

# Caspase

Caspases, or cysteine-aspartic proteases or cysteine-dependent aspartate-directed proteases are a family of cysteine proteases that play essential roles in [apoptosis](#) (programmed cell death), [necrosis](#), and [inflammation](#).

Caspases are essential in cells for [apoptosis](#), or programmed cell death, in development and most other stages of adult life, and have been termed “executioner” proteins for their roles in the cell. Some caspases are also required in the immune system for the maturation of lymphocytes. Failure of apoptosis is one of the main contributions to tumour development and autoimmune diseases; this, coupled with the unwanted apoptosis that occurs with ischemia or Alzheimer's disease, has stimulated interest in caspases as potential therapeutic targets since they were discovered in the mid-1990s.

[Caspase-1](#)

[Caspase 3](#)

[Caspase 6](#)

[Caspase 8](#)

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