

Publication

Myeloperoxidase targets oxidative host attacks to *Salmonella* and prevents collateral tissue damage

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Author(s) Schürmann, Nura; Forrer, Pascal; Casse, Olivier; Li, Jiagui; Felmy, Boas; Burgener, Anne-Valérie; Ehrenfeuchter, Nikolaus; Hardt, Wolf-Dietrich; Recher, Mike; Hess, Christoph; Tschan-Plessl, Astrid; Khanna, Nina; Bumann, Dirk

Author(s) at UniBasel Bumann, Dirk ; Li, Jiagui ; Ehrenfeuchter, Nikolaus ; Schürmann, Nura ; Casse, Olivier ; Recher, Mike ; Khanna, Nina ;

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Host control of infections crucially depends on the capability to kill pathogens with reactive oxygen species (ROS). However, these toxic molecules can also readily damage host components and cause severe immunopathology. Here, we show that neutrophils use their most abundant granule protein, myeloperoxidase, to target ROS specifically to pathogens while minimizing collateral tissue damage. A computational model predicted that myeloperoxidase efficiently scavenges diffusible H₂O₂ at the surface of phagosomal *Salmonella* and converts it into highly reactive HOCl (bleach), which rapidly damages biomolecules within a radius of less than 0.1 μm. Myeloperoxidase-deficient neutrophils were predicted to accumulate large quantities of H₂O₂ that still effectively kill *Salmonella*, but most H₂O₂ would leak from the phagosome. *Salmonella* stimulation of neutrophils from normal and myeloperoxidase-deficient human donors experimentally confirmed an inverse relationship between myeloperoxidase activity and extracellular H₂O₂ release. Myeloperoxidase-deficient mice infected with *Salmonella* had elevated hydrogen peroxide tissue levels and exacerbated oxidative damage of host lipids and DNA, despite almost normal *Salmonella* control. These data show that myeloperoxidase has a major function in mitigating collateral tissue damage during antimicrobial oxidative bursts, by converting diffusible long-lived H₂O₂ into highly reactive, microbicidal and locally confined HOCl at pathogen surfaces.

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