

Tryptophan

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Tryptophan (IUPAC-IUBMB abbreviation: **Trp** or **W**; IUPAC abbreviation: L-Trp or D-Trp; sold for medical use as **Tryptan**)^[2] is one of the 22 standard amino acids and an essential amino acid in the human diet, as demonstrated by its growth effects on rats. It is encoded in the standard genetic code as the codon *UGG*. Only the L-stereoisomer of tryptophan is used in structural or enzyme proteins, but the R -stereoisomer is occasionally found in naturally produced peptides (for example, the marine venom peptide contryphan).^[3] The distinguishing structural characteristic of tryptophan is that it contains an indole functional group.

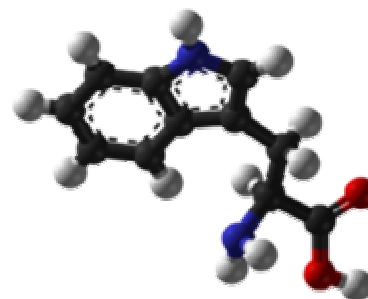
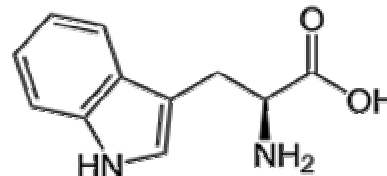
Contents

- 1 Isolation
- 2 Biosynthesis and industrial production
- 3 Function
- 4 Dietary sources
 - 4.1 Use as a dietary supplement and drug
 - 4.2 Metabolites
 - 4.3 Tryptophan supplements and EMS
 - 4.4 Turkey meat and drowsiness
- 5 Fluorescence
- 6 See also
- 7 References
- 8 External links

Isolation

The isolation of tryptophan was first reported by Frederick Hopkins in 1901^[4] through hydrolysis of casein. From 600 grams of crude casein one obtains 4-8 grams of tryptophan.^[5]

L-Tryptophan



IUPAC name

Tryptophan or (2S)-2-amino-3-(1H-indol-3-yl)propanoic acid

Other names

2-Amino-3-(1*H*-indol-3-yl)propanoic acid

Identifiers

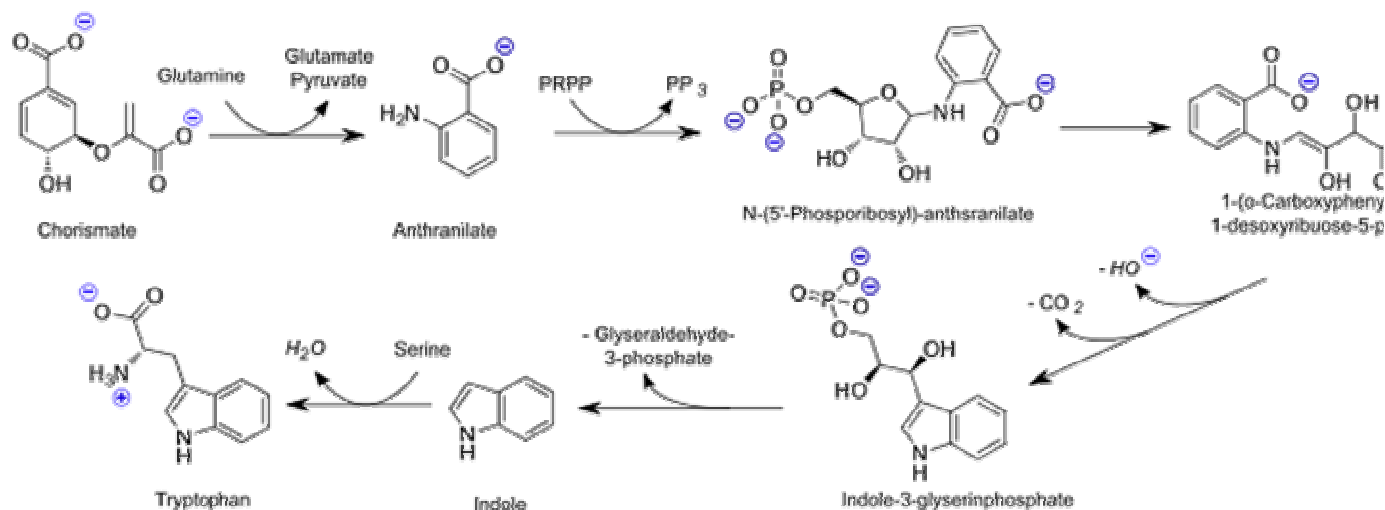
CAS number	73-22-3 ✓
PubChem	6305
ChemSpider	6066 ✓
UNII	8DUH1N11BX ✓
DrugBank	DB00150
KEGG	D00020 ✓
ChEBI	CHEBI:27897 ✗
ChEMBL	CHEMBL54976 ✓
IUPHAR ligand	717
ATC code	N06AX02 (http://www.whocc.no/atc_ddd_index/?code=N06AX02)
Jmol-3D images	Image 1 (http://chemapps.stolaf.edu/jmol/jmol.php?model=c1ccc2c%28c1%29c%28c%5BnH%5D2%29C%5BC%40%40H%5D%28C%28%3DO%29O%29N)

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Biosynthesis and industrial production

Plants and microorganisms commonly synthesize tryptophan from shikimic acid or anthranilate.^[6] The latter condenses with phosphoribosylpyrophosphate (PRPP), generating pyrophosphate as a by-product. After ring opening of the ribose moiety and following reductive decarboxylation, indole-3-glycerinphosphate is produced, which in turn is transformed into indole. In the last step, tryptophan synthase catalyzes the formation of tryptophan from indole and the amino acid serine.

InChI	
Properties	
Molecular formula	C ₁₁ H ₁₂ N ₂ O ₂
Molar mass	204.23 g mol ⁻¹
Solubility in water	Soluble: 0.23 g/L at 0 °C, 11.4 g/L at 25 °C, 17.1 g/L at 50 °C, 27.95 g/L at 75 °C
Solubility	Soluble in hot alcohol, alkali hydroxides; insoluble in chloroform.
Acidity (pK _a)	2.38 (carboxyl), 9.39 (amino) ^[1]
Supplementary data page	
Structure and properties	<i>n</i> , <i>ε</i> _r , etc.
Thermodynamic data	Phase behaviour Solid, liquid, gas
Spectral data	UV, IR, NMR, MS
Except where noted otherwise, data are given for materials in their standard state (at 25 °C (77 °F), 100 kPa)	
✗ (verify) (what is: ✓ / ✗ ?)	
Infobox references	



The industrial production of tryptophan is also biosynthetic and is based on the fermentation of serine and indole using either wild-type or genetically modified bacteria such as *B. amyloliquefaciens*, *B. subtilis*, *C. glutamicum* or *E. coli*. These strains carry either mutations that prevent the reuptake of aromatic amino acids or multiple/overexpressed *trp* operons. The conversion is catalyzed by the enzyme tryptophan synthase.^{[7][8][9]}

Function

For many organisms (including humans), tryptophan is an essential amino acid. This means that it is essential for human life, cannot be synthesized by the organism, and therefore must be part of our diet. Amino acids, including tryptophan, act as building blocks in protein biosynthesis. In addition, tryptophan functions as a biochemical precursor for the following compounds (see also figure to the right):

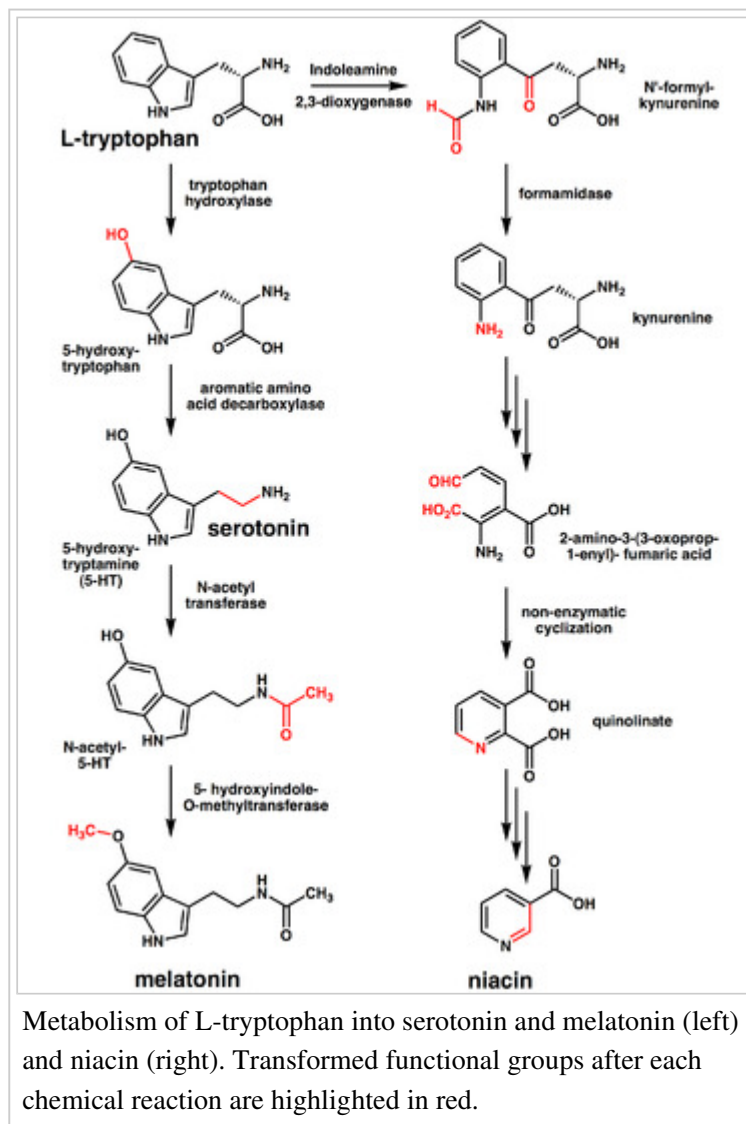
- Serotonin (a neurotransmitter), synthesized via tryptophan hydroxylase.^{[10][11]} Serotonin, in turn, can be converted to melatonin (a neurohormone), via N-acetyltransferase and 5-hydroxyindole-O-methyltransferase activities.^[12]
- Niacin is synthesized from tryptophan via kynurenine and quinolinic acids as key biosynthetic intermediates.^[13]
- Auxin (a phytohormone) when sieve tube elements undergo apoptosis tryptophan is converted to auxins.^[14]

The disorder fructose malabsorption causes improper absorption of tryptophan in the intestine, reduced levels of tryptophan in the blood^[15] and depression.^[16] The authors did not find reduced tryptophan in lactose maldigestion.^[17]

In bacteria that synthesize tryptophan, high cellular levels of this amino acid activate a repressor protein, which binds to the *trp* operon.^[18] Binding of this repressor to the tryptophan operon prevents transcription of downstream DNA that codes for the enzymes involved in the biosynthesis of tryptophan. So high levels of tryptophan prevent tryptophan synthesis through a negative feedback loop and, when the cell's tryptophan levels are reduced, transcription from the *trp* operon resumes. The genetic organisation of the *trp* operon thus permits tightly regulated and rapid responses to changes in the cell's internal and external tryptophan levels.

Dietary sources

Tryptophan is a routine constituent of most protein-based foods or dietary proteins. It is particularly plentiful in chocolate, oats, dried dates, milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, red meat, eggs, fish, poultry, sesame, chickpeas, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, spirulina, bananas, and peanuts.^[19] Despite popular belief,^{[20][21][22]} that turkey has a particularly high amount of tryptophan, the amount of tryptophan in turkey is typical of most poultry.^[23] There is also a myth that plant protein lacks tryptophan; in fact, tryptophan is present in significant amounts in almost all forms of plant protein, and abundant in some.



Tryptophan (Trp) Content of Various Foods^{[23][24]}

Food	Protein [g/100 g of food]	Tryptophan [g/100 g of food]	Tryptophan/Protein [%]
egg, white, dried	81.10	1.00	1.23
spirulina, dried	57.47	0.93	1.62
cod, atlantic, dried	62.82	0.70	1.11
soybeans, raw	36.49	0.59	1.62
cheese, Parmesan	37.90	0.56	1.47
sesame seed	17.00	0.37	2.17
cheese, cheddar	24.90	0.32	1.29
sunflower seed	17.20	0.30	1.74
pork, chop	19.27	0.25	1.27
turkey	21.89	0.24	1.11
chicken	20.85	0.24	1.14
beef	20.13	0.23	1.12
oats	16.89	0.23	1.39
salmon	19.84	0.22	1.12
lamb, chop	18.33	0.21	1.17
perch, Atlantic	18.62	0.21	1.12
chickpeas, raw	19.30	0.19	0.96
egg	12.58	0.17	1.33
wheat flour, white	10.33	0.13	1.23
baking chocolate, unsweetened	12.9	0.13	1.23
milk	3.22	0.08	2.34
Rice, white, medium -grain, cooked	2.38	0.028	1.18
Quinoa, uncooked	14.12	0.167	1.2
Quinoa, cooked	4.40	0.052	1.1
potatoes, russet	2.14	0.02	0.84
tamarind	2.80	0.018	0.64
banana	1.03	0.01	0.87

Use as a dietary supplement and drug

There is evidence that blood tryptophan levels are unlikely to be altered by changing the diet,^[25] but tryptophan is available in health food stores as a dietary supplement.^[26]

Clinical research has shown mixed results with respect to tryptophan's effectiveness as a sleep aid, especially in normal patients.^{[27][28][29]} Tryptophan has shown some effectiveness for treatment of a variety of other conditions typically associated with low serotonin levels in the brain.^[30] In particular, tryptophan has shown some promise as an antidepressant alone^[31] and as an "augmenter" of antidepressant drugs.^{[31][32]} However, the reliability of

these clinical trials has been questioned because of lack of formal controls and repeatability.^{[33][34][35]} In addition, tryptophan itself may not be useful in the treatment of depression or other serotonin-dependent moods, but may be useful in understanding the chemical pathways that will give new research directions for pharmaceuticals.^[36]

Metabolites

A metabolite of tryptophan, 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP), has been suggested as a treatment for epilepsy^[37] and depression, since 5-HTP readily crosses the blood–brain barrier and in addition is rapidly decarboxylated to serotonin (5-hydroxytryptamine or 5-HT).^[38] Clinical trials, however, are regarded inconclusive and lacking.^[39] Serotonin has a relatively short half-life since it is rapidly metabolized by monoamine oxidase.

Due to the conversion of 5-HTP into serotonin by the liver, there may be a significant risk of heart valve disease from serotonin's effect on the heart.^{[40][41]}

It is marketed in Europe for depression and other indications under the brand names Cincofarm and Tript-OH. In the United States, 5-HTP does not require a prescription, as it is covered under the Dietary Supplement Act. Since the quality of dietary supplements is now regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, manufacturers are required to market products whose ingredients match the labeling, but are not required to establish efficacy of the product.^[42]

The primary product of the liver enzyme tryptophan dioxygenase is kynurenine.^{[13][43]}

In 1912 Felix Ehrlich demonstrated that yeast attacks the natural amino acids essentially by splitting off carbon dioxide and re-placing the amino group with hydroxyl. By this reaction, tryptophan gives rise to tryptophol.^[44]

Tryptophan supplements and EMS

There was a large tryptophan-related outbreak of eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome (EMS) in 1989, which caused 1,500 cases of permanent disability and at least thirty-seven deaths. Some epidemiological studies^{[45][46][47]} traced the outbreak to L-tryptophan supplied by a Japanese manufacturer, Showa Denko KK.^[48] It was further hypothesized that one or more trace impurities produced during the manufacture of tryptophan may have been responsible for the EMS outbreak.^{[49][50]} The fact that the Showa Denko facility used genetically engineered bacteria to produce L-tryptophan gave rise to speculation among anti-GMO activists^[51] that genetic engineering itself was responsible for such impurities.^[52]

Most tryptophan was banned from sale in the US in 1991, and other countries followed suit.^[53] In February 2001, the FDA loosened the restrictions on marketing (though not on importation).^[48]

The specific cause of the EMS outbreak remains unknown, but regulators' best estimate is that it was caused by one or impurities in certain batches produced by Showa Denko.^{[48][53]}

Turkey meat and drowsiness

See also: Postprandial somnolence § Turkey and tryptophan

A common assertion is that heavy consumption of turkey meat results in drowsiness, due to high levels of tryptophan contained in turkey.^{[20][21][22]} However, the amount of tryptophan in turkey is comparable to that contained in most other meats.^{[23][21]} Furthermore, post-meal drowsiness may have more to do with what else is

consumed along with the turkey and, in particular, carbohydrates.^[54] It has been demonstrated in both animal models^[55] and humans^{[56][57][58]} that ingestion of a meal rich in carbohydrates triggers release of insulin. Insulin in turn stimulates the uptake of large neutral branched-chain amino acids (BCAA), but not tryptophan (an aromatic amino acid) into muscle, increasing the ratio of tryptophan to BCAA in the blood stream. The resulting increased ratio of tryptophan to BCAA in the blood reduces competition at the large neutral amino acid transporter (which transports both BCAA and aromatic amino acids), resulting in the uptake of tryptophan across the blood–brain barrier into the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).^{[59][60]} Once in the CSF, tryptophan is converted into serotonin in the raphe nuclei by the normal enzymatic pathway.^{[55][57]} The resultant serotonin is further metabolised into melatonin by the pineal gland.^[12] Hence, this data suggests that "feast-induced drowsiness"— or postprandial somnolence — may be the result of a heavy meal rich in carbohydrates, which, via an indirect mechanism, increases the production of sleep-promoting melatonin in the brain.^{[55][56][57][58]}

Fluorescence

Main article: Fluorescence spectroscopy § Tryptophan fluorescence

See also

- 5-HTP
- Attenuator (genetics)
- Dimethyltryptamine
- Serotonin
- Tryptamine
- Hopkins Cole reaction
- Acree-Rosenheim reaction

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External links

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