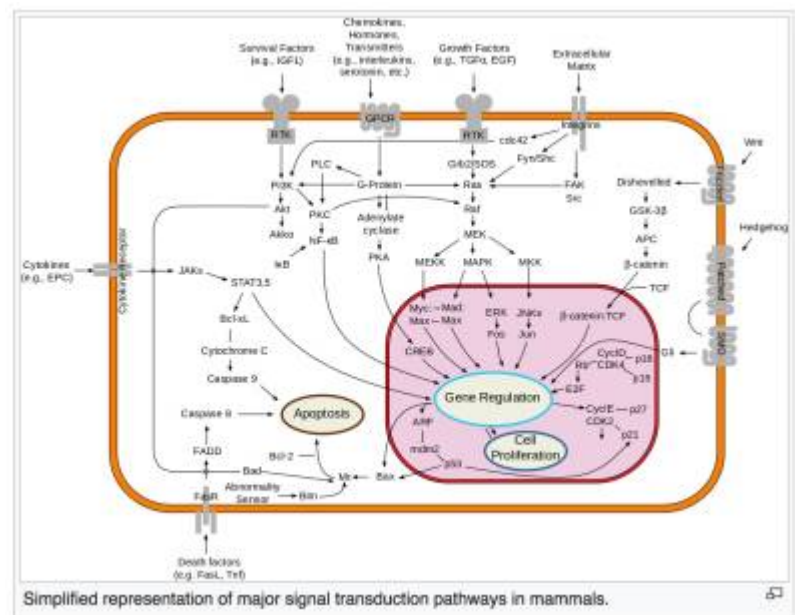


Growth factor

A growth **factor** is a naturally occurring substance capable of stimulating cellular growth, proliferation, healing, and cellular differentiation. Usually it is a protein or a steroid hormone. Growth factors are important for regulating a variety of cellular processes.

Growth factors typically act as signaling molecules between cells. Examples are cytokines and hormones that bind to specific receptors on the surface of their target cells.



They often promote cell differentiation and maturation, which varies between growth factors. For example, bone morphogenetic proteins stimulate bone cell differentiation, while **fibroblast growth factors** and **vascular endothelial growth factor** stimulate blood vessel differentiation (angiogenesis).

Growth factors and inflammatory **cytokines** activate the **mitogen activated protein kinase** (MAPK) cascade.

see [Angiogenic factor](#)

see [Epidermal growth factor](#)

see [Fibroblast growth factor](#)

see [Hepatocyte growth factor](#)

see [Platelet-derived growth factor](#)

see [Transforming growth factor \(TGF\)](#)

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