5-Methylcytosine is a methylated form of the DNA base cytosine that may be involved in the regulation of gene transcription. When cytosine is methylated, the DNA maintains the same sequence, but the expression of methylated genes can be altered (the study of this is part of the field of epigenetics). 5-Methylcytosine is incorporated in the nucleoside 5-methylcytidine.

In 5-methylcytosine, a methyl group is attached to the 5th atom in the 6-atom ring (counting counterclockwise from the NH nitrogen at the six o'clock position, not the 2 o'clock). This methyl group distinguishes 5-methylcytosine from cytosine.

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