

**Rat Progesterone Receptor
(nr3c3, rPGR, rPR)
Reporter Assay System**

96-well Format Assays
Product # R05001

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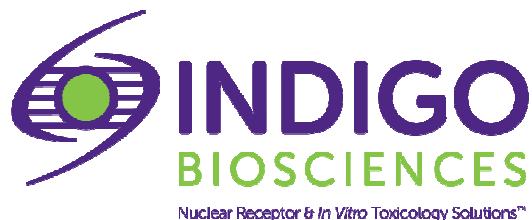
Technical Manual
(*version 7.2*)

www.indigobiosciences.com

3006 Research Drive, Suite A1, State College, PA 16801, USA

Customer Service:
814-234-1919; FAX 814-272-0152
customerserv@indigobiosciences.com

Technical Service:
814-234-1919
techserv@indigobiosciences.com



Rat PGR Reporter Assay System 96-well Format Assays

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I. Description

▪ The Assay System ▪

This nuclear receptor assay utilizes proprietary human cells engineered to provide constitutive, high-level expression of the full-length **Rat Progesterone Receptor** (nr3c3), a ligand-dependent transcription factor referred to herein as **rPGR**.

INDIGO's Reporter Cells include the luciferase reporter gene functionally linked to a PGR-responsive promoter. Thus, quantifying changes in luciferase expression in the treated reporter cells provides a sensitive surrogate measure of the changes in rPGR activity. Luciferase gene expression occurs after ligand-bound PGR undergoes nuclear translocation, DNA binding, recruitment and assembly of the co-activators and accessory factors required to form a functional transcription complex, culminating in expression of the target gene. Unlike *in vitro* binding assays, and some other cell-based assay strategies, the readout from INDIGO's reporter cells demands the same orchestration of all intracellular molecular interactions and events that can be expected to occur *in vivo*.

Rat PGR Reporter Cells are prepared using INDIGO's proprietary **CryoMite™** process. This cryo-preservation method yields exceptional cell viability post-thaw, and provides the convenience of immediately dispensing healthy, division-competent reporter cells into assay plates. There is no need for cumbersome intermediate treatment steps such as spin-and-rinse of cells, viability determinations, or cell titer adjustments prior to assay setup.

INDIGO Bioscience's Nuclear Receptor Assays are all-inclusive cell-based assay systems. In addition to rPGR Reporter Cells, this kit provides two optimized media for use during cell culture and in diluting the user's test samples, the reference agonist progesterone, Luciferase Detection Reagent, and a cell culture-ready assay plate.

▪ The Assay Chemistry ▪

INDIGO's nuclear receptor assay kits capitalize on the extremely low background, high-sensitivity, and broad linear dynamic range of bio-luminescence reporter gene technology.

Reporter Cells incorporate the cDNA encoding beetle luciferase, a 62 kD protein originating from the North American firefly (*Photinus pyralis*). Luciferase catalyzes the mono-oxidation of D-luciferin in a Mg^{+2} -dependent reaction that consumes O_2 and ATP as co-substrates, and yields as products oxyluciferin, AMP, PP_i , CO_2 , and photon emission. Luminescence intensity of the reaction is quantified using a luminometer and is reported in terms of Relative Light Units (RLU's).

INDIGO's Nuclear Receptor Assay kits feature a luciferase detection reagent specially formulated to provide stable light emission between 5 and 90+ minutes after initiating the luciferase reaction. Incorporating a 5-minute reaction-rest period ensures that light emission profiles attain maximal stability, thereby allowing assay plates to be processed in batch. By doing so, the signal output from all sample wells, from one plate to the next, may be directly compared within an experimental set.

▪ Preparation of Test Compounds ▪

Small molecule compounds are typically solvated in DMSO at high concentrations; ideally 1,000x-concentrated stocks relative to the highest desired treatment concentration in the assay. Using high-concentration stocks minimizes DMSO carry-over into the assay plates. Note that the final concentration of DMSO carried over into assay wells should *never* exceed 0.4%.

Immediately prior to setting up an assay the prepared stocks are serially diluted using **Compound Screening Medium (CSM)** to achieve the desired assay concentrations, as described in *Step 7*.

NOTE: CSM is formulated to help stabilize hydrophobic small molecule test compounds in the aqueous environment of the treatment media. Nonetheless, high concentrations of test chemicals diluted in CSM may lack long-term stability and/or solubility, especially if further stored at low temperatures. Hence, it is recommended that compound dilutions are prepared in CSM immediately prior to assay setup and are then treated as 'single-use' reagents.

▪ Considerations for Automated Dispensing ▪

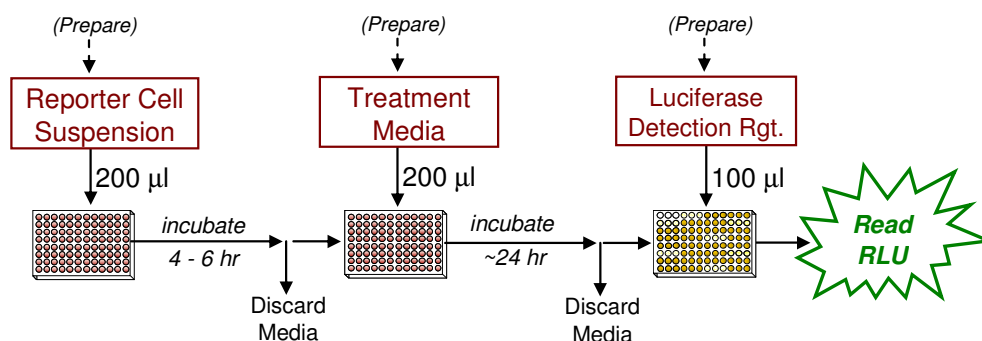
When processing a small number of assay plates, first carefully consider the dead volume requirement of your dispensing instrument before committing assay reagents to its setup. In essence, "dead volume" is the volume of reagent that is dedicated to the instrument; it will *not* be available for final dispensing into assay wells. The following Table provides information on reagent volume requirements, and available excesses.

| Stock Reagent & Volume provided | Volume to be Dispensed (96-well plate) | Excess rgt. volume available for instrument dead volume |
|--|--|---|
| Reporter Cell Suspension 21 ml (prepared from kit components) | 200 µl / well 19.2 ml / plate | ~ 1.8 ml |
| LDR 12 ml (prepared from kit components) | 100 µl / well 9.6 ml / plate | ~ 2.4 ml |

▪ Assay Scheme ▪

Figure 1. Assay workflow.

In brief, 200 µl of Reporter Cells is dispensed into wells of the assay plate and pre-incubated for 4-6 hours. Following the pre-incubation period, culture media are discarded and 200 µl/well of the prepared treatment media are added. Following 22-24 hr incubation, treatment media are discarded and Luciferase Detection Reagent is added. The intensity of light emission (in terms of 'Relative Light Units'; RLU) from each assay well is quantified using a plate-reading luminometer.



▪ Assay Performance ▪

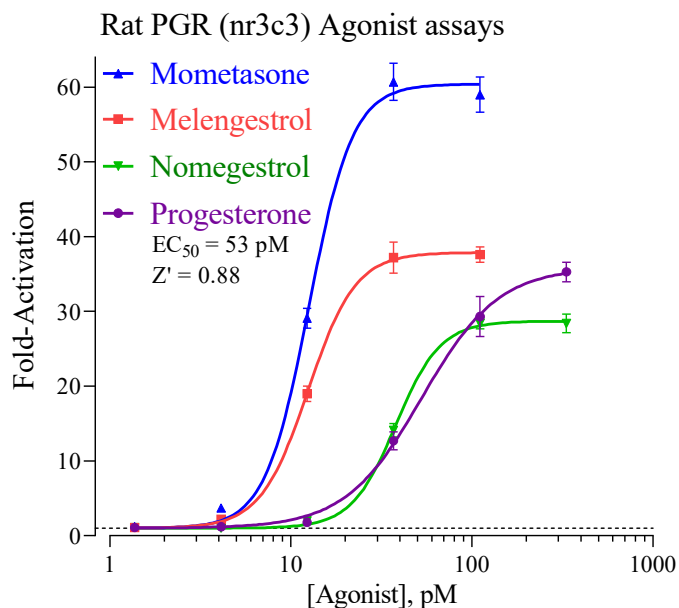


Figure 2. Agonist dose-response analyses of Rat PGR. Agonist analyses of rPGR Reporter Cells using progesterone (provided), nomegestrol acetate and mometasone furoate (Tocris), and melengestrol acetate (Enzo). 1,000x-concentrated stocks were prepared in DMSO, then serially diluted in CSM using 3-fold decrements. Average relative light units (RLU) and corresponding standard deviation (SD) values were determined for each treatment concentration (n=3). Fold-activation (*i.e.*, signal-to-background) and Z' values were calculated as described by Zhang, *et al.* (1999)¹. Non-linear regression and EC₅₀ analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism software. The high Z' score confirms the robust performance of this PGR Assay.

¹ Zhang JH, Chung TD, Oldenburg KR. (1999) A Simple Statistical Parameter for Use in Evaluation and Validation of High Throughput Screening Assays. *J Biomol Screen.*:4(2), 67-73.

$$Z' = 1 - [3 * (SD^{Control} + SD^{Bkg}) / (RLU^{Control} - RLU^{Bkg})]$$

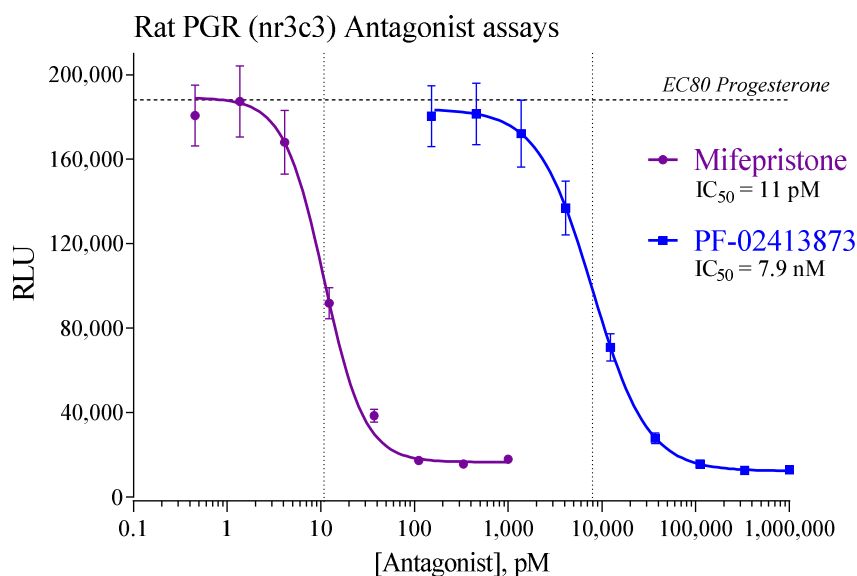


Figure 3. Validation of PGR Assay antagonist dose-response. PGR reference antagonists Mifepristone (Tocris) and PF-02413873 were assessed. Antagonist mode assays were setup as described in this Technical Manual. CSM was first supplemented with an EC₈₀ concentration of the challenge agonist progesterone, and this medium was then used to prepare series of 3-fold serial dilutions of each antagonist.

II. Product Components & Storage Conditions

This rat PGR Assay kit contains materials to perform assays in a single collagen-coated 96-well assay plate.

Reporter cells are temperature sensitive! To ensure maximal viability the tube of Reporter Cells must be maintained at -80°C until immediately prior to the rapid-thaw procedure described in Step 2 of this protocol.

Assay kits are shipped on dry ice. Upon receipt of the kit transfer it to -80°C storage. If you wish to first inspect and inventory the individual kit components be sure to first transfer and submerge the tube of reporter cells in dry ice.

The aliquot of Reporter Cells is provided as a single-use reagent. Once thawed, reporter cells can NOT be refrozen, nor can they be maintained in extended culture with any hope of retaining downstream assay performance. Therefore, extra volumes of these reagents should be discarded after assay setup.

The date of product expiration is printed on the Product Qualification Insert (PQI) enclosed with each kit.

| <u>Kit Components</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Storage Temp.</u> |
|---|---------------|----------------------|
| ▪ rPGR Reporter Cells | 1 x 2.0 mL | -80°C |
| ▪ Cell Recovery Medium (CRM) | 2 x 10.5 mL | -20°C |
| ▪ Compound Screening Medium (CSM) | 1 x 45 mL | -20°C |
| ▪ Progesterone, 600 nM (in DMSO) (reference agonist for rPGR) | 1 x 30 µL | -20°C |
| ▪ Detection Substrate | 1 x 6.0 mL | -80°C |
| ▪ Detection Buffer | 1 x 6.0 mL | -20°C |
| ▪ 96-well, <i>collagen-coated</i> assay plate (white, sterile, cell-culture ready) | 1 | -20°C |

NOTE: This Assay kit contains one 96-well assay plate in which the assay wells have been collagen-coated and dried; the assay plate should be stored frozen (-20°C or colder) until use.

III. Materials to be Supplied by the User

The following materials must be provided by the user, and should be made ready prior to initiating the assay procedure:

DAY 1

- container of dry ice (see Step 2)
- cell culture-rated laminar flow hood.
- 37°C, humidified 5% CO₂ incubator for mammalian cell culture.
- 37°C water bath.
- 70% alcohol wipes
- 8-channel electronic, repeat-dispensing pipettes & sterile tips
- disposable media basins, sterile.
- sterile multi-channel media basins (such as the Heathrow Scientific "Dual-Function Solution Basin"), or deep-well plates, or appropriate similar vessel for generating dilution series of reference compound(s) and test compound(s).
- *Optional:* antagonist reference compound (*e.g.*, Fig. 3)
- *Optional:* clear 96-well assay plate, cell culture treated, for viewing cells on Day 2.

DAY 2 plate-reading luminometer.

IV. Assay Protocol

Review the entire Assay Protocol before starting. Completing the assay requires an overnight incubation. *Steps 1-11* are performed on **Day 1**, requiring less than 2 hours of bench work to complete, but including a 4 hr incubation step. *Steps 12-17* are performed on **Day 2** and require less than 1 hour to complete.

▪ A word about Antagonist-mode assay setup ▪

Receptor inhibition assays expose the Reporter Cells to a constant, sub-maximal concentration (typically between EC₅₀ – EC₈₅) of a known agonist AND the test compound(s) to be evaluated for antagonist activity. This rPGR assay kit includes a 600 nM stock solution of **Progesterone**, a potent physiological agonist of PGR that may be used to setup antagonist-mode assays. 100 pM progesterone typically approximates EC₈₀ in this cell-based assay. Hence, it presents a suitable assay concentration of agonist to be used when screening test compounds for inhibitory activity.

Add the challenge agonist to a bulk volume of **CSM** at an EC₅₀ – EC₈₅ concentration. This medium is then used to prepare serial dilutions of test compounds to achieve the desired respective final assay concentrations. This is an efficient and precise method of setting up PGR antagonist assays, and it is the method presented in *Step 7b* of this protocol.

DAY 1 Assay Protocol: All steps should be performed using aseptic technique.

1.) Remove the **2 tubes** of **Cell Recovery Medium (CRM)** from freezer storage, thaw and equilibrate to 37°C using a water bath.

2.) Rapid Thaw of the Reporter Cells: *First*, retrieve the two tubes of **CRM** from the 37°C water bath and sanitize their outside surfaces with a 70% ethanol swab.

Second, retrieve the tube of **Reporter Cells** from -80°C storage, place it directly into dry ice for transport to the laminar flow hood. When ready to begin, transfer the tube of reporter cells into a rack and, *without delay*, perform a rapid thaw of the cells by transferring 9.5 ml from *each of the 2 tubes* of 37°C CRM into the tube of frozen cells. Place the tube of Reporter Cells in a 37°C water bath for 5 minutes. The resulting volume of cell suspension will be **21 ml**.

3.) Retrieve the tube of Reporter Cell Suspension from the water bath and sanitize the outside surface with a 70% alcohol swab.

4.) *Gently* invert the tube of Reporter Cells several times to disperse cell aggregates and gain a homogenous cell suspension. Transfer the cell suspension into a reservoir. Using an 8-channel pipette, dispense **200 µl / well** of cell suspension into the assay plate.

NOTE 4.1: If INDIGO's Live Cell Multiplex Assay is to be incorporated, a minimum of 3 'cell blank' wells (meaning cell-free, but containing 'Compound Screening Media') must be included in the assay plate to allow quantification of plate-specific fluorescence background (refer to the LCMA Technical Manual).

NOTE 4.2: Increased well-to-well variation (= increased standard deviation!) will occur if care is not taken to prevent cells from settling in the reservoir during the dispensing period. Likewise, take care to ensure precision in dispensing exact volumes across the assay plate.

NOTE 4.3: Users sometimes wish to examine the reporter cells using a microscope. If so, the extra volume of cell suspension provided with each kit may be dispensed into a clear, preferably collagen-coated, 96-well assay plate. Continue to process this plate in identical manner to the white assay plate.

5.) Pre-culture reporter cells: Place the assay plate into a 37°C, ≥ 85% humidity, 5% CO₂ incubator for 4 -6 hours.

NOTE: Ensure a high-humidity environment within the cell culture incubator. This is critical to prevent the onset of deleterious edge-effects in the assay plate.

6.) Near the end of the pre-culture period: Remove Compound Screening Medium (CSM) from freezer storage and thaw in a 37°C water bath.

7.) Prepare the Test Compound and Reference Compound treatment media at the desired final assay concentrations: Use CSM to prepare an appropriate dilution series of the reference and test compound stocks. Prepare all treatment media at the desired final assay concentrations. In *Step 9*, the prepared treatment media will be dispensed at 200 µl / well into the assay plate. Manage dilution volumes carefully; this assay kit provides **45 ml** of CSM.

NOTE: Total DMSO carried over into assay reactions should never exceed 0.4%.

a. Agonist-mode assays. This PGR Assay kit includes a 600 nM stock solution of Progesterone, a potent reference agonist of PGR. The following 7-point treatment series, with concentrations presented in 3-fold decrements, provides a suitable dose-response: 600, 200, 66.7, 22.2, 7.41, 2.49, and 0.823 pM. **APPENDIX 1** provides guidance for generating such a dilution series. Always include 'no treatment' (or 'vehicle') controls.

~ or ~

b. Antagonist-mode assays. When setting antagonist assays, first supplement a bulk volume of CSM with the challenge agonist Progesterone to achieve the desired final assay-concentration (refer to "*A word about antagonist-mode assay setup*", pg. 7). The agonist-supplemented CSM is then used to generate dilutions of test compound stocks to achieve their final assay concentrations.

8.) At the end of the cell pre-incubation period, discard the culture media by ejecting it into an appropriate waste container. *Gently* tap the inverted plate onto a clean absorbent paper towel to remove residual droplets. Cells will remain tightly adhered to well bottoms.

9.) Dispense **200 µl / well** of each prepared treatment media into the assay plate.

NOTE: If well-to-well variation due to 'edge-effects' is a concern this problem *may* be mitigated by dispensing sterile liquid into the *inter-well* spaces of the assay plate. Simply remove 1 tip from the 8-channel dispenser and dispense 100 µl of sterile water into each of the seven inter-well spaces per column of wells.

10.) Transfer the assay plate into a 37°C, humidified 5% CO₂ incubator for 22 - 24 hours.

NOTE: Ensure a high-humidity (≥ 85%) environment within the cell culture incubator. This is critical to prevent the onset of deleterious "edge-effects" in the assay plate.

11.) For greater convenience on Day 2, retrieve **Detection Substrate and Detection Buffer** from freezer storage and place them in a dark refrigerator (4°C) to thaw overnight.

DAY 2 Assay Protocol: Subsequent manipulations do *not* require special regard for aseptic technique and may be performed on a bench top.

12.) 30 minutes before intending to quantify receptor activity, remove **Detection Substrate** and **Detection Buffer** from the refrigerator and place them in a low-light area so that they may equilibrate to room temperature. Once at room temperature, gently invert each tube several times to ensure homogenous solutions.

NOTE: Do NOT actively warm Detection Substrate above room temperature. If these solutions were not allowed to thaw overnight at 4°C, a room temperature water bath may be used to expedite thawing.

13.) Set the plate-reader to "luminescence" mode. Set the instrument to perform a single 5 second "plate shake" prior to reading the first assay well. Read time may be set to 0.5 second (500 mSec) per well, *or less*.

14.) *Immediately before proceeding to Step 15*, transfer the entire volume of Detection Buffer into the vial of Detection Substrate, thereby generating a 12 ml volume of **Luciferase Detection Reagent (LDR)**. Mix gently to avoid foaming.

15.) Following 22 - 24 hours incubation in treatment media, discard the media contents by ejecting it into an appropriate waste container. *Gently* tap the inverted plate onto a clean absorbent paper towel to remove residual droplets. Cells will remain tightly adhered to well bottoms.

16.) Add 100 µl of **LDR** to each well of the assay plate. Allow the assay plate to rest at room temperature for at least 5 minutes following the addition of LDR. Do not shake the assay plate during this period.

17.) Quantify luminescence.

V. Related Products

| Rat PGR Assay Products | |
|--|---|
| Product No. | Product Descriptions |
| R05001-32 | Rat PGR Reporter Assay System 3x 32 assays in 8-well strips (96-well plate format) |
| R05001 | Rat PGR Reporter Assay System 1x 96-well format assay |
| Human PGR Assay Products | |
| IB05001-32 | Human PGR Reporter Assay System 3x 32 assays in 8-well strips (96-well plate format) |
| IB05001 | Human PGR Reporter Assay System 1x 96-well format assay |
| IB05002 | Human PGR Reporter Assay System 1x 384-well format assays |
| Bulk volumes of assay reagents may be custom manufactured to accommodate any scale of HTS. Please Inquire. | |
| LIVE Cell Multiplex (LCM) Assay Products | |
| LCM-01 | Reagent volumes sufficient to perform 96 Live Cell Assays in 1x96-well, or 2x48-well, or 3x32-well assay plate formats |
| LCM-05 | Reagent in 5x bulk volume to perform 480 Live Cell Assays contained in 5 x 96-well assay plates |
| LCM-10 | Reagent in 10x bulk volume to perform 960 Live Cell Assays contained in 10 x 96-well assay plates |

Please refer to INDIGO Biosciences website for updated product offerings.

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VI. Limited Use Disclosures

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Product prices, availability, specifications, claims and technical protocols are subject to change without prior notice. The printed Technical Manual provided in the kit box will always be the most current version available.

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APPENDIX 1

Example scheme for the serial dilution of Progesterone reference agonist, and the setup of a rat PGR dose-response assay.

