

Superoxide dismutase

Superoxide dismutase (SOD, EC 1.15.1.1) is an enzyme that alternately catalyzes the dismutation (or partitioning) of the superoxide (O_2^-) radical into either ordinary molecular oxygen (O_2) or hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2). Superoxide is produced as a by-product of oxygen metabolism and, if not regulated, causes many types of cell damage.

Hydrogen peroxide is also damaging and is degraded by other enzymes such as catalase. Thus, SOD is an important antioxidant defense in nearly all living cells exposed to oxygen. One exception is *Lactobacillus plantarum* and related lactobacilli, which use a different mechanism to prevent damage from reactive (O_2^-).

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