

Chapter 24

Proteins

◆ Introduction

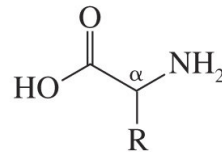
→ The three major groups of biological polymers are polysaccharides, proteins and nucleic acids

→ Proteins have many diverse functions; they are major components of the following biomolecules

- ☞ Enzymes and hormones which catalyze and regulate biological reactions
- ☞ Muscles and tendons which provide the body with means for movement
- ☞ Hemoglobin which carries oxygen to all parts of the body
- ☞ Antibodies they are integral parts of the immune system

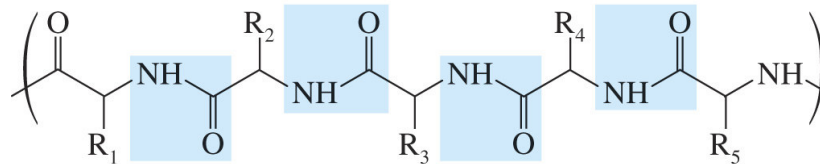
→ All proteins are polyamides

- ☞ Their monomeric units are one of about 20 α - amino acids



An α -amino acid

R is a side chain at the α carbon that determines the identity of the amino acid (Table 24.1).



A portion of a protein molecule

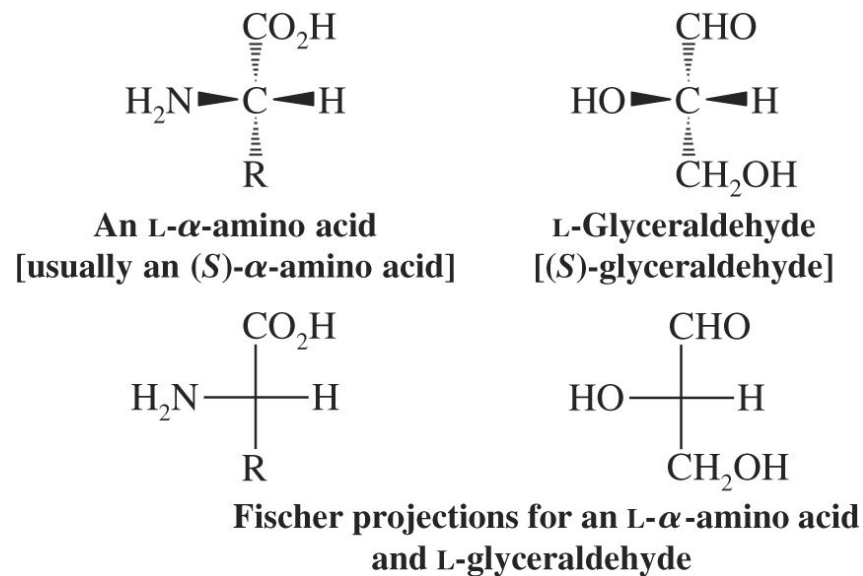
Amide (peptide) linkages are shaded.

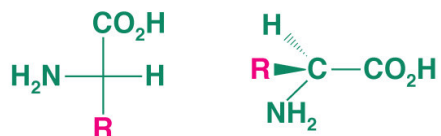
R₁-R₅ may be any of the possible side chains.



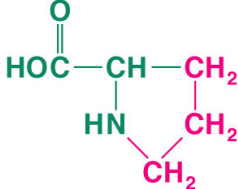
→ **Proteins have several levels of structure**

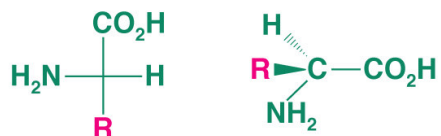
- ☞ *Primary structure* refers to the exact sequence of amino acids along a protein chain
- ☞ *Secondary and tertiary structures* refer to the further bending and folding of the primary structure
- ☞ *Quaternary structure* refers to the aggregation of more than one polypeptide chain


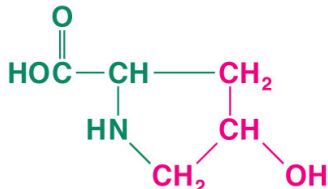
→ **All amino acids except glycine are chiral and have the L configuration (as related to glyceraldehyde) at the α carbon**

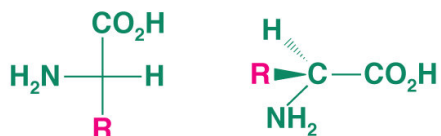


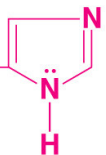


Structure of R	Name	Abbreviations ^a	pK _{a1} α-CO ₂ H	pK _{a2} α-NH ₃ ⁺	pK _{a3} R group	pI
Neutral Amino Acids						
— H	Glycine	G or Gly	2.3	9.6		6.0
— CH₃	Alanine	A or Ala	2.3	9.7		6.0
— CH(CH₃)₂	Valine ^b	V or Val	2.3	9.6		6.0
— CH₂CH(CH₃)₂	Leucine ^b	L or Leu	2.4	9.6		6.0
— CHCH₂CH₃ CH₃	Isoleucine ^b	I or Ile	2.4	9.7		6.1
— CH₂ — 	Phenylalanine ^b	F or Phe	1.8	9.1		5.5
— CH₂CONH₂	Asparagine	N or Asn	2.0	8.8		5.4
— CH₂CH₂CONH₂	Glutamine	Q or Gln	2.2	9.1		5.7
— CH₂ 	Tryptophan ^b	W or Trp	2.4	9.4		5.9
	Proline	P or Pro	2.0	10.6		6.3
(complete structure)						



Structure of R	Name	Abbreviations ^a	pK _{a1} α-CO ₂ H	pK _{a2} α-NH ₃ ⁺	pK _{a3} R group	pI
Neutral Amino Acids						
—CH ₂ OH	Serine	S or Ser	2.2	9.2		5.7
—CH(OH) CH ₃	Threonine ^b	T or Thr	2.6	10.4		6.5
—CH ₂ — 	Tyrosine	Y or Tyr	2.2	9.1	10.1	5.7
	Hydroxyproline	Hyp	1.9	9.7		6.3
(complete structure)						
—CH ₂ SH	Cysteine	C or Cys	1.7	10.8	8.3	5.0
—CH ₂ —S —CH ₂ —S	Cystine	Cys-Cys	1.6 2.3	7.9 9.9		5.1
—CH ₂ CH ₂ SCH ₃	Methionine ^b	M or Met	2.3	9.2		5.8



Structure of R	Name	Abbreviations ^a	pK _{a1} α-CO ₂ H	pK _{a2} α-NH ₃ ⁺	pK _{a3} R group	pI
R Contains an Acidic (Carboxyl) Group						
—CH ₂ CO ₂ H	Aspartic acid	D or Asp	2.1	9.8	3.9	3.0
—CH ₂ CH ₂ CO ₂ H	Glutamic acid	E or Glu	2.2	9.7	4.3	3.2
R Contains a Basic Group						
—CH ₂ CH ₂ CH ₂ CH ₂ NH ₂	Lysine ^b	K or Lys	2.2	9.0	10.5 ^c	9.8
—CH ₂ CH ₂ CH ₂ NH—C(=NH)—NH ₂	Arginine	R or Arg	2.2	9.0	12.5 ^c	10.8
—CH ₂ — 	Histidine	H or His	1.8	9.2	6.0 ^c	7.6

^aSingle-letter abbreviations are now the most commonly used form in current biochemical literature.

^bAn essential amino acid.

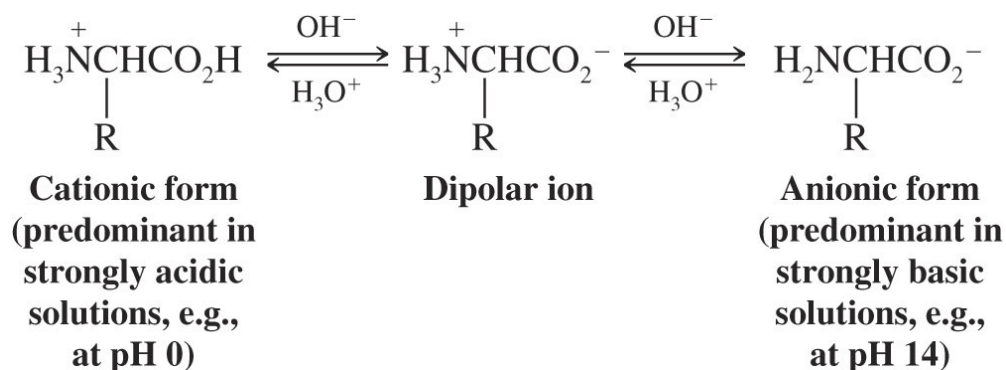
^cpK_a is of protonated amine of R group.

● Amino Acids as Dipolar Ions

→ In the dry solid state amino acids exist as dipolar ions (zwitterions)

→ In aqueous solution an equilibrium exists between the dipolar ion, the cationic and the anionic forms of the amino acid

☞ The predominant form depends on the pH of the solution



→ At low pH the amino acid exists primarily in the cationic form

→ At high pH the amino acid exists primarily in the anionic form

→ At some intermediate pH called the *pI (isoelectric point)*, the concentration of the dipolar ion is at a maximum and the concentrations of anionic and cationic forms are equal

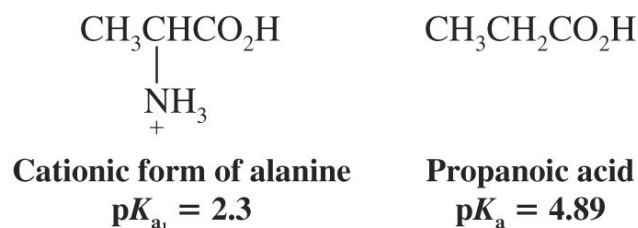
→ Each individual amino acid has a characteristic *pI* (see Table 24.1)

☞ Entire proteins also have a characteristic *pI*

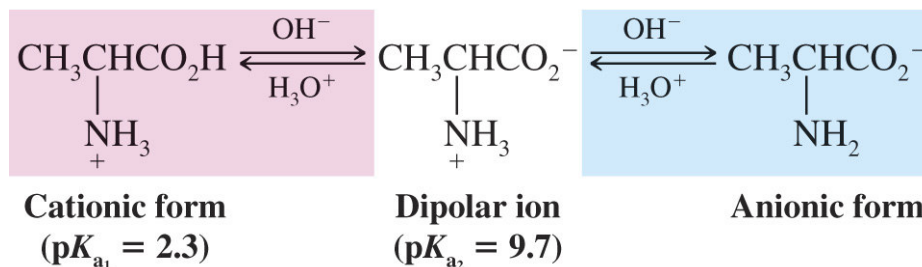
→ The amino acid alanine has a neutral side chain and can be used to illustrate the fundamental behavior of an amino acid at various pHs

☞ At low pH alanine exist as the cation

☞ pK_{a1} of alanine (for ionization of the carboxylic acid proton) is 2.3, considerably lower than the pK_a of a normal carboxylic acid



☞ pK_{a2} of alanine (for ionization of a proton from the protonated amino group) is 9.7

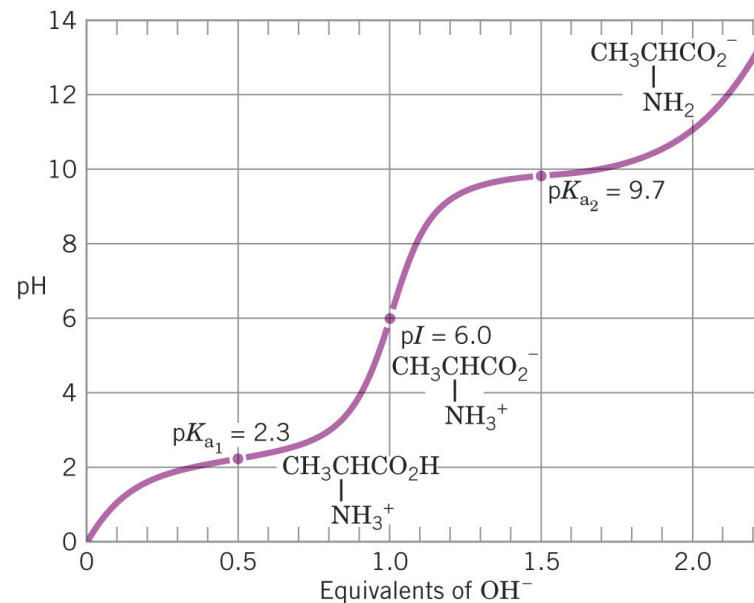


☞ The isoelectric point, pI , for alanine is the average of the two pK_a values *i.e.* $(pK_{a1} + pK_{a2})/2$

- When base is slowly added to fully protonated alanine, a pH is reached where half of the carboxylic acid groups are deprotonated
- This pH of 2.3 is the value of pK_{a1}
- The Henderson-Hasselbalch equation predicts this result

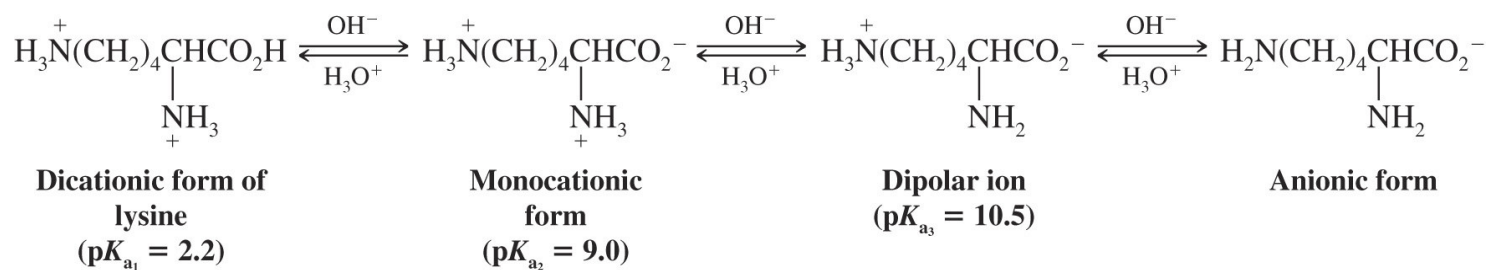
$$pK_a = pH + \log \frac{[HA]}{[A^-]} \quad [HA] = [A^-] \quad \text{and} \quad \log \frac{[HA]}{[A^-]} = 0$$

- As more base is added, the pI is reached and the molecule is electrically neutral; this point is reached when exactly one equivalent of base is added
- As more base is added and pH 9.7 is reached, half of the the aminium groups will be deprotonated
- Addition of more base will eventually produce only the anionic amino acid



→ Lysine, which contains a basic side-chain, has a more complex equilibrium

- ☞ The *pI* for lysine will be high because of the presence of two basic groups
- ☞ The *pI* for lysine is the average of the monocation (pK_{a2}) and the dipolar ion (pK_{a3})

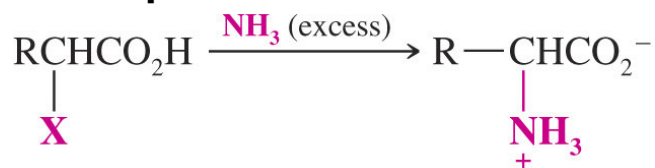


◆ Synthesis of α -Amino Acids

→ The first three methods result in racemic mixtures of amino acids

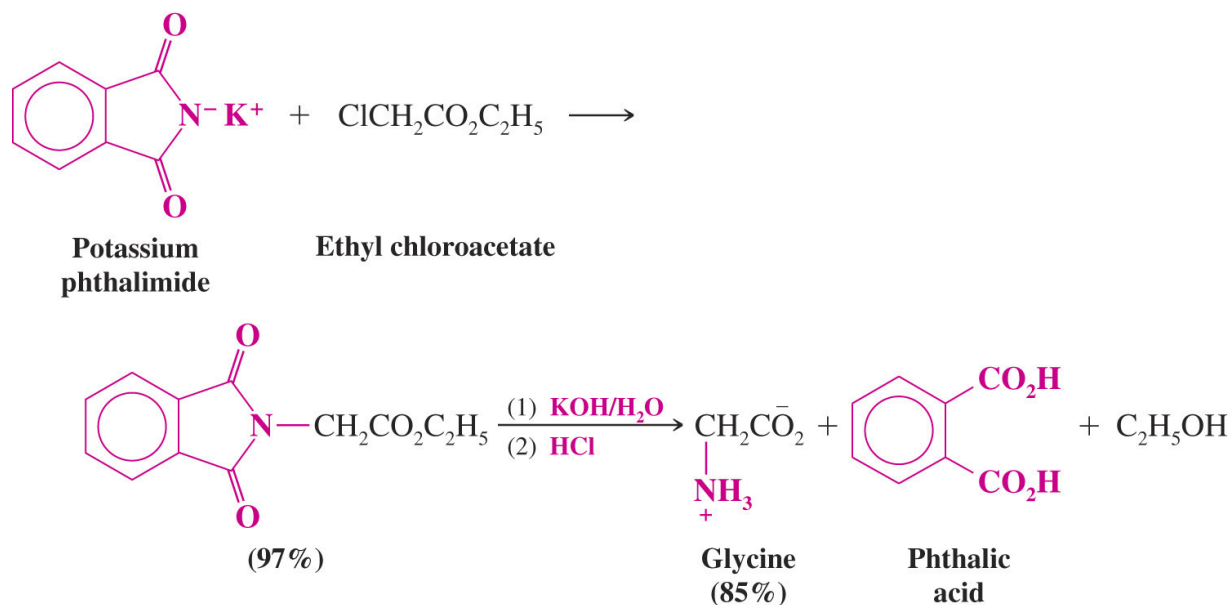
● Direct Ammonolysis of an α -Halo Acid

→ Yields tend to be poor in this reaction



● From Potassium Phthalimide

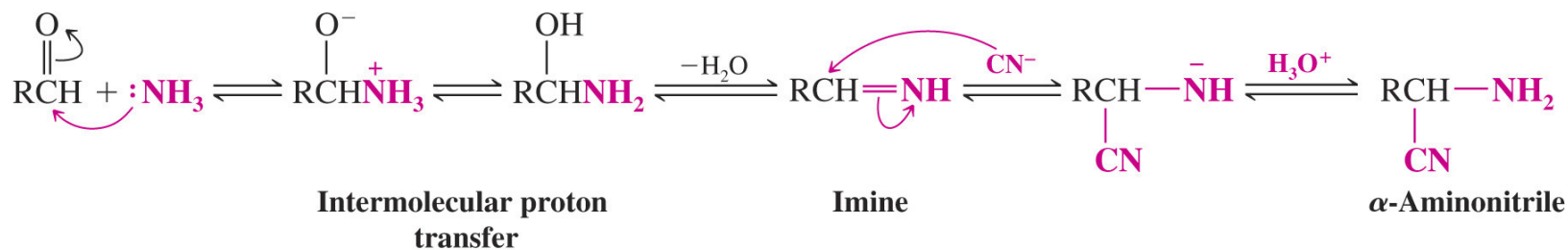
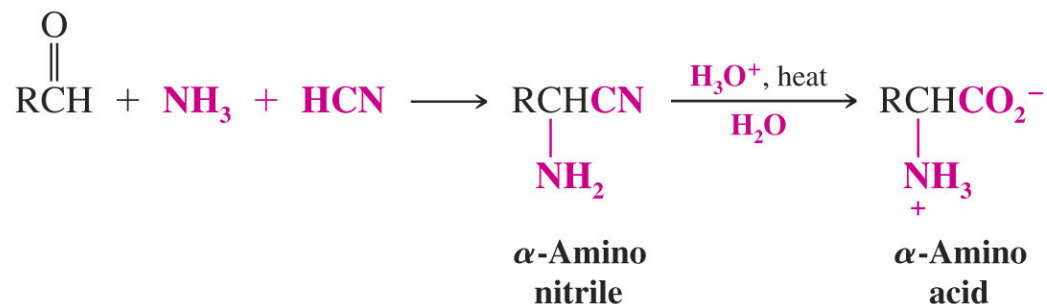
→ This is a variation of the Gabriel synthesis and yields are usually high



● The Strecker Synthesis

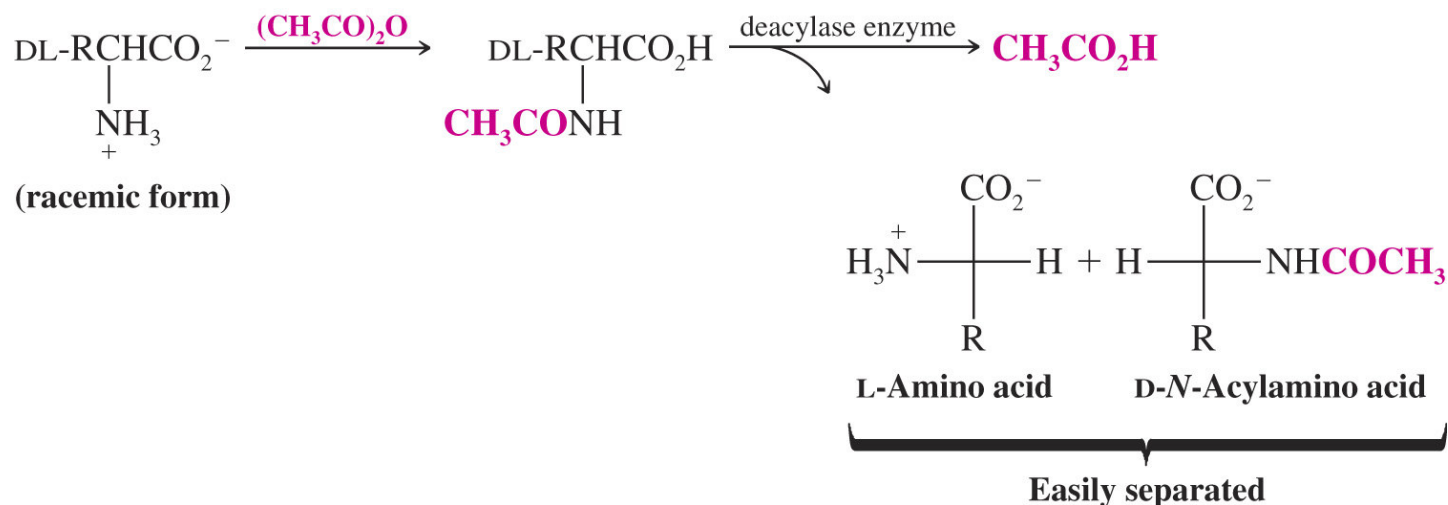
→ Treatment of an aldehyde with ammonia and hydrogen cyanide yields an α -aminonitrile which is hydrolyzed to the α -amino acid

☞ The reaction proceeds via an intermediate imine



● Resolution of DL-Amino Acids

- A racemic amino acid mixture can be resolved by
- (1) conversion to a racemic mixture of *N*-acylamino acids, followed by
 - (2) hydrolysis with a deacylase enzyme that selectively deacylates the L-acylamino acid

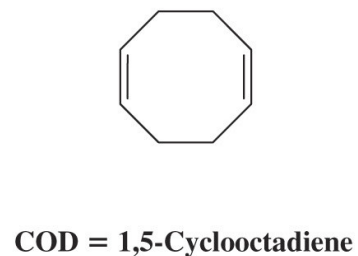
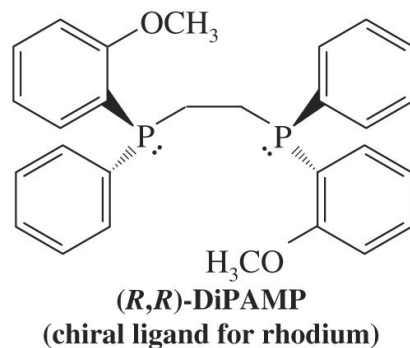
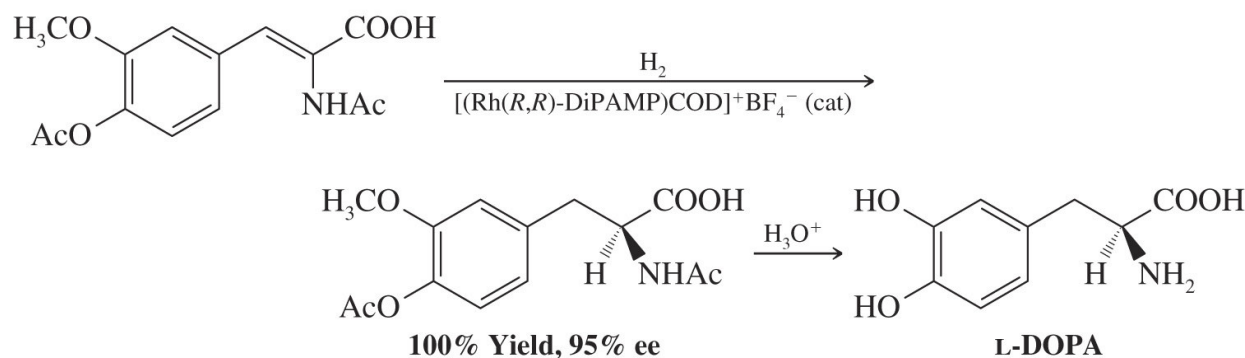


● Asymmetric Synthesis of Amino Acids

- Enantioselective syntheses that produce only the desired naturally occurring amino acid enantiomers are ideal
- One important method involves asymmetric hydrogenation of an enamide using a chiral transition metal catalyst

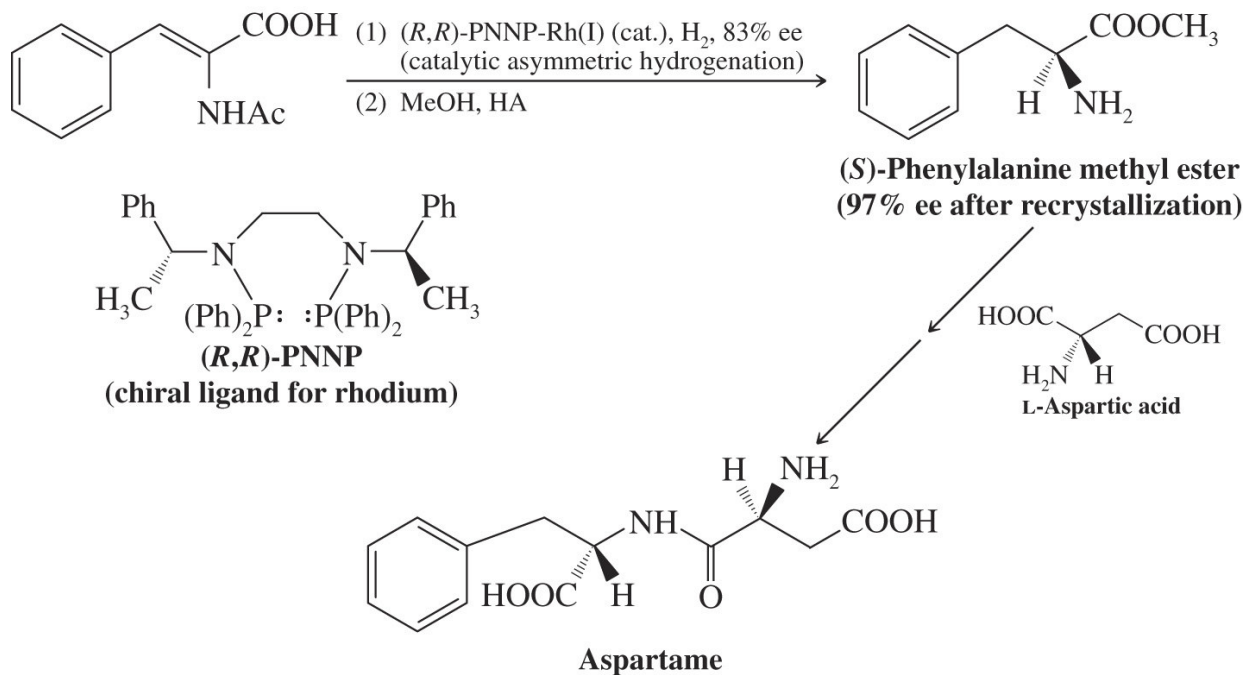
☞ This method was used to synthesize L-dopa, a chiral amino acid used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease

Asymmetric Synthesis of L-DOPA



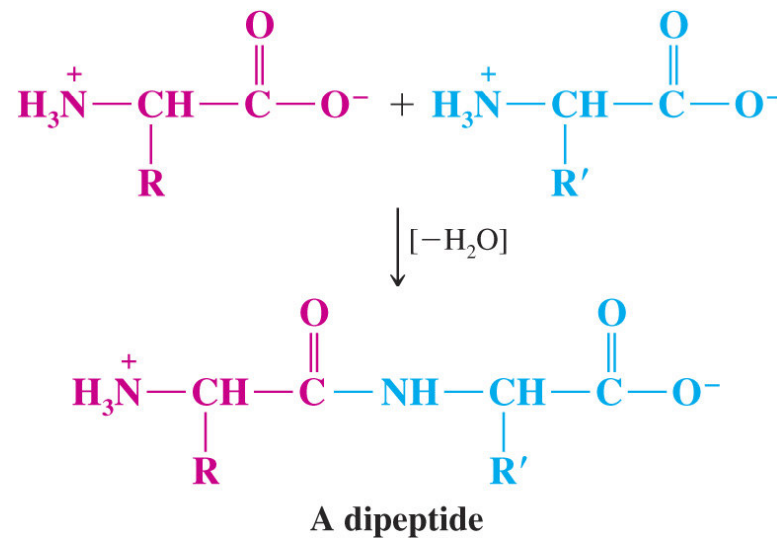
☞ **A similar method is used to synthesize (S)-phenylalanine, needed for preparation of Aspartame**

Asymmetric Synthesis of Aspartame



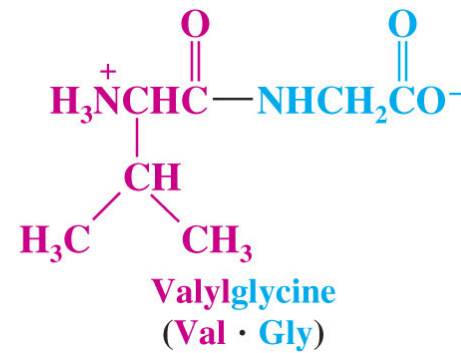
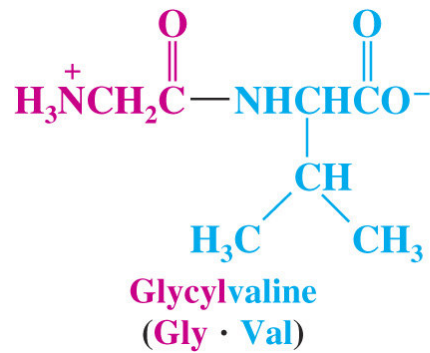
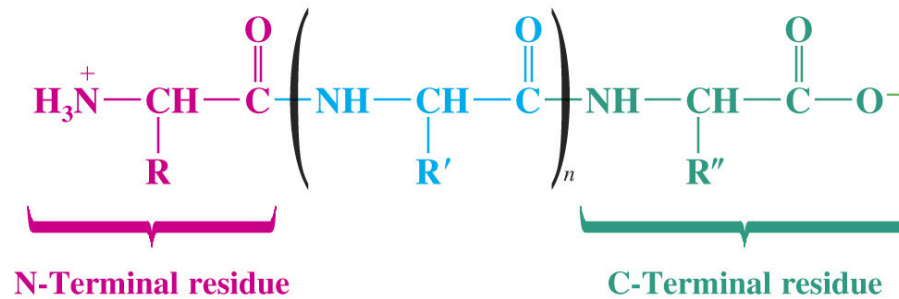
◆ Polypeptides and Proteins

- Enzymes polymerize amino acids by forming amide linkages
- The polymer is called a *peptide* and the amide linkages are called *peptide bonds* or *peptide linkages*
- Each amino acid in the peptide is called an amino acid residue
- Proteins can contain one or more polypeptide chains and other associated molecules or metal ions



→ Polypeptides are customarily written with the *N*-terminal residue to the left

- ☞ Three letter or one letter abbreviations are usually used as a short hand to indicate the sequence of a polypeptide

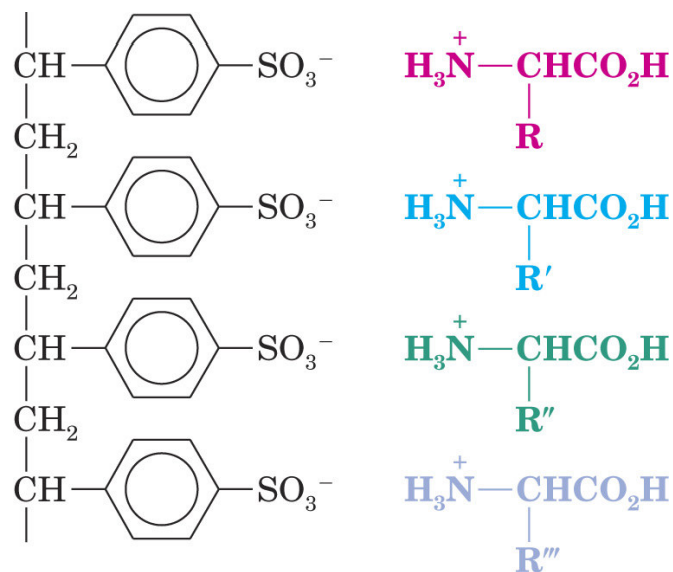


● Hydrolysis

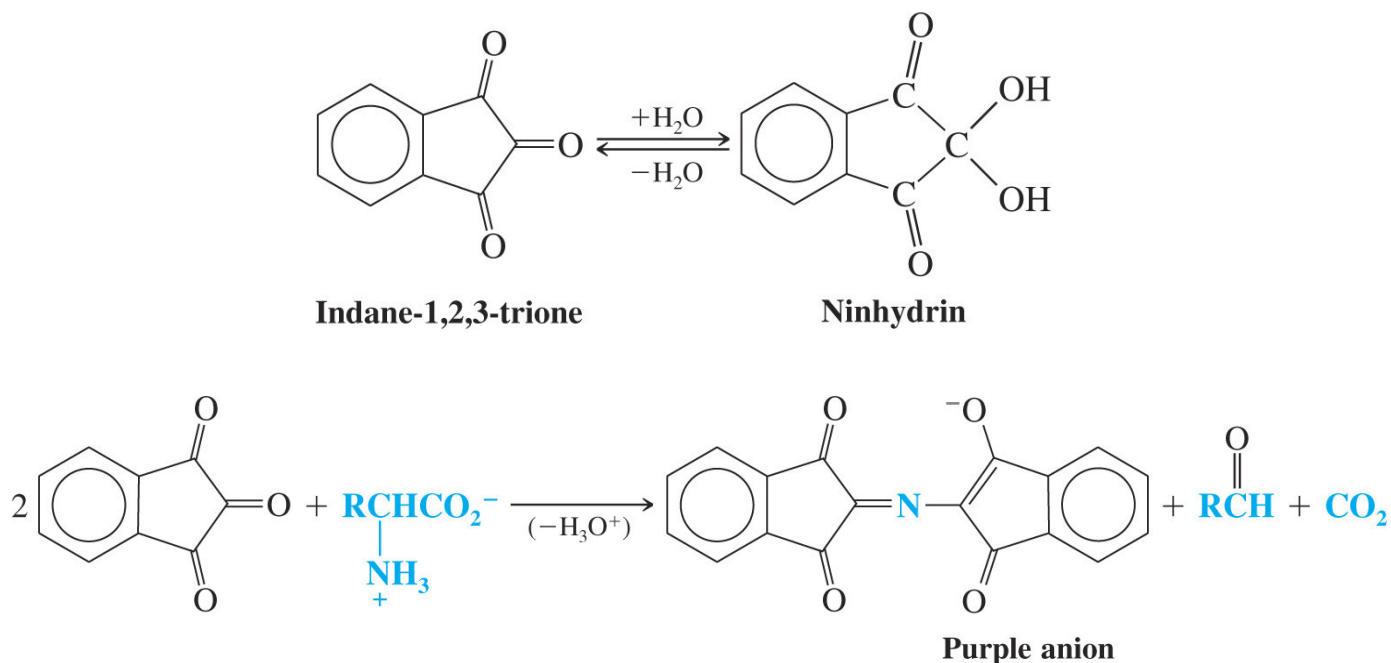
→ A polypeptide can be hydrolyzed by refluxing with 6M hydrochloric acid for 24h

→ The individual amino acids can be separated from each other using a cation-exchange resin

- ☞ An acidic solution of the amino acids is passed through the cation-exchange column; the strength of adsorption varies with the basicity of each amino acid (the most basic are held most strongly)
- ☞ Washing the column with a sequence of buffered solutions causes the amino acids to move through it at different rates



→ In the original method, the column eluant is treated with ninhydrin, a dye used for detecting and quantifying each amino acid as it comes off the column



→ In modern practice, analysis of amino acid mixtures is routinely accomplished using high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC)

◆ Primary Structure of Polypeptides and Proteins

→ The sequence of amino acids in a polypeptide is called its primary structure

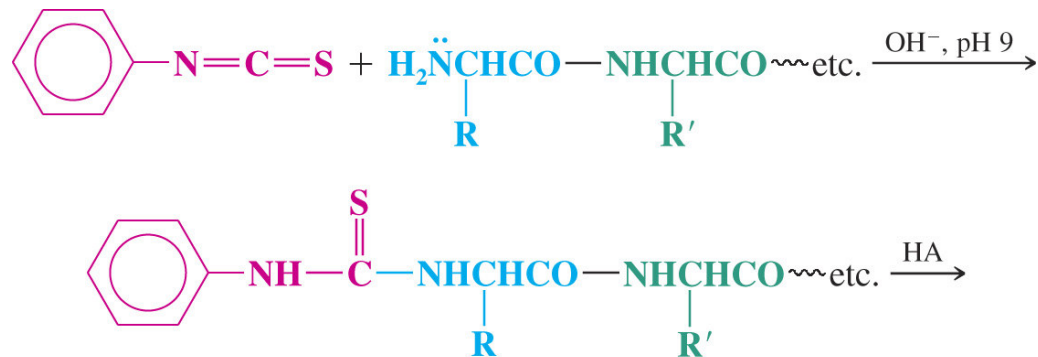
☞ Several methods exist to elucidate the primary structure of peptides

● Edman Degradation

→ Edman degradation involve sequential cleavage and identification of *N*-terminal amino acids

→ Edman degradation works well for polypeptide sequence analyses up to approximately 60 amino acid residues

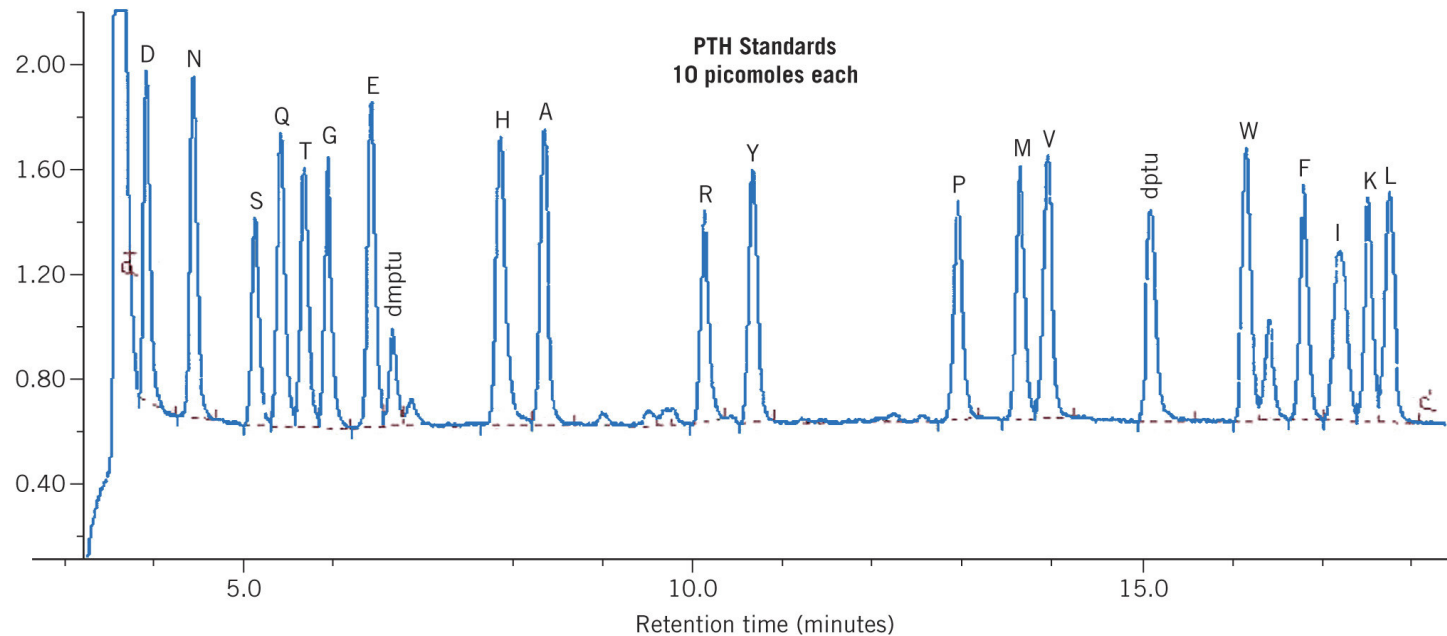
- ☞ The *N*-terminal residue of the polypeptide reacts with phenyl isothiocyanate
- ☞ The resulting phenylthiocarbamyl derivative is cleaved from the peptide chain
- ☞ The unstable product rearranges to a stable phenylthiohydantoin (PTH) which is purified by HPLC and identified by comparison with PTH standards



Labeled polypeptide

→ **Automated amino acid sequencing machines use the Edman degradation and high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC)**

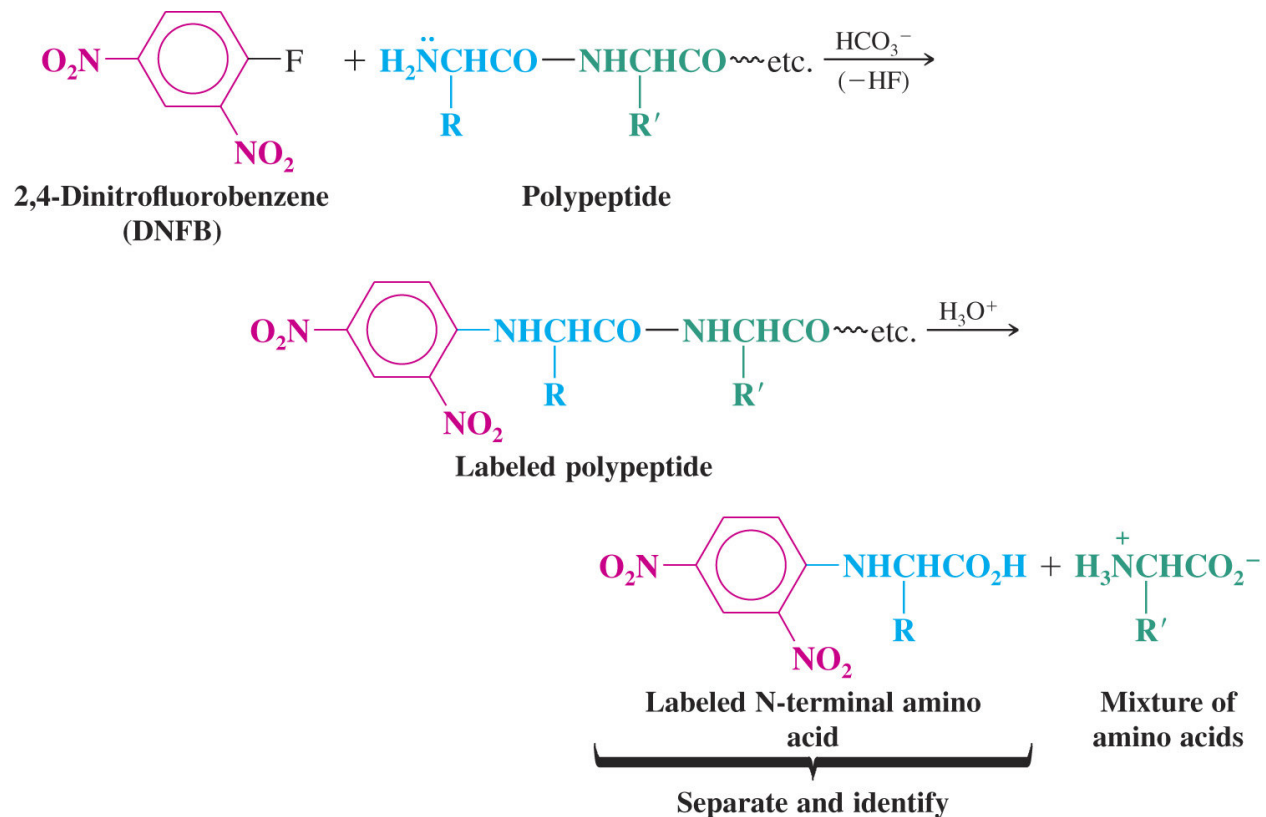
- ☞ One Edman degradation cycle beginning with a picomolar amount of polypeptide can be completed in approximately 30 minutes
- ☞ Each cycle results in identification of the next amino acid residue in the peptide



● Sanger *N*-Terminal Analysis

→ The *N*-terminal end of the polypeptide is labeled with 2,4-dinitrofluorobenzene and the polypeptide is hydrolyzed

☞ The labeled *N*-terminal amino acid is separated from the mixture and identified



→ The Sanger method is not as widely used as the Edman method

- **C-Terminal Analysis**

- **Enzymes called carboxypeptidases hydrolyze C-terminal amino acids selectively**

- 👉 **The enzyme continues to release each newly exposed C-terminal amino acid as the peptide is hydrolyzed; it is necessary to monitor the release of C-terminal amino acids as a function of time to identify them**

● Complete Sequence Analysis

- The Sanger and Edman methods of analysis apply to short polypeptide sequences (up to about 60 amino acid residues by Edman degradation)
- For large proteins and polypeptides, the sample is subjected to partial hydrolysis with dilute acid to give a random assortment of shorter polypeptides which are then analyzed

☞ The smaller polypeptides are sequenced, and regions of overlap among them allow the entire polypeptide to be sequenced

- Example: A pentapeptide is known to contain the following amino acids:

Val₂, Leu, His, Phe

☞ Using DNFB and carboxypeptidase, the N-terminal and C-terminal amino acids are identified

Val (Val, His, Phe) Leu

☞ The pentapeptide is subjected to partial hydrolysis and the following dipeptides are obtained

Val · His + His · Val + Val · Phe + Phe · Leu

☞ The amino acid sequence of the pentapeptide must be:

Val · His · Val · Phe · Leu

→ **Larger polypeptides can also be cleaved into smaller sequences using *site-specific* reagents and enzymes**

- ☞ The use of these agents gives more predictable fragments which can again be overlapped to obtain the sequence of the entire polypeptide
- ☞ Cyanogen bromide (CNBr) cleaves peptide bonds only on the C-terminal side of methionine residues

→ **Mass spectrometry can be used to determine polypeptide and protein sequences**

- ☞ “Ladder sequencing” involves analyzing a polypeptide digest by mass spectrometry, wherein each polypeptide in the digest differs by one amino acid in length; the difference in mass between each adjacent peak indicates the amino acid that occupies that position in the sequence
- ☞ Mass spectra of polypeptide fragments from a protein can be compared with databases of known polypeptide sequences, thus leading to an identification of the protein or a part of its sequence by matching

◆ Examples of Polypeptide and Protein Primary Structure

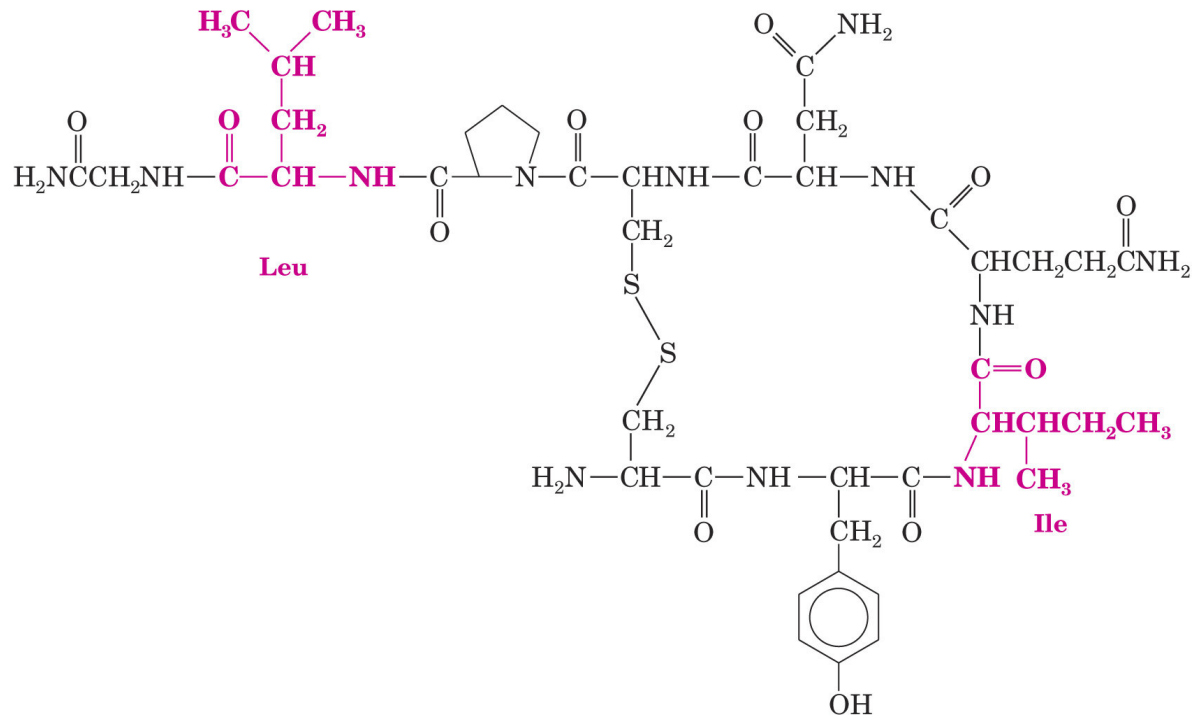
● Oxytocin and Vasopressin

→ Oxytocin stimulates uterine contractions during childbirth

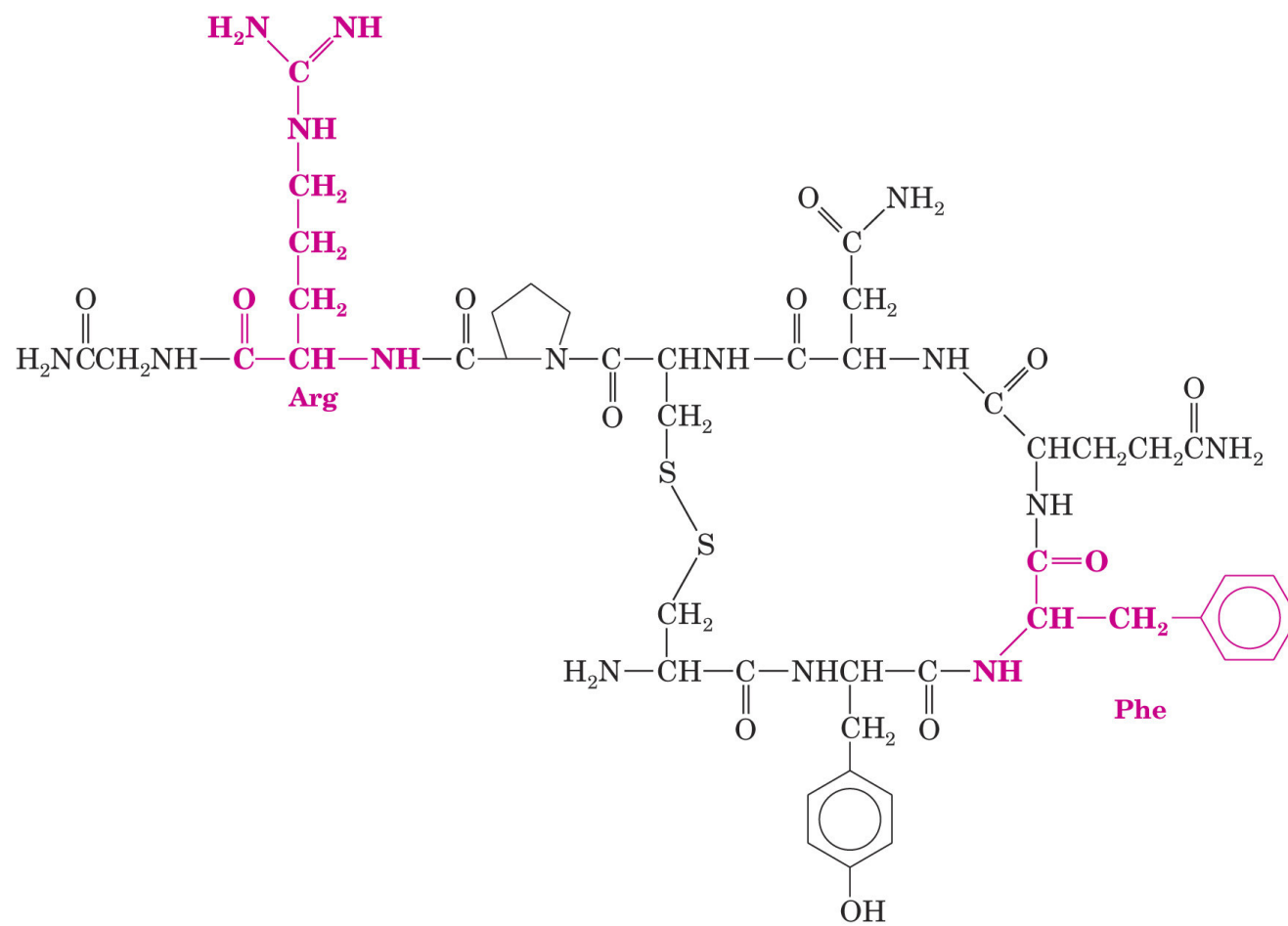
→ Vasopressin causes contraction of peripheral blood vessels and a resultant increase in blood pressure

👉 The two polypeptides are nonapeptides and differ in only 2 amino acid residues

Oxytocin



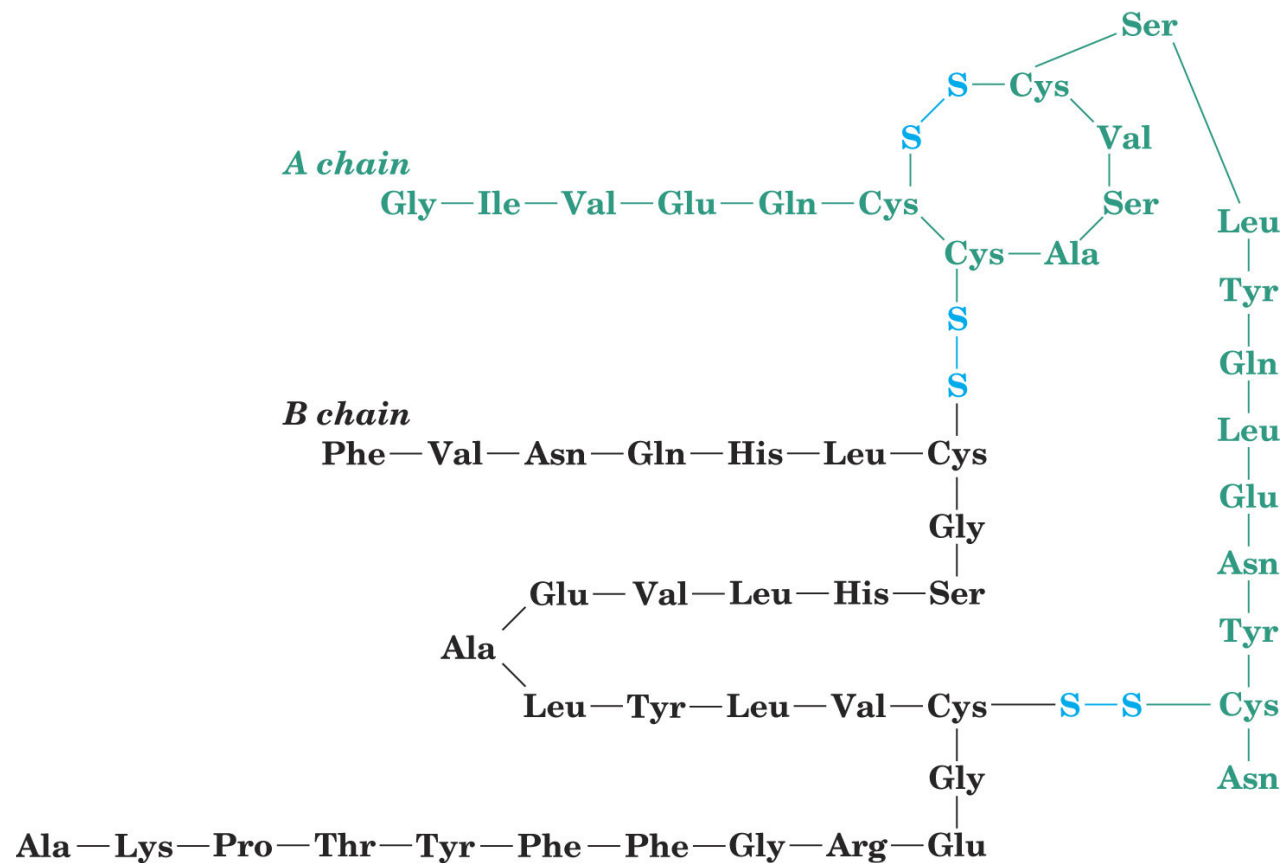
Vasopressin



● Insulin

→ Insulin is a hormone which regulates glucose metabolism

- ☞ Insulin deficiency in humans is the major cause of diabetes mellitus
- ☞ The structure of bovine insulin (shown below) was determined in 1953 by Sanger
- ☞ Human insulin differs from bovine insulin at only three amino acids in its sequence



◆ Polypeptide and Protein Synthesis

→ Laboratory synthesis of polypeptides requires orchestration of blocking and activating groups to achieve selective amide bond formation

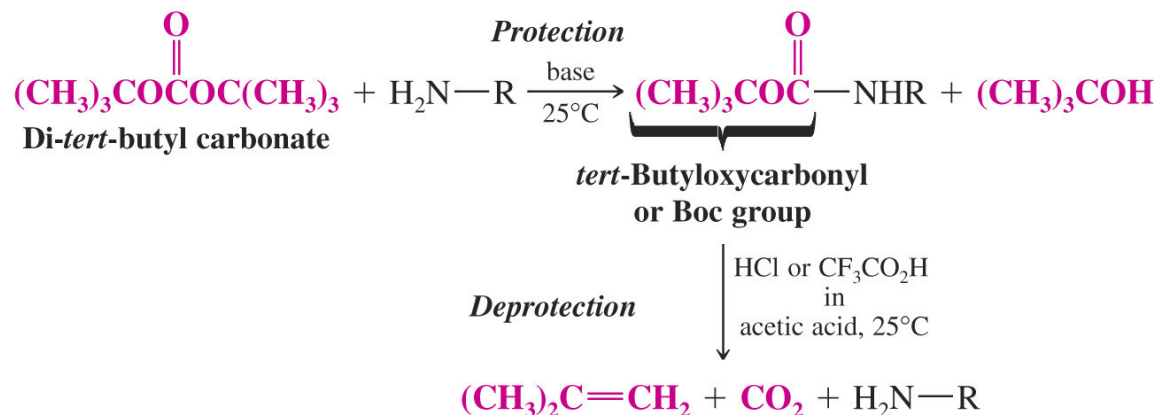
- ☞ Amino groups must be blocked until their reactivity as a nucleophile is desired
- ☞ Carboxylic acid groups must be activated for acyl substitution at the appropriate time

→ Amino groups are usually blocked using one of the following:

- ☞ A benzyloxycarbonyl group (a “Z” group)
- ☞ A di-*tert*-butyloxycarbonyl group (a “Boc” group)
- ☞ An 9-fluorenylmethoxycarbonyl group (an “Fmoc” group)

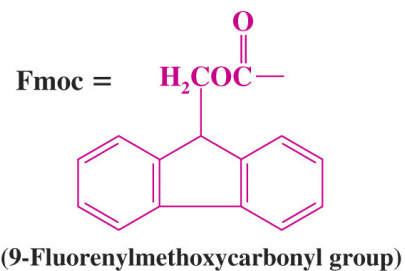
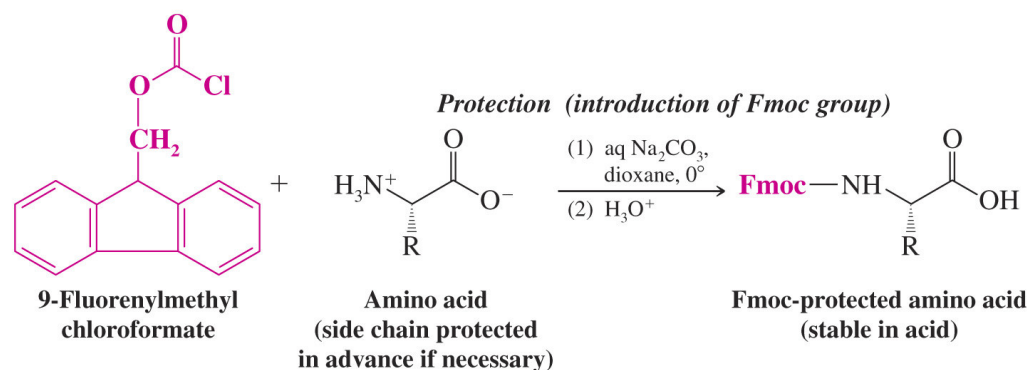
→ Methods for installing and removing Z, Boc, and Fmoc groups are shown below:

tert-Butyloxycarbonyl Group

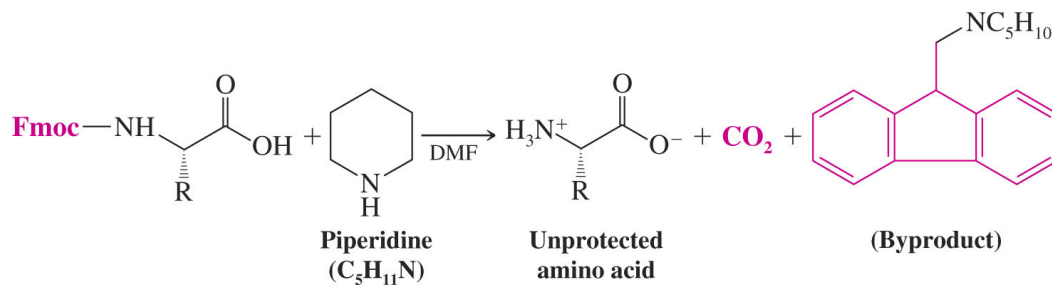


→ Methods for installing and removing Z, Boc, and Fmoc groups are shown below:

9-Fluorenylmethoxycarbonyl Group

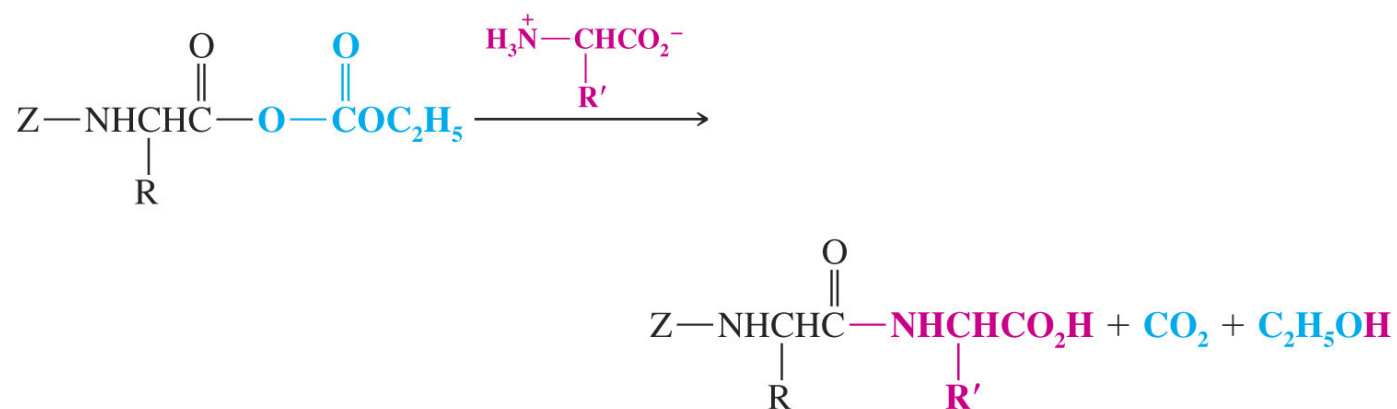
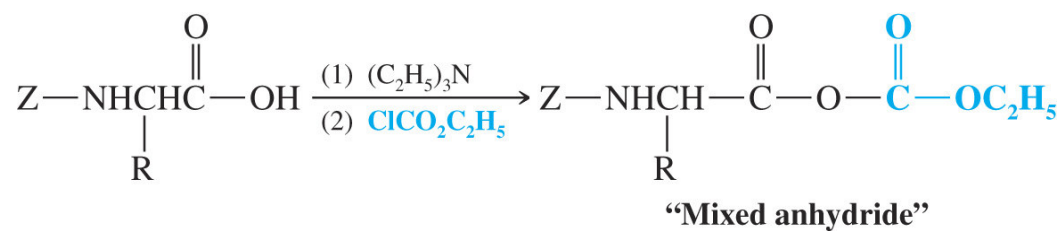


Deprotection (removal of Fmoc group)



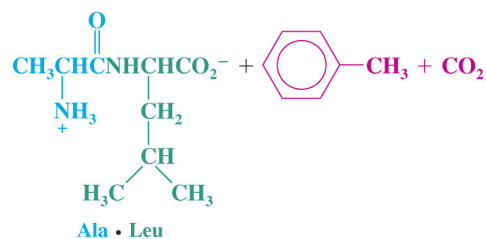
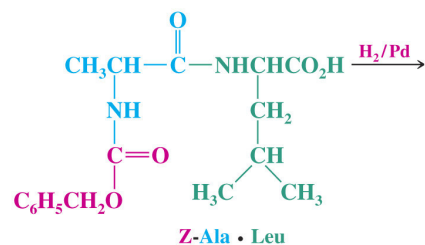
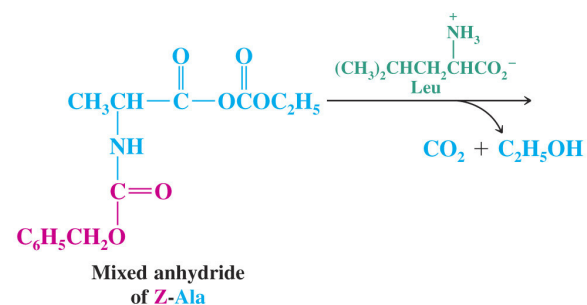
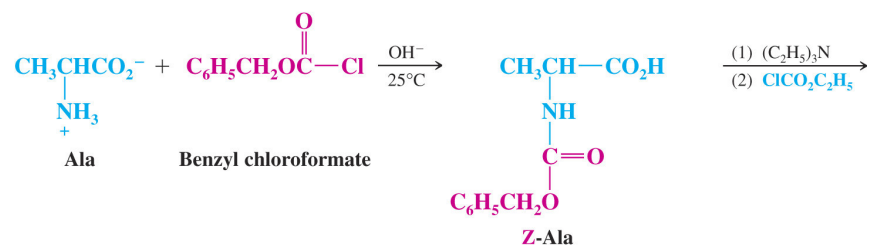
- Carboxylic acid groups are usually activated by conversion to a mixed anhydride:

☞ Ethyl chloroformate can be used



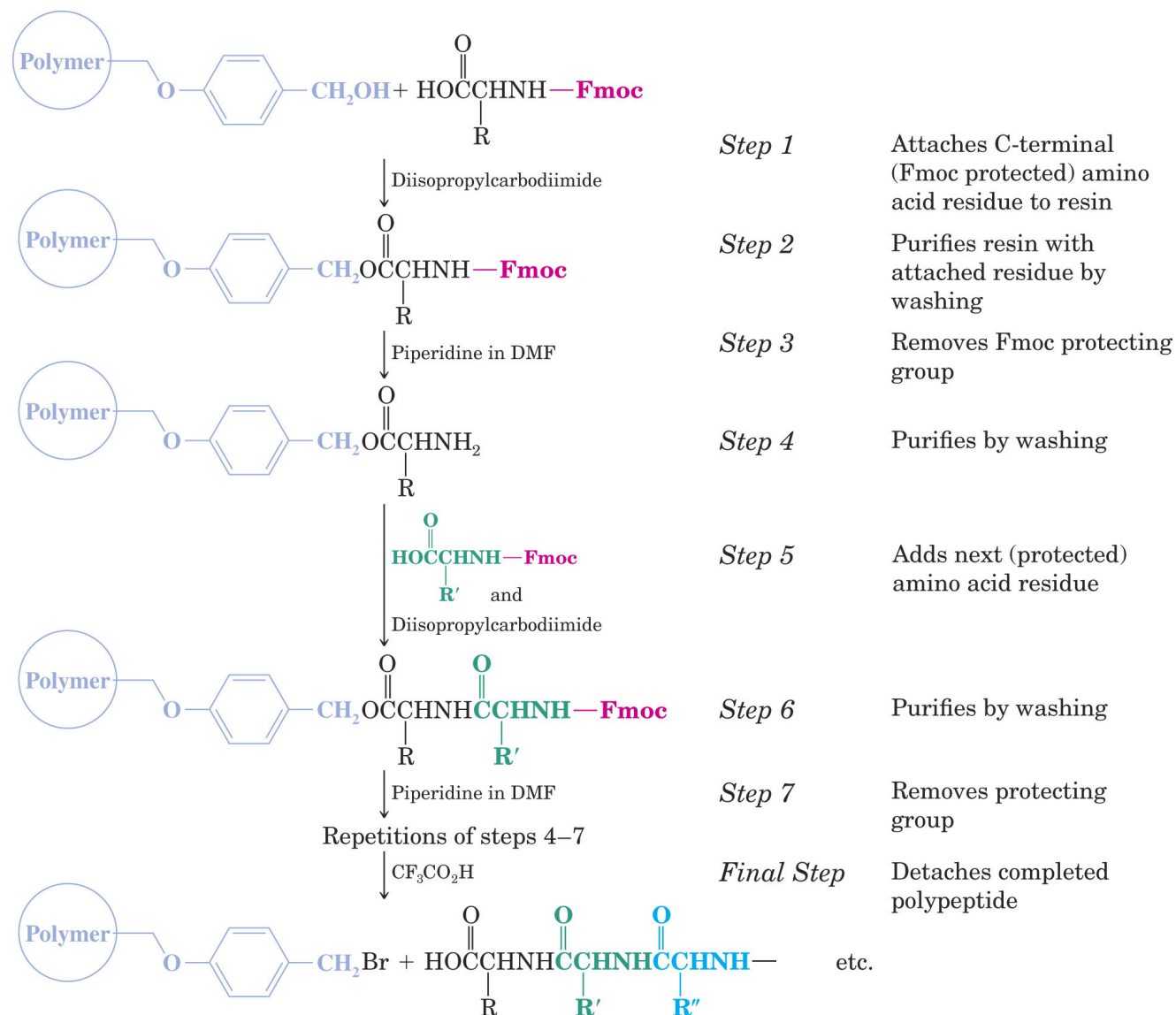
◆ An Example of Laboratory Peptide Synthesis:

→ Synthesis of Ala-Leu



◆ Automated Peptide Synthesis

- Solid Phase Peptide Synthesis (SPSS) was invented by R. B. Merrifield, for which he earned the Nobel Prize in 1984
- SPSS involves 'growing' a peptide on a solid polymer bead by sequential cycles of amide bond formation
- The peptide is cleaved from the bead when the synthesis is complete
- SPSS is used in commercial peptide synthesis machines
 - 🔑 Peptides dozens of residues in length can be synthesized automatically
 - 🔑 A landmark example is synthesis of ribonuclease, having 124 amino acid residues



◆ Secondary, Tertiary, and Quaternary Structures of Proteins

● Secondary Structure

→ The secondary structure of a protein is defined by local conformations of its polypeptide backbone

☞ These local conformations are specified in terms of regular folding patterns such as helices, pleated sheets, and turns

→ The secondary structure of a protein is determined by the sequence of amino acids in its primary structure

→ Key to secondary structure is that peptide bonds assume a geometry in which all 6 atoms of the amide linkage are trans coplanar

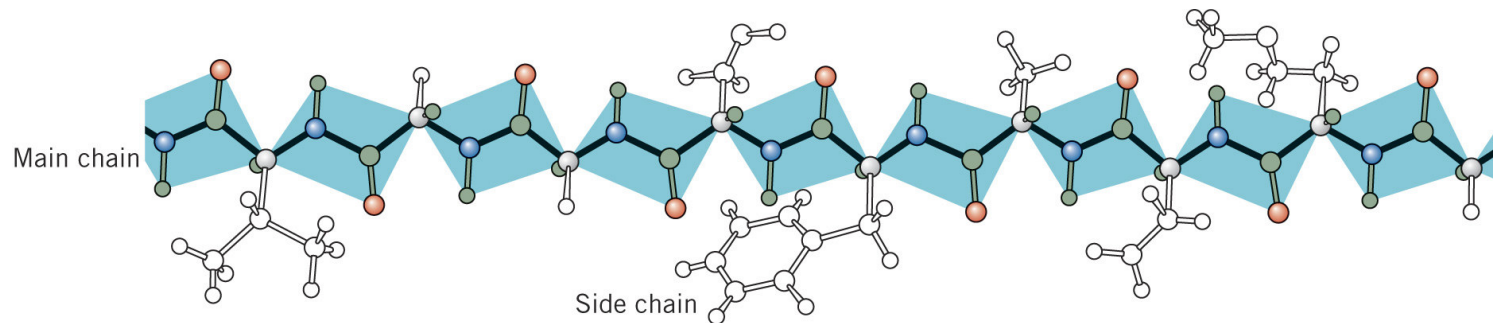
→ Coplanarity results from contribution of the second resonance form of amides, in which there is considerable N-C double bond character



→ The carbon with attached R groups between the amide nitrogen and the carbonyl group has relatively free rotation and this leads to different conformations of the overall chain

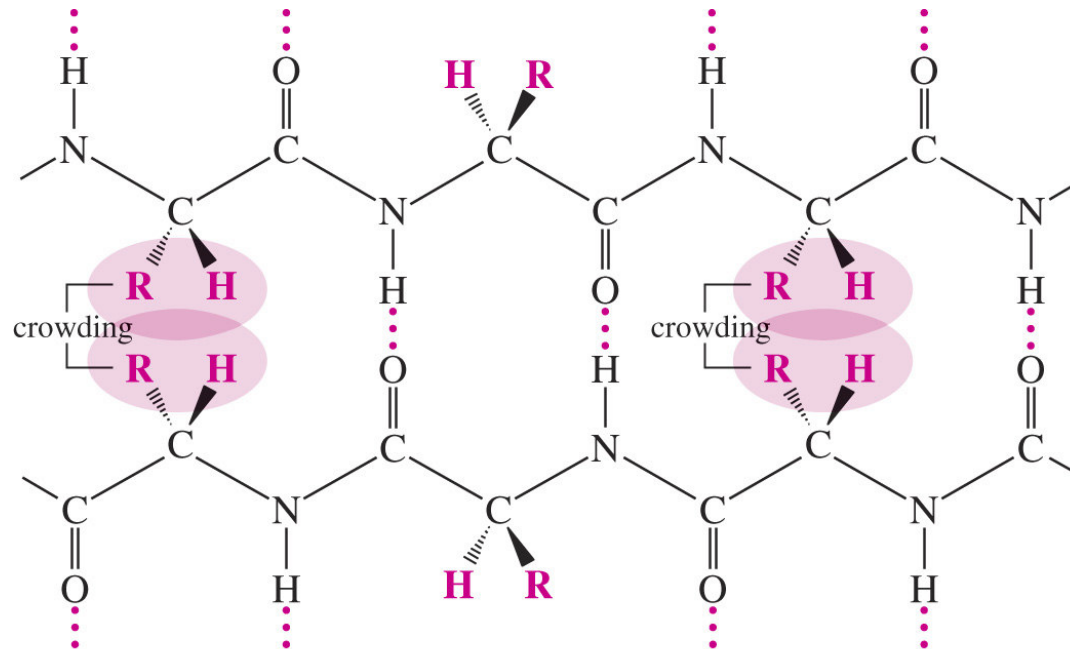
- Two common secondary structure are the *β-pleated sheet* and the *α-helix*

→ In the β-pleated sheet, a polypeptide chain is in an extended conformation with groups alternating from side to side



→ The extended polypeptide chains in β -pleated sheets form hydrogen bonds to adjacent polypeptide chains

- ☞ Slight bond rotations are necessary between amide groups to avoid unfavorable steric interactions between peptide side chains, leading to the pleated structure
- ☞ The β -pleated sheet is the predominant structure in silk fibroin



Hypothetical flat-sheet structure
(not formed because of steric hindrance)

- ➔ **The α -helix is the most important protein secondary structure**
- ➔ **α -Helices in a polypeptide are right-handed with 3.6 amino acid residues per turn (See figure 24.11 page 1198)**
 - ☞ The amide nitrogen has a hydrogen bond to an amino acid carbonyl oxygen that is three residues away
 - ☞ The R groups extend away from the axis of the helix
- ➔ **α -Helices comprise the predominant secondary structure of fibrous proteins such as myosin (in muscle) and α -keratin (in hair and nails)**
- ➔ **There are other secondary structures that are more difficult to describe**
 - ☞ Examples are coil or loop conformations and reverse turns or β bends

- **Carbonic Anhydrase**

- ➔ **The structure of the enzyme carbonic anhydrase is shown in Figure 24.12, page 1198**

- ☞ **Alpha helices are in magenta and strands of β -pleated sheets are in yellow**
 - ☞ **The mechanism of carbonic anhydrase reaction was discussed in Chapter 3**

● Tertiary Structure

→ The tertiary structure of a protein is the three-dimensional shape which results from further folding of its polypeptide chains

☞ This folding is superimposed on the folding caused by its secondary structure

→ In globular proteins, the folding in tertiary structures exposes the maximum number of polar (hydrophilic) side chains to the aqueous environment, making most globular proteins water soluble

☞ The folding also serves to enclose a maximum number of nonpolar (hydrophobic) side chains within the protein interior

→ Tertiary structures are stabilized by forces including hydrogen bonding, disulfide bonds, van der Waals forces, and ionic attractions

- **Myoglobin**

- ➔ **The globular protein myoglobin transports oxygen within muscle tissues (See Figure 24.13, page 1200)**

- 👉 **Myoglobin has an associated non-polypeptide molecule called heme (shown in gray)**
 - 👉 **The heme group is the site of oxygen binding**

- **Quaternary Structure**

- **The overall structure of a protein having multiple subunits is called its quaternary structure**

- 👉 Not all proteins have quaternary structure

- **Hemoglobin**

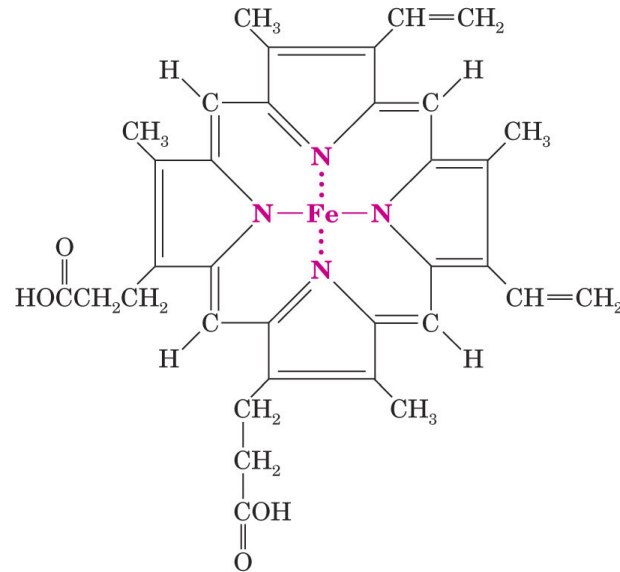
- **Hemoglobin is a globular protein that transports oxygen in the blood**

- **Hemoglobin contains four polypeptide subunits (2 designated α , and 2 designated β) (See Figure 24.21, page 1210)**

- 👉 The α subunits are shown in blue and green; β subunits are shown in yellow and cyan

→ Each of the four protein subunits carries a heme group

- ☞ The four heme groups are shown in purple
- ☞ Each heme group can bind one oxygen molecule in a reversible complex



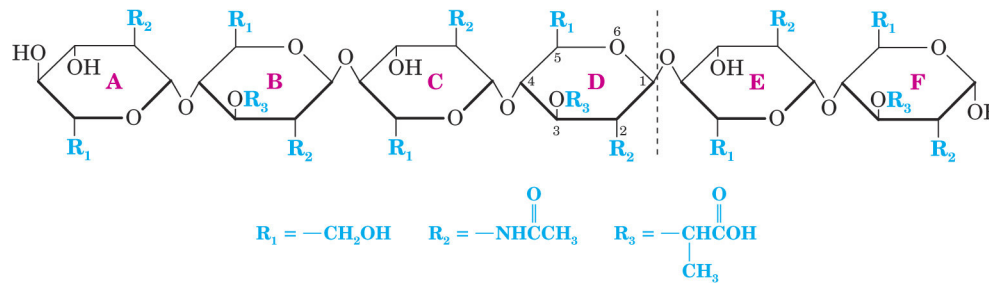
● Introduction to Enzymes

- Most enzymes are proteins
- Enzymes can catalyze reactions by a factor of 10^6 - 10^{12}
- Enzymes have very high specificity for their respective substrates (reactants)
- Enzymatic reactions take place in the active site of each enzyme
 - ☞ The structure of the active site facilitates binding and catalysis
- Enzymes sometimes require a cofactor or coenzyme
 - ☞ A cofactor can be a metal ion (e.g., Zn^{+2} , Mg^{+2}) bound at the active site
 - ☞ A coenzyme is a small organic molecule bound at the active site that becomes chemically changed during the enzymatic reaction (e.g., NAD^+)

● Lysozyme

→ Lysozyme catalyzes hydrolysis of a glycosidic linkage in the polysaccharide cell wall of bacteria

☞ The mechanism of lysozyme involves acid-base reactions and S_N1 reaction



→ The mechanism of lysozyme is shown in Figure 24.16, page 1204

● Serine Proteases

- Proteases hydrolyze amide bonds in proteins
- Chymotrypsin, trypsin, and elastin are serine proteases
- Serine proteases have a serine hydroxyl group that is involved in the mechanism of amide bond hydrolysis

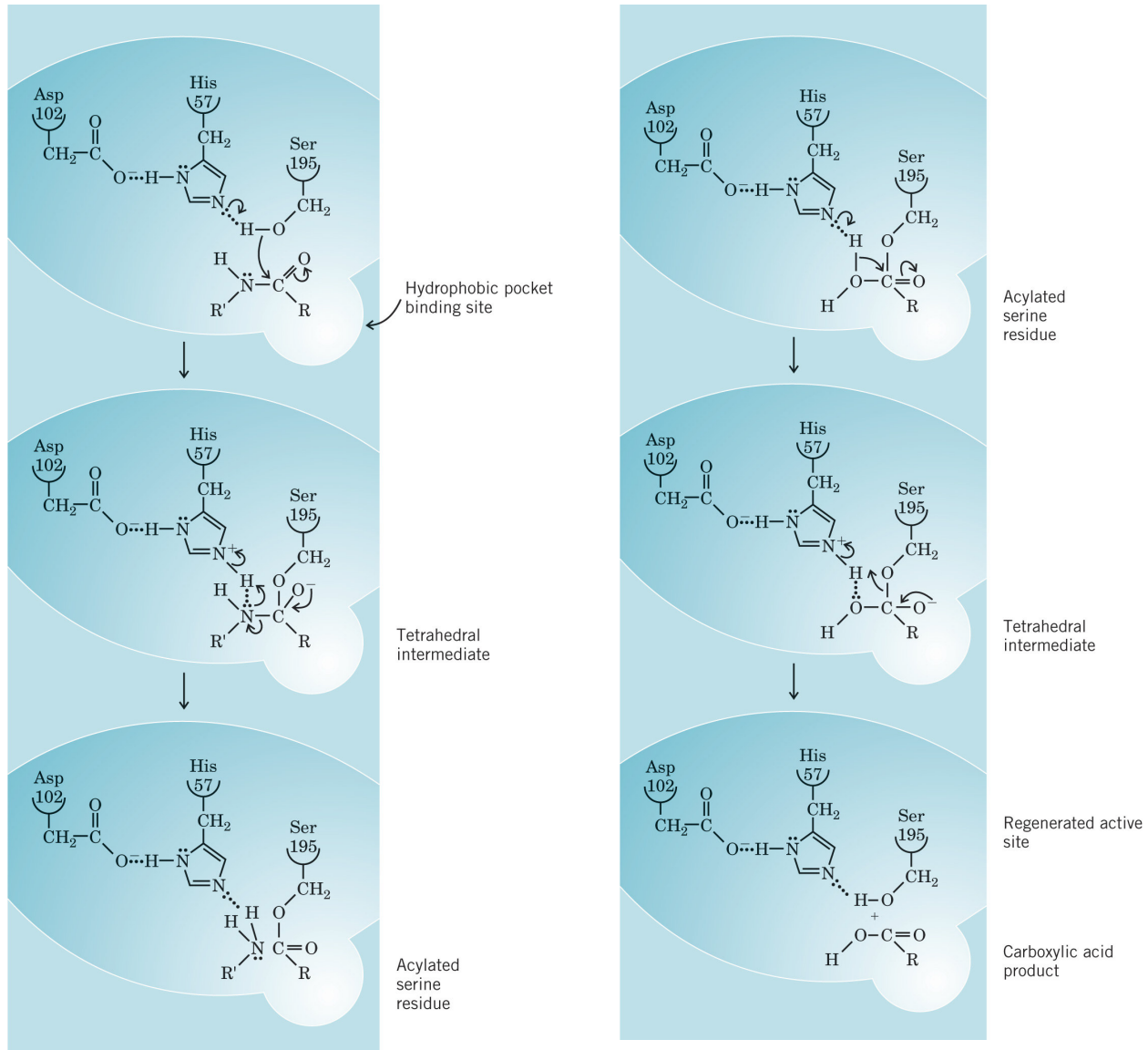
- ☞ A “catalytic triad” involving the side chains of specific aspartic acid, histidine, and serine residues catalyze the amide hydrolysis
- ☞ The serine hydroxyl attacks the amide carbonyl group, forming a tetrahedral intermediate
- ☞ The aspartic acid and histidine side chains form an acid-base relay system to assist with protonation and deprotonation steps
- ☞ The serine tetrahedral intermediate releases the amine, leaving an acylated serine
- ☞ A water molecule attacks the carbonyl group of the acylated serine
- ☞ A new tetrahedral intermediate forms
- ☞ When this tetrahedral intermediate collapses to the carboxylic acid, the serine hydroxyl is released for a new catalytic cycle

- ☞ See the following slide for the mechanism of trypsin

● The Active Site Catalytic Triad of Trypsin

- ☞ This is shown figure 24.17, page 1205

● The Catalytic Mechanism of Trypsin



- **Purification and Analysis of Polypeptides and Proteins**

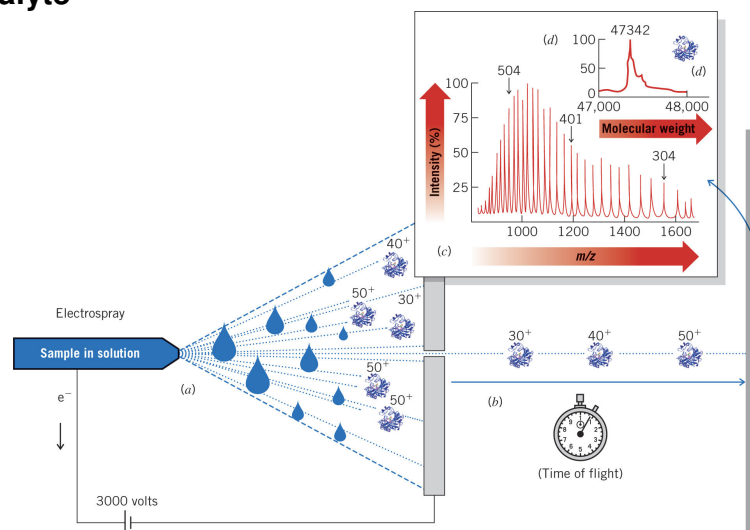
- Proteins are purified initially by precipitation, column chromatography, and electrophoresis
- HPLC is the method of choice for final purification of a protein

- **Analysis of proteins**

- Molecular weight can be estimated by gel electrophoresis and size exclusion chromatography
- Mass spectrometry is used to determine protein molecular weights with high accuracy and precision
 - ☞ Electrospray ionization (ESI) mass spectrometry is one way to create protein ions for mass spectrometry
 - ☞ Matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization (MALDI) mass spectrometry is another technique for generating protein ions for mass spectrometry
 - ☞ The 2002 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded in part for development of ESI (by Fenn, et al) and MALDI (by Tanaku) for mass spectrometry

● Electrospray Ionization (ESI) Mass Spectrometry (MS)

- ☞ Multiply charged ions of the analyte (e.g., a protein sample) are formed by protonation in an acidic solvent
- ☞ The protonated analyte may have one, several, or many positive charges
- ☞ The charged analyte is sprayed through a high-voltage nozzle into a vacuum chamber
- ☞ Molecules of the solvent evaporate, leaving 'naked' ions of the multiply charged analyte
- ☞ The ions are drawn into a mass analyzer and detected according to mass-to-charge (m/z) ratio
- ☞ Quadrupole and time of flight (TOF) mass analyzers are common methods for detecting and separating ions
- ☞ The family of detected ions is displayed as a series according to m/z ratio
- ☞ Computer deconvolution of the m/z peak series leads to the molecular weight of the analyte



● Proteomics

→ Proteomics involves identification and quantification of all of the proteins expressed in a cell at a given time

- ☞ Proteins expression levels vary in cells over time
- ☞ Proteomics involves identification and quantification of all of the proteins expressed in a cell at a given time
- ☞ Proteomics data can shed light on the health or life-cycle stage of a cell

→ Tools for Proteomics

- ☞ Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (2D-PAGE) is a low resolution technique for separating protein mixtures
- ☞ Two-dimensional (2D) microcapillary HPLC coupled with mass spectrometry is a high resolution technique for separating and identifying proteins in a cell extract

● **Multidimensional Protein Identification Technology**

→ **MudPIT (Multidimensional protein identification technology)**
involves:

- ☞ **Lysis of intact cells**
- ☞ **Digestion of the proteins to a mixture of smaller peptides**
- ☞ **Separation of the peptide mixture by 2D HPLC using a strong cation exchange column in tandem with a reversed-phase (hydrophobic) column)**
- ☞ **Direct introduction of the 2D HPLC eluent into a mass spectrometer**
- ☞ **Comparison of mass spectra with a database of mass spectral data for known proteins**
- ☞ **Data matching can lead to identification of >1000 proteins in one integrated analysis**