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epitope

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epitope /ep-i-tope/ (ep-ĭ-tōp) an antigenic determinant (see under [determinant](#)) of known structure.

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ep·i·tope (ĕp'ĭ-tōp')

n.

The surface portion of an antigen capable of eliciting an immune response and of combining with the antibody produced to counter that response.

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epitope

[ep'itōp]

Etymology: Gk *epi* + *topos*, place

See [antigenic determinant](#).

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epitope Any site on a biomolecule (antigenic determinant) which can evoke antibody formation. The minimum size of a molecule capable of evoking antibody formation is about 1 kD; if the molecule is smaller, as with haptens, it may evoke an immune response by associating with a carrier protein. Large non-polymeric molecules can have many epitopes. When the van der Waals surfaces of proteins are constructed by X-ray crystallography, epitopic sites appear to require prominently exposed regions—"hills" and "ridges" with surface rigidity. More flexible sites are less antigenic.

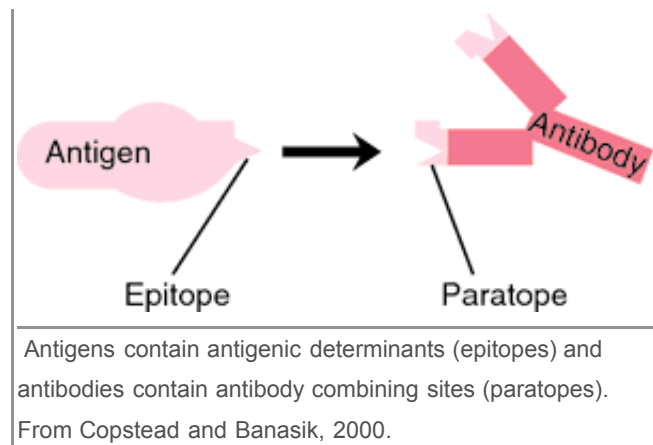
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determinant [de-ter'mĭ-nant]

a factor that establishes the nature of an entity or event.

antigenic determinant a site on the surface of an antigen molecule to which a single antibody molecule binds; generally an antigen has several or many different antigenic determinants and reacts with many different antibodies. Called also [antigen](#).

antibodies. Called also **epitope**.



hidden determinant an antigenic determinant located in an unexposed region of a molecule so that it is prevented from interacting with receptors on lymphocytes, or with antibody molecules, and is unable to induce an **IMMUNE RESPONSE**; it may appear following stereochemical alterations of molecular structure.

immunogenic determinant the part of an immunogenic molecule that interacts with a helper T CELL in triggering antibody production as opposed to the antigenic determinant or hapten, which interacts with B CELLS.

Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, Seventh Edition. © 2003 by Saunders, an imprint of Elsevier, Inc. All rights reserved.

epitope

see antigenic **determinant**.

continuous epitope

contiguous amino acid sequences in a linear array.

discontinuous epitope

one in which amino acids are in close proximity in the folded protein, but distant when unfolded.

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epitope Immunology Any site on a molecule—an antigenic determinant that can evoke antibody formation. See Idiotype, Immunogenicity.

McGraw-Hill Concise Dictionary of Modern Medicine. © 2002 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

ep·i·tope (ep'i-tōp),

The simplest form of an antigenic determinant on a complex antigenic molecule, which can combine with antibody or T cell receptor.

[epi- + -tope]

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ep·i·tope (ep'i-tōp)

The simplest form of an antigenic determinant, on a complex antigenic molecule, that can combine with antibody or T-cell receptor.

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epitope protein residue at the surface of a microorganism or non-self cell; triggers host immune response

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