

N-Glycan Analysis of Biotherapeutic Glycoproteins using AdvanceBio Gly-X InstantPC Sample Preparation and LC/FLD/MS

N-glycan analysis productivity simplified and standardized

The location and structure of N-linked glycans can play a critical role in the pharmacology of therapeutic proteins, potentially affecting immunogenicity, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. Agilent AdvanceBio Gly-X is a next generation N-glycan sample preparation platform¹ that provides a simplified in-solution workflow using InstantPC dye for rapid glycan labeling and high signal for fluorescence detection (FLD) and mass spectrometry (MS) along with an efficient vacuum plate cleanup step to remove excess label and denaturant. Labeled N-glycan samples are ready for UHPLC/FLD/MS in 60 minutes or less using the AdvanceBio Amide HILIC column for hydrophilic interaction liquid chromatography, followed by relative quantitation. In addition, a wide range of InstantPC-labeled N-glycan standards are available to calibrate N-glycan separations and identify N-glycan species.



Figure 1. Released N-glycan analysis workflow using Gly-X InstantPC sample preparation with LC/FLD/MS.

End-to-end N-glycan analysis workflow solution designed and manufactured by Agilent

In this guide, you'll find the consumables you need to get started with InstantPC N-glycan analysis. Many of the consumables were tested and their results reported in the application note [5994-1348EN](#).² This study assessed the N-glycans of rituximab (Rituxan, a monoclonal antibody or mAb) and etanercept (Enbrel, an Fc fusion protein) and demonstrated that InstantPC labeled N-glycan analysis shows significantly higher fluorescence signal and greater MS ionization efficiency compared with 2-AB glycans, allowing detection of low abundance glycan species.

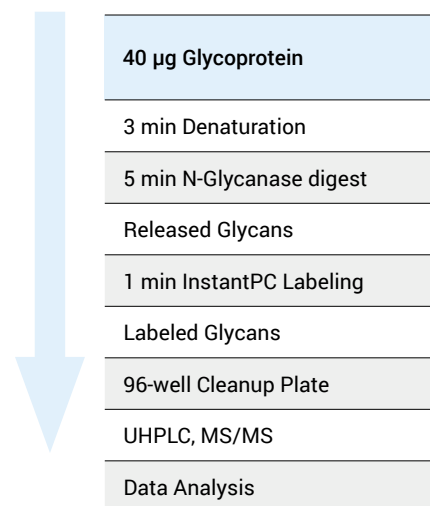
This Gly-X InstantPC N-Glycan analysis workflow guide includes ordering information for:

- Sample preparation kit – Gly-X InstantPC technology, specifically developed and optimized for strong fluorescence signal in LC/FLD and enhanced ionization for MS analysis.
- InstantPC-labeled N-glycan standards – these well-characterized individual standards and libraries play an essential role in profiling N-glycan species which can impact the safety and efficacy of biotherapeutic drug products.
- Liquid chromatography columns for separation of glycans by HILIC.
- Solvents and reagents.
- Concentrated mobile phase ready for dilution.
- Vials and caps.
- Data analysis and reporting.

Here's how you boost N-glycan analysis productivity

- Samples ready for UHPLC/FLD or LC/MS in less than 1 hour.
- 5-min PNGase F digestion provides unbiased N-glycan release.
- InstantPC dye for high UHPLC/FLD and MS signal.
- Simple, ambient stable 96-well cleanup plate.
- Supports rapid and high resolution analysis.
- Modular format supports flexible sample throughput and eliminates waste.

Figure 2 shows examples of HILIC/FLD data for released N-glycans from rituximab and etanercept prepared with Gly-X InstantPC. Further information including MS data for N-glycan structure assignment is included in application note [5994-1348EN](#).



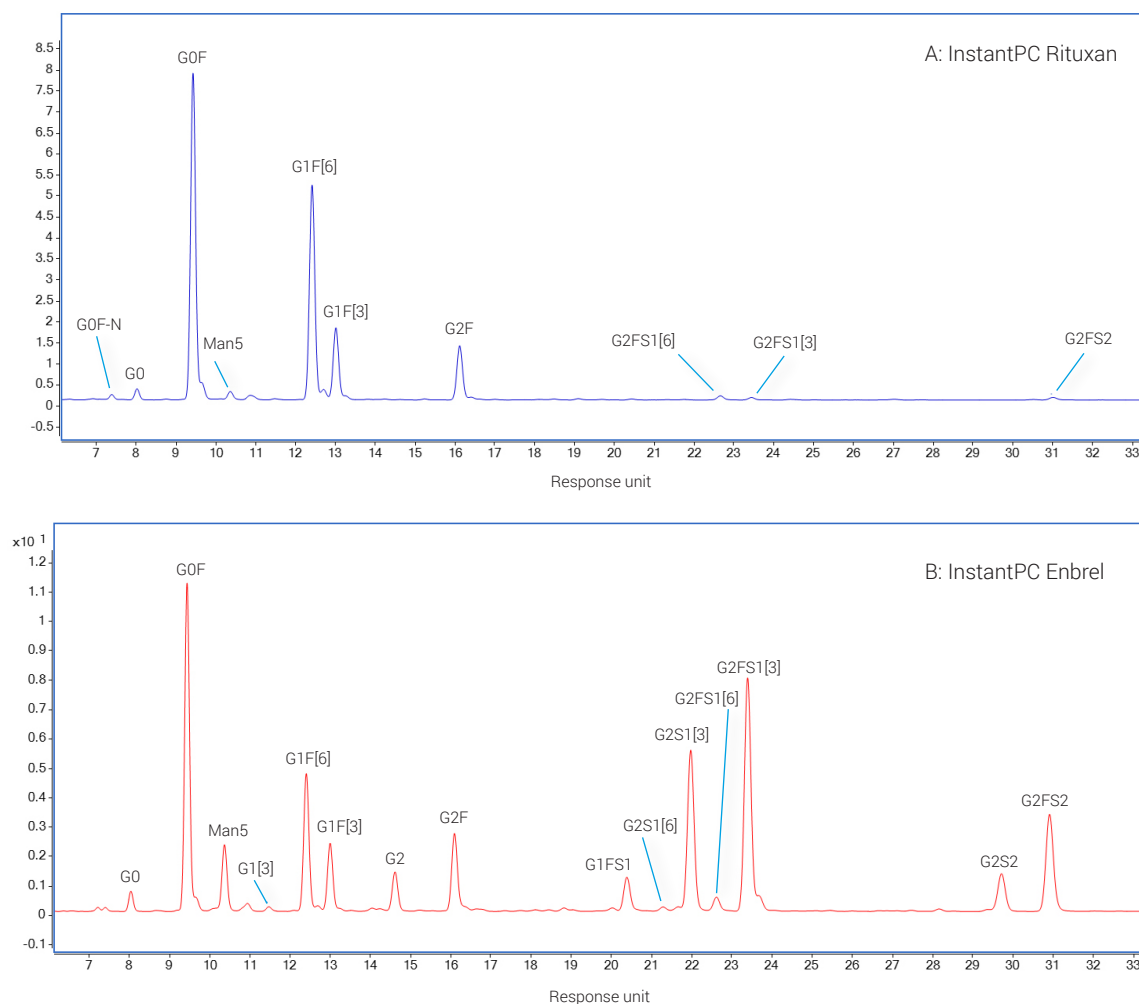


Figure 2. HILIC-UHPLC fluorescence profile of A) Rituxan and B) Enbrel N-glycans labeled with InstantPC. N-Glycan relative percent areas are shown in Tables 1 and 2, n = 4. UHPLC conditions and Q-TOF parameters are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 1. Relative % area, SD, and %CV values for Rituxan N-glycans labeled with InstantPC, n = 4.

	Average Rel % Area	Standard Deviation	%CV
G0F-N	0.520	0.000	0.000
G0	1.288	0.005	0.388
G0F	42.965	0.031	0.072
Man5	1.003	0.010	0.955
G1F[6]	29.453	0.031	0.105
G1F[3]	10.203	0.030	0.293
G2F	7.858	0.013	0.160
G2FS1[6]	0.675	0.010	1.481
G2FS1[3]	0.378	0.015	3.974
G2FS2	0.455	0.010	2.198

Table 2. Relative % area, SD, and %CV values for Enbrel N-glycans labeled with InstantPC, n = 4.

	Average Rel % Area	Standard Deviation	%CV
G0	1.138	0.005	0.440
G0F	20.340	0.055	0.269
Man5	4.073	0.015	0.368
G1[3]	0.320	0.008	2.552
G1F[6]	9.130	0.037	0.410
G1F[3]	4.523	0.013	0.278
G2	2.628	0.010	0.364
G2F	5.573	0.015	0.269
G1FS1	2.628	0.015	0.564
G2S1[6]	0.268	0.005	1.869
G2S1[3]	13.235	0.033	0.251
G2FS1[6]	1.148	0.005	0.436
G2FS1[3]	20.185	0.057	0.285
G2S2	3.478	0.005	0.144
G2FS2	9.143	0.030	0.327

Table 3. Agilent 1290 Infinity II UHPLC HILIC/FLD conditions for InstantPC labeled N-glycans.

Parameter	Value		
Column	Agilent AdvanceBio Amide HILIC, 2.1 × 150 mm, 1.8 μm (p/n 859750-913)		
Column Temp	60 °C		
Mobile Phase	A) 50 mM ammonium formate, pH 4.4 B) Acetonitrile		
Gradient Program	Time (minutes)	%B	Flow rate (mL/min)
	0	77	0.6
	45	59	0.6
	46	40	0.6
	47	40	0.6
	49	77	0.6
	60	77	0.6
Injection Volume	1 μL		
Fluorescence Detection	Agilent 1260 Infinity II FLD InstantPC: λEx 285 nm, λEm 345 nm		

Table 4. Agilent 6545XT Q-TOF parameters for InstantPC labeled N-glycans.

Agilent 6545XT Q-TOF	
Source	Dual AJS ESI
Gas Temperature	150 °C
Drying Gas Flow	9 L/min
Nebulizer	35 psi
Sheath Gas Temperature	300 °C
Sheath Gas Flow	10 L/min
Vcap	2,500 V
Nozzle Voltage	500 V
Fragmentor	120 V
Skimmer	65 V
Mass Range	m/z 600 to 3,000
Scan Rate	1 spectrum/sec
Acquisition Mode	Extended dynamic range (2 GHz)

Getting started with Gly-X InstantPC

Glycoprotein sample prep considerations

Glycoprotein samples should be prepared to a maximum of 2 mg/mL in a low salt neutral buffer free of detergents and nucleophiles such as amines. Higher concentration samples should be diluted in water or 50 mM HEPES, pH 7.9.

- Maximum concentration: 2 mg/mL.
- Maximum amount of protein per reaction: 40 µg (for example, 2 µL of each 2 mg/mL solution). Higher quantity of protein could be used for mAbs, up to 100 µg, but data linearity should be assessed.
- Buffer: Low salt (~150 mM) neutral buffer without detergents and nucleophiles such as amines. Sample can be diluted with water or 50 mM HEPES, pH 7.9.

Other considerations:

- Sample in amine buffers (for example, Tris, arginine, glycine, histidine) components should follow a buffer exchange step before deglycosylation. We recommend using AdvanceBio Spin columns for desalting/buffer exchange, as detailed in the ordering information below. Supporting data is in application note [5994-7239EN](#). Alternatively, a 10 kDa molecular weight cut-off spin centrifugal filter can be used.
- 0.1% formic acid should be used as an eluent when samples are prepared by protein A affinity chromatography.
- PBS is not recommended.
- Please consult the Gly-X InstantPC manual for further details.⁵

Incubation and cleanup hardware

During the Gly-X InstantPC sample prep, the samples are heated to 90 °C during protein denaturation, and to 50 °C for PNGase F digestion and InstantPC labeling. For heating the samples in the 96 well plate provided, we recommend using a thermocycler, or a dry block heater, and suggestions are provided below. The cleanup process is driven by vacuum. If you wish to use a vacuum manifold and pump other than the Millipore model suggested, please contact Agilent.

Heating and Vacuum Hardware (non-Agilent)	Part No.
96-well Thermocycler (Corning)	THERM-1001, 110V THERM-1000, 230V
Compact Digital Dry Bath/Block Heater (Thermo Fisher Scientific)	88871001
Vacuum manifold (Millipore)	MSVMHTS00
Vacuum pump (Millipore)	WP6211560, 110 V WP6122050, 220V

HILIC separation best practices

Small injection volumes of 1 µL labeled glycans are most convenient for HILIC separations. Aqueous injection volumes > 1 µL will compromise peak shape and resolution. For instructions on sample dilution with organic solvents for injection volumes > 1 µL, please consult the Gly-X InstantPC user manual, [5994-1231EN](#), page 14.

Users should optimize their HPLC systems to minimize dead volume. Optimal column life is achieved by operating only up to 80% of the maximum pressure.

Agilent AdvanceBio Ammonium Formate Mobile Phase concentrate (p/n G3912-00000) can be used to prepare 1 L of 50 mM ammonium formate, pH 4.4.

The typical operating temperature is 60 °C. Higher temperatures can be used, but will shorten column lifetime.

Glycan standards

Agilent offers a broad range of released N-glycan standards and libraries labeled with InstantPC which enables calibration of LC/FLD/MS systems used for released glycan analysis. For a complete list of labeled N-glycan standards, please see our Glycan Standards technical flyer, [5994-2202EN](#). Glycan standards are critical to help identify glycan isomers and co-eluting peaks. Potential co-elutions include G0F/Man5, Man5/G1, G1FS1/G2F.

Glycan Peak Assignment Tool

For users of the AdvanceBio Amide HILIC column, a free web-based software tool is available that is designed to predict N-glycan retention times for a wide range of InstantPC- and 2-AB-labeled glycans. For more information please consult application note [5994-7477EN](#). The tool is accessible here: [Glycan Peak Assignment Tool](#)

Easy selection and ordering information

To order items listed in the tables below from the Agilent online store, add items to your *Favorite Products* list by clicking on the MyList # header links. Then, enter the quantities for the products you need, Add to Cart and proceed to checkout. Your list will remain under *Favorite Products* for your use with future orders.

If this is your first time using *Favorite Products*, you will be asked to enter your email address for account verification. If you have an existing Agilent account, you will be able to log in. However, if you don't have a registered Agilent account, you will need to register for one. This feature is valid only in regions that are e-commerce enabled. All items can also be ordered through your regular sales and distributor channels.

MyList 1 Gly-X InstantPC N-glycan sample preparation, AdvanceBio Amide HILIC columns, solvents, sample containment and buffer exchange.

Description	Part No.
Sample Preparation	
AdvanceBio Gly-X N-glycan prep with InstantPC kit, 96-ct	GX96-IPC
AdvanceBio Gly-X N-glycan prep with InstantPC kit, 24-ct*	GX24-IPC*
Gly-X Vacuum Manifold Spacer	GX100
HILIC Column	
AdvanceBio Amide HILIC 300Å, 2.1 x 150 mm, 1.8 µm	859750-913
Reagents	
InfinityLab ultrapure LC/MS acetonitrile (1L)	5191-4496
MS solution, formic acid, 10 mL	US-700002341
AdvanceBio Ammonium Formate Mobile Phase concentrate, 10 mL	G3912-00000
InfinityLab ultrapure LC/MS standard, water	5191-4498
Vials and Caps**	
Screw-top vials, 250 µL, 100/pk	5190-2242
Cap, snap, blue, PTFE/silicone septa, 100/pk. Cap size: 11 mm	5182-0541
Buffer Exchange	
AdvanceBio Spin columns for desalting or buffer exchange	1980-1103
AdvanceBio Spin 96-sample plate for desalting or buffer exchange, 10 to 50 µL samples, 1/pk	1980-1104
96-well plate, polypropylene, 1.2 mL, 27 mm, round wells, U shape, 25/pk Recommended for wash steps with p/n 1980-1104	5043-9308
96-well plate, polypropylene, 0.33 mL, 14 mm, round wells, V shape, 25/pk	5043-9312
Sealing mat, 96 wells, round, preslitted, silicone, 50/pk Recommended for sample storage with p/n 1980-1104	5042-1389

* 24-ct kit (GX24-IPC) contains a 96-well cleanup plate. Store the cleanup plate at room temp, and order 24-ct refills of Gly-X InstantPC Deglycosylation and Labeling Modules (GX24-201PC).

** InstantPC labeled glycans are eluted into a 96 well plate. Users may either inject samples from the plate onto LC directly, or transfer to sample vials.

MyList 2 Additional configurations of Gly-X InstantPC N-glycan sample preparation kits and modules.

Description	Part No.
AdvanceBio Gly-X N-glycan prep with InstantPC kit, 96-ct	GX96-IPC
AdvanceBio Gly-X N-glycan prep with InstantPC Kit, 24-ct	GX24-IPC
AdvanceBio Gly-X deglycosylation module, 24-ct	GX24-100
AdvanceBio Gly-X InstantPC labeling module, 24-ct	GX24-101
AdvanceBio Gly-X deglycosylation module, 96-ct	GX96-100
AdvanceBio Gly-X InstantPC labeling module, 96-ct	GX96-101
AdvanceBio Gly-X InstantPC cleanup module, 96-ct	GX96-102
AdvanceBio Gly-X deglycosylation and InstantPC labeling module set, 24-ct	GX24-201PC
AdvanceBio Gly-X deglycosylation and InstantPC labeling module set, 96-ct	GX96-201PC
Gly-X Vacuum Manifold Spacer	GX100

Glycan standards

For a full list of Agilent labeled N-glycan standards, please see our Glycan Standards Technical Flyer, [5994-2202EN](#).

MyList 3 InstantPC labeled N-glycan standards that appear in rituximab.² These standards can be used as controls in N-glycan separation and to differentiate coeluting peaks.

MyList 3 (N-Glycans detected in Rituxan)

Description	CFG Structure	Part No.
G0F-N / FA1		GKPC-402
G0 / A2		GKPC-301
G0F / FA2		GKPC-302
Man5 / M5		GKPC-103
G1 / A2G1		GKPC-317
G1F / FA2G1		GKPC-316
G2F / FA2G2		GKPC-305
G2FS1 α(2,3) / FA2G2S(3)1		GKPC-325
G2FS2 α(2,3) / FA2G2S(3)2		GKPC-323

MyList 4 InstantPC labeled N-glycan standards that appear in etanercept.² These standards can be used as controls in N-glycan separation and to differentiate coeluting peaks.

MyList 4 (N-Glycans detected in Enbrel)

Description	CFG Structure	Part No.
G0F-N / FA1		GKPC-402
G0 / A2		GKPC-301
G0F / FA2		GKPC-302
Man5 / M5		GKPC-103
G1 / A2G1		GKPC-317
G1F / FA2G1		GKPC-316
G2 / A2G2		GKPC-304
G1FS1 α(2,3) / FA2G1S(3)1		GKPC-330
G2F / FA2G2		GKPC-305
G2S1 α(2,3) / A2G2S(3)1		GKPC-321
G2FS1 α(2,3) / FA2G2S(3)1		GKPC-325
G2S2 α(2,3) / A2G2S(3)2		GKPC-322
G2FS2 α(2,3) / FA2G2S(3)2		GKPC-323

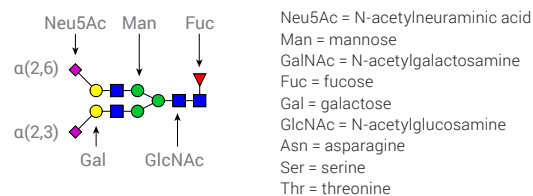


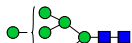




Figure 3. Glycan cartoons follow the recommendations of the Consortium for Functional Glycomics⁷ (CFG) and were drawn using GlycoWorkbench 2.14.10.

MyList 5 AdvanceBio InstantPC labeled high mannose N-glycan standards.

Description	CFG Structure	Part No.
Man5 / M5		GKPC-103
Man6 / M6		GKPC-104
Man7 / M7		GKPC-105
Man8 / M8		GKPC-106
Man9 / M9		GKPC-107

MyList 6 InstantPC labeled tri- and tetraantennary N-glycan libraries for studying sialylated glycoproteins. Glycan structures are shown on Certificates of Analysis.

Description	Part No.
InstantPC α (2,3) Sialylated Triantennary N-Glycan Library	GKPC-233
InstantPC α (2,6) Sialylated Triantennary N-Glycan Library	GKPC-263
InstantPC α (2,3) Sialylated Tetraantennary N-Glycan Library	GKPC-234
InstantPC α (2,6) Sialylated Tetraantennary N-Glycan Library	GKPC-264

MyList 7 N-Glycan libraries and control glycoproteins. Glycan structures are shown on the Certificates of Analysis.

Description	Part No.
Human IgG N-Glycan Library consists of complex biantennary oligosaccharides consistent with N-glycans on normal human IgG, including some bisecting GlcNAc N-glycans, labeled with InstantPC	GKPC-005
CHO mAb N-Glycan Library consists of neutral fucosylated complex biantennary N-glycans and high mannose N-glycan Man5 present in many CHO derived monoclonal antibodies (mAbs), labeled with InstantPC	GKPC-020
CHO mAb N-Glycan Library plus CHO mAb Glycoprotein consists of complex biantennary and high mannose N-glycans present in many CHO-derived therapeutic glycoproteins. The source glycoprotein for the library is included for inclusion in sample preparation as a control.	GKPC-020-P
AdvanceBio InstantPC Maltodextrin ladder. May be used as a ladder standard for generating glucose unit (GU) values ⁷	GKPC-503
Agilent-NISTmAb, 25 μ L	5191-5744
Agilent-NISTmAb, 4 x 25 μ L	5191-5745

MyList 8 AdvanceBio Amide HILIC columns for hydrophilic interaction liquid chromatography (HILIC) methods. For further information please visit our [website](#).

Description	Part No.
1.8 μm, 1200 bar maximum pressure, 80 °C maximum temperature	
AdvanceBio Amide HILIC, 2.1 x 150 mm, 1.8 μ m	859750-913
AdvanceBio Amide HILIC, 2.1 x 100 mm, 1.8 μ m	858750-913

References

1. N-Glycan Analysis: Better Together. Agilent Brochure [5994-1647EN](#), 2020.
2. Improved Hydrophilic Interaction Liquid Chromatography for LC/FLD/MS Analysis of Released N-Glycans. Agilent Application Note. [5994-6916EN](#), 2023.
3. Agilent AdvanceBio Gly-X N-Glycan Prep with InstantPC kit. Simplified Workflow for Rapid FLD/MS Glycan Analysis Agilent Flyer [5994-0918EN](#), 2019.
4. Glycan Standards Technical Flyer, [5994-2202EN](#), 2020.
5. Agilent AdvanceBio Gly-X N-Glycan Prep with InstantPC Kit, 96-ct (formerly ProZyme). User Manual [5994-1231EN](#).
6. Y Xie, et al. High-throughput and high-sensitivity N-Glycan profiling: A platform for biopharmaceutical development and disease biomarker discovery. Analytical Biochemistry, Volume 623, 15 June 2021, 114205.
7. Varki A, et al. Symbol Nomenclature for Graphical Representations of Glycans. Glycobiology, 2015 Dec; 25(12): 1323–1324
8. A Quick and Efficient Sample Cleanup for Biomolecule Analysis. [5994-7239EN](#), 2024
9. Glycan Peak Assignment Tool (GPAT) Novel glucose unit-based software enabling more accurate peak assignments for InstantPC and 2-AB N-glycan HILIC/FLD analysis using the AdvanceBio Amide HILIC column and mobile phase. [5994-7477EN](#), 2024.

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