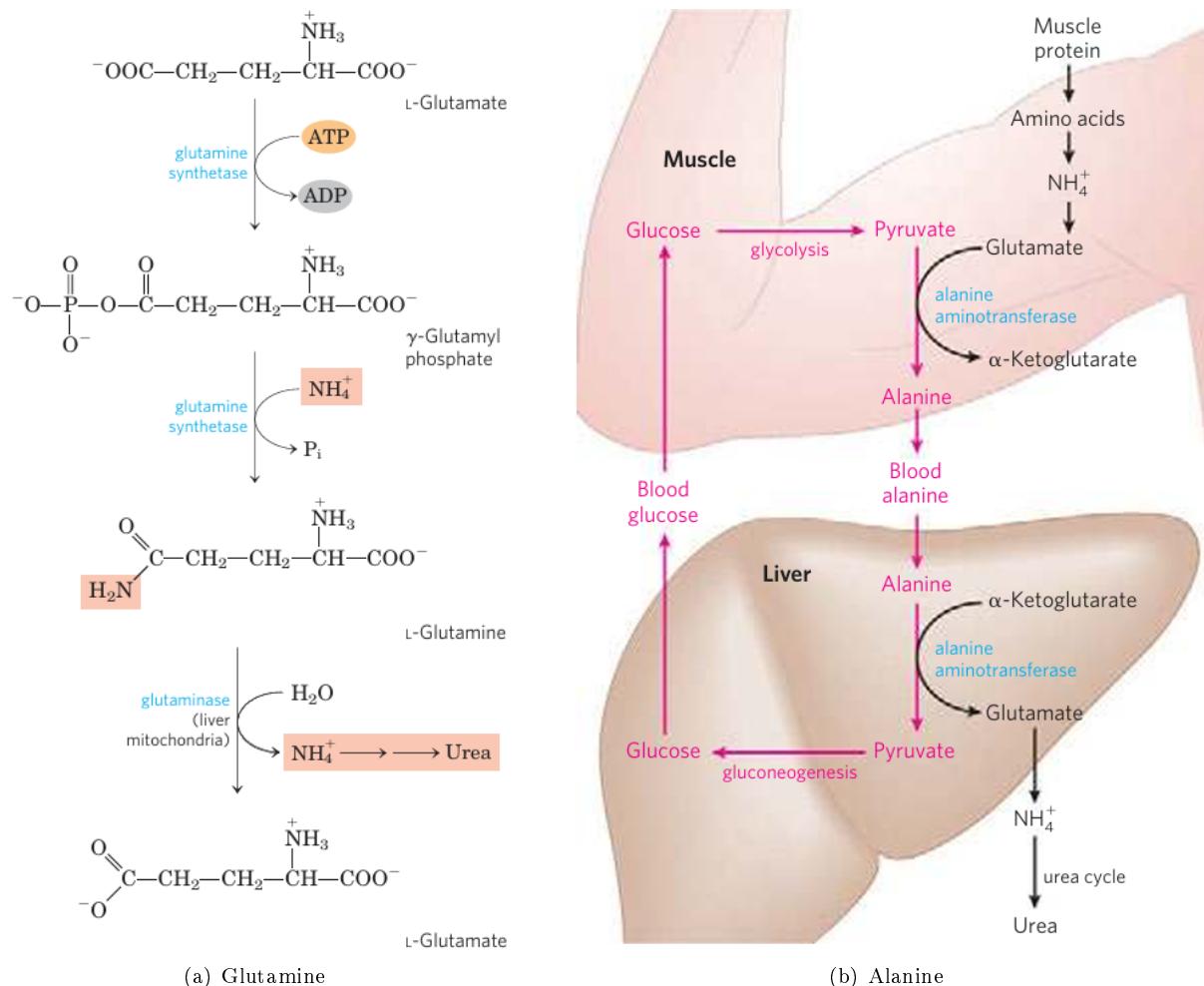


Figure 45: Transport of Ammonia

3.4.1.2 Urea production

Once transported to liver mitochondria converted to urea in a serie of 4 reactions (**the Urea cycle**). The first happens in the mitochondrial matrix while the remaining three happen in the cytosol.

- i) Citrulline is formed from Ornithine by the addition of a carbamoyl group. **Carbamoyl** carries the ammonia from glutamine. The construction of Carbomyl used 2 ATP.
- ii) Argininosuccinate is formed by condensation of citrulline and asparate. This uses ATP.
- iii) Argininosuccinate is decomposed in **fumarate** (that feeds in the TCA cylce) and arginine.
- iv) Arginine is decomposed into urea and ornithine by **arginase**

3.4.1.3 Entry in TCA

As there are 20 amino acids there are 20 catabolic ways do those amino acids.

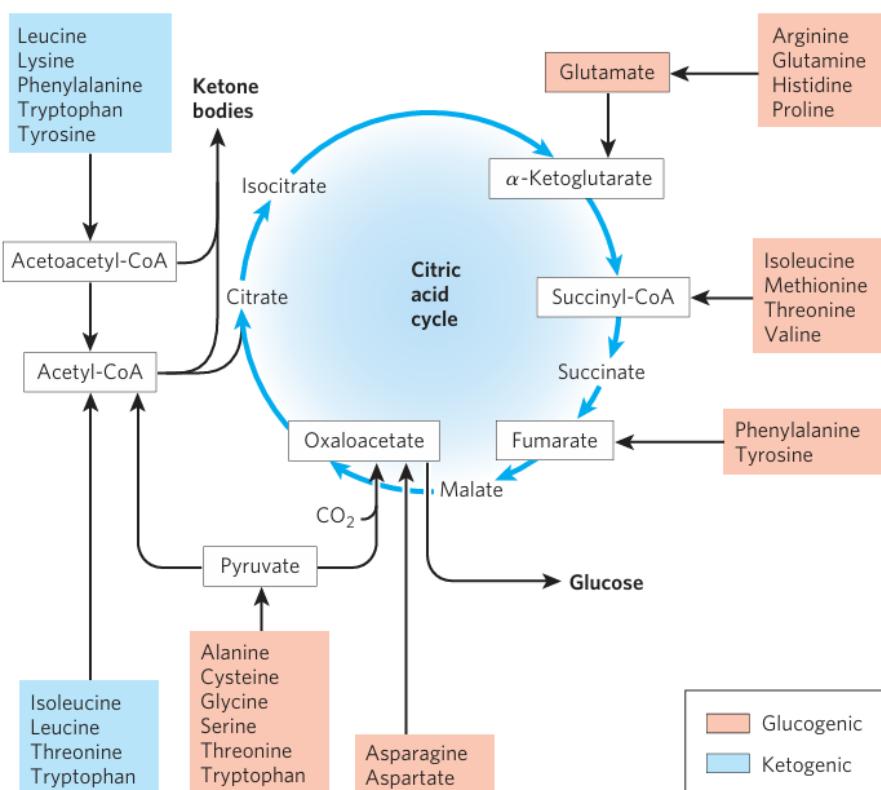


Figure 46: Glucose-alanine cylce

Remark 3.19 (Defects in amino acid metabolism). Several genetic defects have been identified in humans that impact the amino acid metabolism. These defects lead to the accumulation of neurotoxic intermeadiates resulting in intellectual disabilities.

3.5 ECT

Glossary

Anabolism Metabolic pathways that build complex molecules from simpler ones, requiring an input of energy.. 11

Arsenate Poisoning A toxic condition caused by exposure to arsenate (AsO_4^{3-}), which disrupts cellular metabolism by mimicking phosphate. Arsenate can uncouple oxidative phosphorylation by substituting for inorganic phosphate glycolysis or ATP synthesis, leading to decreased ATP production and cellular toxicity. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, neurological disturbances, and multi-organ failure in severe cases.. 8

ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate) The primary energy currency of the cell, used to power many cellular processes. Its hydrolysis releases heat but not energy, while the transfer of phosphate leads to a higher state in free energy of the substrate.. 6

bile acids amphipathic molecules derived from cholesterol that aid in the digestion and absorption of dietary fats by emulsifying lipids and facilitating micelle formation. They are synthesized in the liver, stored in the gallbladder, and released into the small intestine. Bile acids are also involved in cholesterol excretion and undergo enterohepatic circulation. 27

Carnitine ammonium compound that plays a crucial role in the transport of long-chain fatty acids into the mitochondrial matrix for β -oxidation. Carnitine enabling them to cross the inner mitochondrial membrane via the carnitine shuttle system. 30

Catabolism Metabolic pathways that break down complex molecules into simpler ones, releasing energy.. 11

Coupled Reactions Two chemical reactions linked together, where an energetically favourable reaction (e.g., ATP hydrolysis) provides the energy to drive an energetically unfavourable reaction.. 12

Dehydrogenase An enzyme that catalyzes the removal of two hydrogen atoms from a substrate, typically transferring them to an electron acceptor such as NAD^+ or FAD. Dehydrogenases play a crucial role in metabolic pathways like glycolysis and the citric acid cycle.. 5

Electron Carrier Molecules that can accept and donate electrons, facilitating the transfer of energy in redox reactions (e.g., NAD^+ , FAD).. 9

Enthalpy (H) A thermodynamic quantity representing the total heat content of a system. In biochemistry, enthalpy changes (ΔH) are associated with bond formation and breaking, influencing biochemical reactions and energy transfer.. 1

Entropy A measure of the disorder or randomness of a system. The second law of thermodynamics states that the total entropy of an isolated system tends to increase over time.. 1, 12

Exergonic Reaction A chemical reaction that releases energy (has a negative ΔG) and is therefore favorable.. 1, 12

Facultative Anaerobic Organism A organism that is able to produce ATP by anaerobic respiration if oxygen is present, but is also capable of switching to fermentation if oxygen is absent. 19

FAD (Flavin Adenine Dinucleotide) A redox-active coenzyme associated with various enzymes, particularly in the electron transport chain and fatty acid oxidation. FAD is reduced to FADH_2 , which donates electrons to the respiratory chain.. 10

Flavoprotein A protein that contains a flavin coenzyme, such as FAD or FMN, as a prosthetic group. 10

FMN (Flavin Mononucleotide) A coenzyme derived from riboflavin (vitamin B2) that acts as a prosthetic group in various oxidoreductases, including NADH dehydrogenase in the electron transport chain. FMN is involved in redox reactions, cycling between oxidized and reduced states.. 10

Hexokinase An enzyme that catalyzes the phosphorylation of glucose to glucose-6-phosphate, the first step in glycolysis.. 15

Kinase An enzyme that catalyzes the transfer of phosphate groups from high-energy donor molecules, such as ATP, to specific substrates, a process known as phosphorylation.. 6

lipoylelysine a covalent complex of lipoic acid attached via an amide bond to the ϵ -amino group of a lysine residue. It serves as a swinging arm in multi-enzyme complexes like the pyruvate dehydrogenase complex, transferring reaction intermediates between active sites. It has two thiol groups that can undergo reversible oxidation to a disulfid bond.. 21

NAD⁺ (Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide) A coenzyme involved in redox reactions, serving as an electron carrier in cellular respiration. NAD⁺ is reduced to NADH, which donates electrons to the electron transport chain for ATP production.. 9

NADP⁺ (Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide Phosphate) A phosphorylated form of NAD⁺ that functions as an electron carrier, primarily in anabolic pathways such as fatty acid and nucleotide biosynthesis. NADP⁺ is reduced to NADPH, which provides reducing power for biosynthetic reactions.. 9

Niacin (Vitamin B3) A water-soluble B vitamin essential for energy metabolism, DNA repair, and cell signaling. Niacin is a precursor to the coenzymes NAD⁺ and NADP⁺, which are crucial for redox reactions in cellular respiration and biosynthetic pathways. 10

Oxidase An enzyme that catalyzes oxidation reactions, using molecular oxygen (O₂) as the electron acceptor without incorporating it into the substrate. Oxidases are involved in various biological oxidation processes, including those in the electron transport chain.. 5

Oxygenase An enzyme that catalyzes the incorporation of oxygen atoms from molecular oxygen (O₂) into a substrate. Oxygenases are classified into monooxygenases and dioxygenases, which incorporate one or two oxygen atoms, respectively, and are essential in metabolic pathways like drug metabolism and biosynthesis.. 5

Phosphatase An enzyme that removes phosphate groups from proteins or other molecules, a process known as dephosphorylation, which often regulates cellular activity.. 6

pyridoxal phosphate (PLP) A cofactor derived from vitamin B₆, essential for amino acid metabolism. PLP is involved in transamination, decarboxylation, and deamination reactions. 35

Pyruvate A three-carbon molecule that is the end product of glycolysis.. 19

pyruvate dehydrogenase complex (PDH complex or PDC) a multi-enzyme complex that catalyzes the conversion of pyruvate into acetyl-CoA, linking glycolysis to the citric acid cycle. 22

pyruvate translocase a transport protein located in the inner mitochondrial membrane that facilitates the import of pyruvate from the cytosol into the mitochondrial matrix for further metabolic processing. 21

Reducing Equivalent A unit of reducing power in biochemical redox reactions, referring to the transfer of one electron (or its equivalent as a hydrogen atom or hydride ion). Reducing equivalents are carried by molecules such as NADH, NADPH, and FADH₂, playing a crucial role in cellular respiration and biosynthetic pathways.. 9

Second Law of Thermodynamics States that the total entropy of an isolated system can never decrease over time.. 1, 12

succinate dehydrogenase an enzyme that catalyzes the oxidation of succinate to fumarate in the citric acid cycle (step 6). It is also part of Complex II in the electron transport chain, linking the TCA cycle with oxidative phosphorylation by transferring electrons from FADH₂ to ubiquinone (coenzyme Q). 26

Ubiquinone (Coenzyme Q) A lipid-soluble electron carrier in the electron transport chain, transferring electrons between complex I/II and complex III. Ubiquinone exists in oxidized (Q), semiquinone (Q⁻), and reduced (QH₂) forms.. 11