

MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY AND INFECTION

Lecture Notes



Tom Elliott
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5th Edition

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Preface](#)

[Contributors](#)

[Part 1: Basic Microbiology](#)

[Chapter 1: Basic Bacteriology](#)

[Bacterial Structure](#)

[Bacterial Growth](#)

[Chapter 2: Classification of Bacteria](#)

[Bacterial Taxonomy and Nomenclature](#)

[Bacterial Classification](#)

[Other Bacterial Groups](#)

[Chapter 3: Staphylococci](#)

[Definition](#)

[Classification](#)

[Chapter 4: Streptococci and Enterococci](#)

Streptococci
 α -Haemolytic Streptococci
 β -Haemolytic Streptococci

Chapter 5: Clostridia

Definition
Epidemiology
Classification
Other Clostridial Infections

Chapter 6: Other Gram-positive bacteria

Bacillus
Corynebacteria
Other Corynebacteria

Chapter 7: Gram-Negative Cocci

Other Gram-Negative Cocci

Chapter 8: Enterobacteriaceae

Chapter 9: *Haemophilus* and Other Fastidious Gram-Negative Bacteria

Haemophilus influenzae
H. parainfluenzae and Aggregatibacter
aphrophilus
H. aegyptius
H. ducreyi
HACEK
Eikenella Corrodens

Cardiobacterium Hominis
Brucella
Bordetella
Pasteurella
Capnocytophaga Species
Streptobacillus Moniliformis
Gardnerella Vaginalis

Chapter 10: Pseudomonas, Legionella and Other Environmental Gram-Negative Bacilli

Pseudomonas, Burkholderia and
Stenotrophomonas
Acinetobacter

Chapter 11: Campylobacter, Helicobacter and Vibrio

Campylobacter
Helicobacter
Vibrio

Chapter 12: Treponema, Borrelia and Leptospira

Spirochaetes
Borrelia
Leptospira

Chapter 13: Gram-Negative Anaerobic Bacteria

Bacteroides, *Prevotella* and *Porphyromonas*
Gram-Negative Anaerobic Cocci

Chapter 14: Chlamydiaceae, *Rickettsia*, *Coxiella*, Mycoplasmataceae and Anaplasmatataceae

Chlamydiaceae
Rickettsia
Anaplasmatataceae

Chapter 15: Basic Virology

Virus Structure (Figure 15.1)
Virus Cultivation
Viral Infection of Host Cells
Virus Classification
Detection of Virus Infections

Chapter 16: Major Virus Groups

DNA Viruses (Table 16.1)
Herpesviruses
Adenoviruses
Parvoviruses
RNA Viruses (Table 16.1)
Paramyxoviruses
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
Parainfluenza Viruses

[Measles Virus](#)

[Mumps](#)

[Rhinoviruses](#)

[Coronaviruses](#)

[Enteroviruses](#)

[Rubella Virus \(Chapter 40\)](#)

[Rotaviruses](#)

[Norovirus and Sapoviruses](#)

[Hepatitis Viruses \(Includes DNA and RNA Viruses\)](#)
[\(Chapter 29\)](#)

[Human Retroviruses](#)

[Human Papillomavirus \(HPV\)](#)

[Rabies Virus](#)

[Chapter 17: Basic Mycology and Classification of Fungi](#)

[Characteristics](#)

[Classification](#)

[Fungal Infections](#)

[Examples of Fungal Pathogens](#)

[Chapter 18: Parasitology: Protozoa](#)

[Classification](#)

[Protozoa](#)

[Free-Living Amoebae](#)

[Chapter 19: Parasitology: Helminths](#)

[Nematodes](#)

[Cestodes](#)

Trematodes

Part 2: Antimicrobial Agents

Chapter 20: Antibacterial Agents

Definitions

Principles of Antimicrobial Therapy

Mechanism of Action of Antimicrobial Agents

Resistance to Antimicrobial Agents

The Genetics of Bacterial Resistance to Antimicrobials

Adverse Reactions and Antimicrobials (Table 20.2)

Laboratory Aspects of Antimicrobial Therapy

Antibacterial Agents

Antibacterial Agents Acting on Cell Membranes

Macrolides and Lincosamides

Inhibition of Nucleic Acid Synthesis and Function

Co-Trimoxazole (Trimethoprim Combined with Sulfamethoxazole)

Other Antimicrobials

Chapter 21: Antifungal Agents

Azoles

Chapter 22: Antiviral Agents

Mechanisms of Action

Drug Resistance

Anti-HIV Compounds

Viral Entry Inhibitors (Fusion Inhibitors)

[Drug Combinations](#)
[Resistance in HIV Infection](#)
[Anti-Hepatitis B Compounds](#)
[Anti-Hepatitis C Compounds](#)
[Anti-Influenza Compounds](#)

[Part 3: Infection](#)

[Chapter 23: Diagnostic Laboratory Methods](#)

[Clinical Request Form](#)
[Sample Collection](#)
[Transport of Clinical Samples](#)
[Non-Culture Techniques](#)

[Chapter 24: Epidemiology and Prevention of Infection](#)

[Epidemiology of Infection](#)
[The Cycle of Infection](#)
[Sources of Infection](#)
[Routes of Spread of Infection](#)
[Examples of Factors Affecting Transmission of Microorganisms](#)
[Key Strategies to Prevent Infections](#)
[Healthcare-Associated Infections](#)
[Isolation Procedures](#)
[The Prevention and Control of Infection in Hospitals](#)
[Surveillance](#)

[Biological Warfare](#)

[Prevention of Infection to Healthcare Workers](#)

[Chapter 25: Upper Respiratory Tract Infections](#)

[Viral Infections](#)

[Bacterial Infections](#)

[Chapter 26: Lower Respiratory Tract Infections](#)

[Pneumonia](#)

[Specific Causes of Community-Acquired Pneumonia](#)

[Viral Causes of Community-Acquired Pneumonia](#)

[Hospital-Acquired Pneumonia \(HAP\)](#)

[Chapter 27: Tuberculosis and Mycobacteria](#)

[Chapter 28: Gastrointestinal Infections](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Bacterial Causes of Infective Gastroenteritis](#)

[Diagnosis of Bacterial Causes of Infective Gastroenteritis](#)

[Management of Bacterial Causes of Infective Gastroenteritis and Food Poisoning](#)

[Prevention of Bacterial Causes of Infective Gastroenteritis and Food Poisoning](#)

[Viral Causes of Infective Gastroenteritis](#)

Protozoal Causes of Infective Gastroenteritis

Chapter 29: Liver and Biliary Tract Infections

Aetiology and Host-Parasite Interactions

Viral Hepatitis

Other Causes of Viral Hepatitis

Chapter 30: Urinary Tract Infections

Clinical Definitions

Microbial Aetiology and Host-Parasite Interactions

Chapter 31: Genital Infections

Vaginitis

Urethritis and Cervicitis

Non-Gonococcal Urethritis and Cervicitis

Other Causes of Urethritis

Chapter 32: Infections of the Central Nervous System

Bacterial Meningitis

Major Causes of Bacterial Meningitis

Laboratory Diagnosis of Bacterial Meningitis

Treatment of Bacterial Meningitis

Chapter 33: Bacteraemia and Bloodstream Infection

Definitions

Aetiology

Pathogenesis and Epidemiology

Laboratory Diagnosis

Management

Chapter 34: Device-Related Infections

Pathogenesis of Device-Related Infection

Examples of Device-Related Infections

Chapter 35: Cardiovascular Infections

Infective Endocarditis

Pacemaker and Device Related Infection

Myocarditis

Pericarditis

Chapter 36: Bone and Joint Infections

Osteomyelitis

Septic Arthritis

Reactive Arthritis

Viral Arthritis

Chapter 37: Skin and Soft-Tissue Infections

Normal Flora of Skin

Pathogenesis of Skin and Soft-Tissue Infections

Skin and Soft-Tissue Infections (SSTI)

Toxin-Mediated Skin Conditions

Infections of the Eye

Chapter 38: Infections in the Compromised Host

Infections Associated with Defects in Innate Immune Systems (Table 38.1)

Chapter 39: Infections Caused by Antimicrobial-Resistant Bacteria

Introduction

Meticillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus*

Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci (VRE)

Chapter 40: Perinatal and Congenital Infections

Definitions

Congenital Infections

Neonatal Infections

Enteroviruses

Maternal Infections and Perinatal Infections

Chapter 41: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Definitions

HIV Viral Anatomy

HIV Life Cycle and Associated Antiretroviral Agents

Epidemiology

Pathogenesis

Clinical Features

[Prophylaxis](#)
[Laboratory Diagnosis](#)
[Treatment](#)

[Chapter 42: Miscellaneous Viral Infections](#) [Arboviruses](#)

[Part 4: Self-assessment](#)

[Self-Assessment Questions](#)

[Chapter 1 Basic Bacteriology](#)
[Chapter 2 Classification of Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 3 Staphylococci](#)
[Chapter 4 Streptococci and Enterococci](#)
[Chapter 5 Clostridia](#)
[Chapter 6 Other Gram-Positive Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 7 Gram-Negative Cocci](#)
[Chapter 8 Enterobacteriaceae](#)
[Chapter 9 *Haemophilus* and other Fastidious Gram-Negative Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 10 *Pseudomonas*, *Legionella* and other environmental Gram-negative bacilli](#)
[Chapter 11 *Campylobacter*, *Helicobacter* and vibrios](#)
[Chapter 12 *Treponema*, *Borrelia* and *Leptospira*](#)
[Chapter 13 Gram-Negative Anaerobic Bacilli](#)
[Chapter 14 Chlamydiaceae, *Rickettsia*, *Coxiella*, Mycoplasmataceae and Anaplasmatidae](#)
[Chapter 15 Basic Virology](#)

[Chapter 16 Major Virus Groups](#)
[Chapter 17 Basic Mycology and Classification of Fungi](#)
[Chapter 18 Parasitology: Protozoa](#)
[Chapter 19 Parasitology: Helminths](#)
[Chapter 20 Antibacterial Agents](#)
[Chapter 21 Antifungal Agents](#)
[Chapter 22 Antiviral Agents](#)
[Chapter 23 Diagnostic Laboratory Methods](#)
[Chapter 24 Epidemiology, Prevention of Infections](#)
[Chapter 25 Upper Respiratory Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 26 Lower Respiratory Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 27 Tuberculosis and Mycobacteria](#)
[Chapter 28 Gastrointestinal Infections](#)
[Chapter 29 Liver and Biliary Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 30 Urinary Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 31 Genital Infections](#)
[Chapter 32 Infections of the Central Nervous System](#)
[Chapter 33 Bacteraemia and Bloodstream Infections](#)
[Chapter 34 Device-Related Infections](#)
[Chapter 35 Cardiovascular Infections](#)
[Chapter 36 Bone and Joint Infections](#)
[Chapter 37 Skin and Soft Tissue Infections](#)
[Chapter 38 Infections in the Compromised Host](#)
[Chapter 39 Infections Caused by Antimicrobial-Resistant Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 40 Perinatal and Congenital Infections](#)

[Chapter 41 Human Immunodeficiency Viruses](#)
[Chapter 42 Miscellaneous Viral Infections](#)

[Answers to self-assessment questions](#)

[Chapter 1 Basic Bacteriology](#)
[Chapter 2 Classification of Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 3 Staphylococci](#)
[Chapter 4 Streptococci and Enterococci](#)
[Chapter 5 Clostridia](#)
[Chapter 6 Other Gram-Positive Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 7 Gram-Negative Cocci](#)
[Chapter 8 Enterobacteriaceae](#)
[Chapter 9 *Haemophilus* and other fastidious Gram-Negative Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 10 *Pseudomonas*, *Legionella* and Other Environmental Gram-Negative Bacilli](#)
[Chapter 11 *Campylobacter*, *Helicobacter* and *Vibrio*](#)
[Chapter 12 *Treponema*, *Borrelia* and *Leptospira*](#)
[Chapter 13 Gram-Negative Anaerobic Bacilli](#)
[Chapter 14 Chlamydiaceae, *Rickettsia*, *Coxiella*, Mycoplasmataceae and Anaplasmatataceae](#)
[Chapter 15 Basic Virology](#)
[Chapter 16 Major Virus Groups](#)
[Chapter 17 Basic Mycology and Classification of Fungi](#)
[Chapter 18 Parasitology: Protozoa](#)
[Chapter 19 Parasitology: Helminths](#)
[Chapter 20 Antibacterial Agents](#)
[Chapter 21 Antifungal Agents](#)

[Chapter 22 Antiviral Agents](#)
[Chapter 23 Diagnostic Laboratory Methods](#)
[Chapter 24 Epidemiology and Prevention of Infection](#)
[Chapter 25 Upper Respiratory Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 26 Lower Respiratory Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 27 Tuberculosis and Mycobacteria](#)
[Chapter 28 Gastrointestinal Infections](#)
[Chapter 29 Liver and Biliary Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 30 Urinary Tract Infections](#)
[Chapter 31 Genital Infections](#)
[Chapter 32 Infections of the Central Nervous System](#)
[Chapter 33 Bacteraemia and Bloodstream Infections](#)
[Chapter 34 Device-Related Infections](#)
[Chapter 35 Cardiovascular Infections](#)
[Chapter 36 Bone and Joint Infections](#)
[Chapter 37 Skin and Soft Tissue Infections](#)
[Chapter 38 Infections in the Compromised Host](#)
[Chapter 39 Infections Caused by Antimicrobial-Resistant Bacteria](#)
[Chapter 40 Perinatal and Congenital Infections](#)
[Chapter 41 Human Immunodeficiency Viruses](#)
[Chapter 42 Miscellaneous Viral Infections](#)

[General subject index](#)

[Organism index](#)

Medical Microbiology and Infection

Lecture Notes

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Preface

The magnitude of recent changes in the field of medical microbiology has warranted this fifth edition of *Lecture Notes: Medical Microbiology and Infection*. While these changes have been encompassed in new chapters, this edition continues to maintain the well-received and user-friendly format of earlier editions, highlighting the pertinent key facts in medical microbiology and providing a sound foundation of knowledge which students can build on. The book for the first time is multi-authored, with chapters being written by recognised experts in their field.

This fifth edition is arranged into three main sections: basic microbiology, antimicrobial agents and infection. It covers all aspects of microbiology, including bacteriology, virology, mycology and parasitology. As in previous editions, the text is supported throughout with colour figures to illustrate the key points.

This book is written specifically for students in medicine, biomedicine, biology, dentistry, science and also pharmacology, who have an interest in medical microbiology at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In addition, this book will serve as a useful *aide memoire* for doctors sitting MRCS and MRCP examinations, as well as other healthcare professionals, for example biomedical scientists, working towards state registration.

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Part 1

Basic Microbiology

Chapter 1

Basic Bacteriology

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Bacterial Structure

Bacteria are single-celled prokaryotic microorganisms, and their DNA is not contained within a separate nucleus as in eukaryotic cells. They are approximately 0.1–10.0 μm in size ([Figure 1.1](#)) and exist in various shapes, including spheres (cocci), curves, spirals and rods (bacilli) ([Figure 1.2](#)). These characteristic shapes are used to classify and identify bacteria. The appearance of bacteria following the Gram stain is also used for identification. Bacteria which stain purple/blue are termed Gram-positive, whereas those that stain pink/red are termed Gram-negative. This difference in response to the Gram stain results from the composition of the cell envelope (wall) ([Figure 1.3](#)), which are described below.

[Figure 1.1](#) Shape and size of some clinically important bacteria.

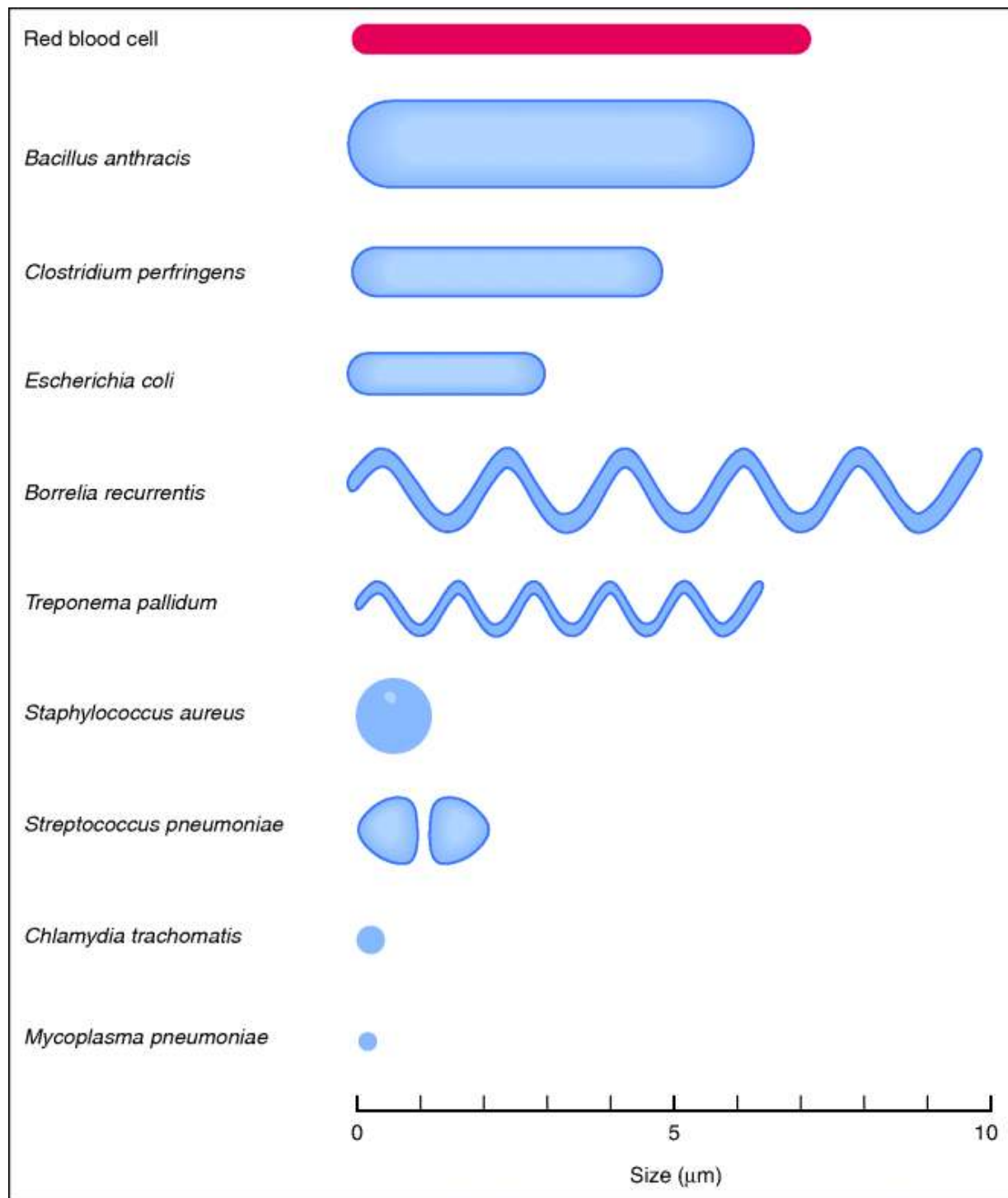


Figure 1.2 Some bacterial shapes.

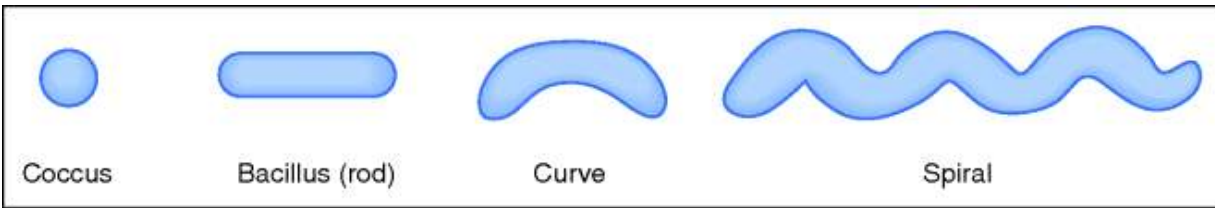
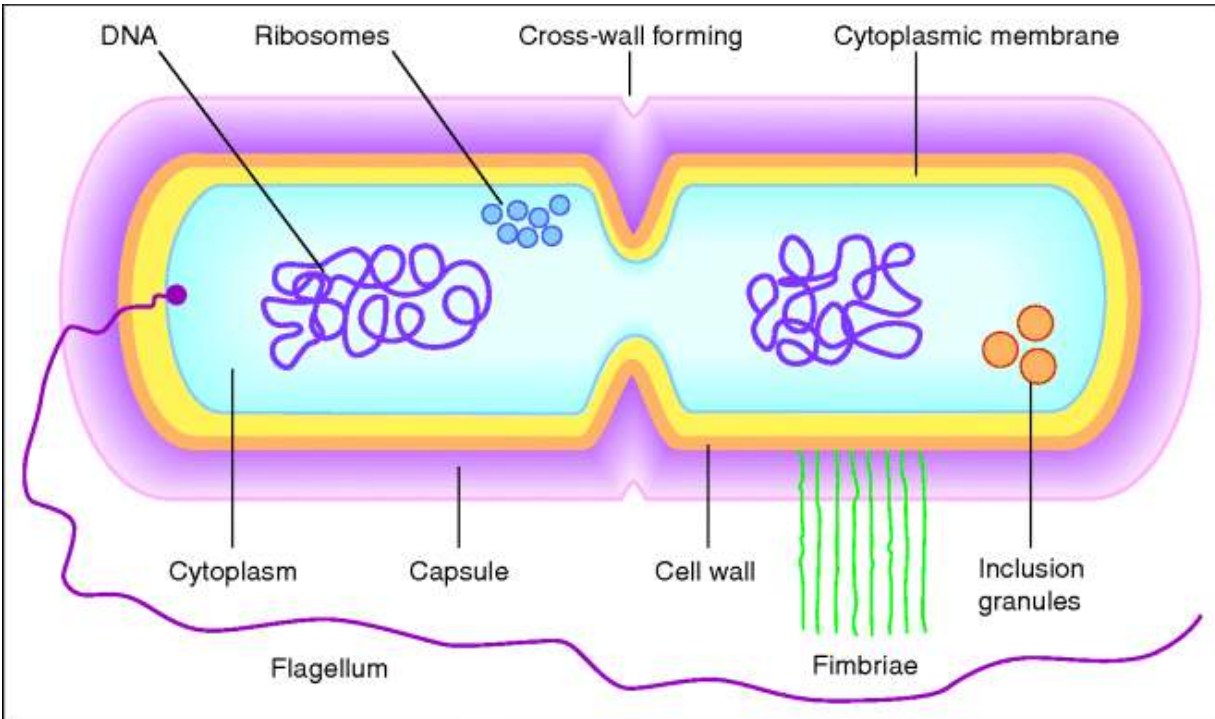


Figure 1.3 A section of a typical bacterial cell.



Cell Envelope

Cytoplasmic Membrane

A *cytoplasmic membrane* surrounds the cytoplasm of all bacterial cells and are composed of protein and phospholipid; they resemble the membrane surrounding mammalian (eukaryotic) cells but lack sterols. The phospholipids form a bilayer into which proteins are embedded, some spanning the membrane. The membrane carries out many functions, including the synthesis and export of cell-wall components, respiration, secretion of extracellular enzymes and toxins, and the uptake of nutrients by active transport mechanisms.

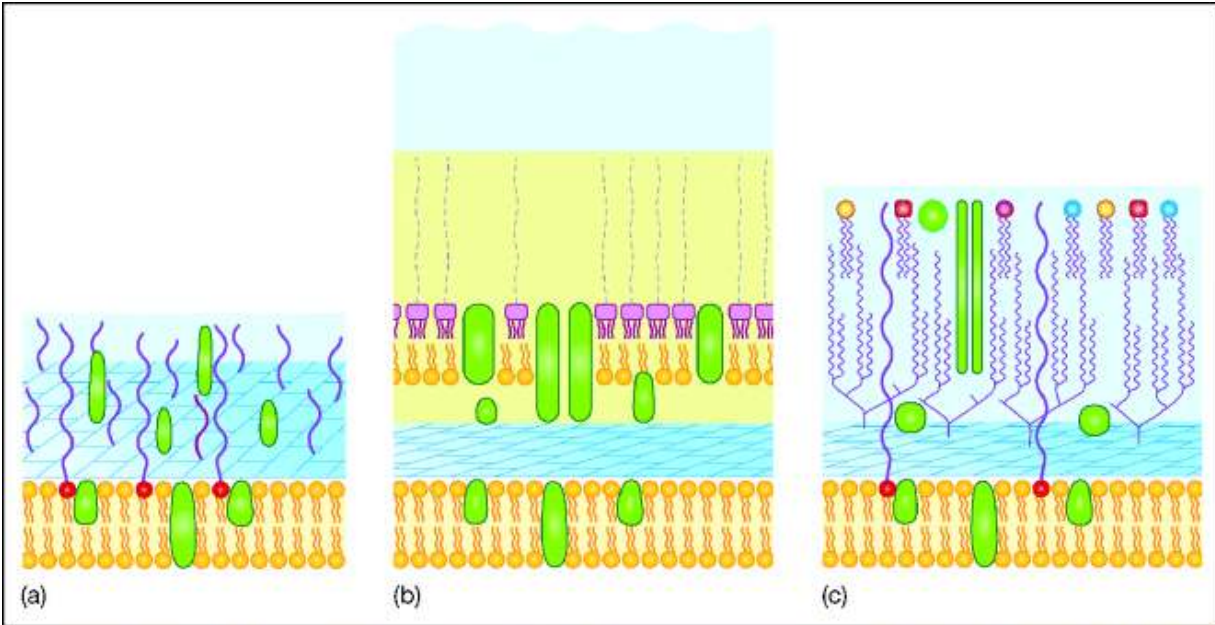
Mesosomes are intracellular membrane structures, formed by folding of the cytoplasmic membrane. They occur more frequently in Gram-positive than in Gram-negative bacteria. Mesosomes present at the point of cell division of Gram-positive bacteria are involved in chromosomal separation; at other sites they may be associated with cellular respiration and metabolism.

Cell Wall

Bacteria maintain their shape by a strong rigid outer cover, the cell wall ([Figure 1.3](#)).

Gram-positive bacteria have a relatively thick, uniform cell wall, largely composed of peptidoglycan, a complex molecule consisting of linear repeating sugar subunits cross-linked by peptide side chains ([Figure 1.4a](#)). Other cell-wall polymers, including teichoic acids, teichuronic acids and proteins, are also present.

Figure 1.4 Cell wall and cytoplasmic membrane of (a) Gram-positive bacteria, (b) Gram-negative bacteria and (c) mycobacteria. The Gram-positive bacterial cell wall has a thick peptidoglycan layer with associated molecules (teichoic acids, teichuronic acids and proteins). The Gram-negative bacterial cell wall contains lipopolysaccharides, phospholipids and proteins in an outer membrane linked to a thin inner peptidoglycan layer. The mycobacterial cell wall contains long chain length fatty acids (mycolic acids).



Gram-negative bacteria have a thinner peptidoglycan layer and an additional outer membrane that differs in structure from the cytoplasmic membrane ([Figure 1.4b](#)). The outer membrane contains lipopolysaccharides on its outer face, phospholipids on its inner face, proteins and lipoproteins which anchor it to the peptidoglycan. Porins are a group of proteins that form channels through which small hydrophilic molecules, including nutrients, can cross the outer membrane. Lipopolysaccharides are a characteristic feature of Gram-negative bacteria and are also termed 'endotoxins' or 'pyrogen'. Endotoxins are released on cell lysis and have important biological activities involved in the pathogenesis of Gram-negative infections; they activate macrophages, clotting factors and complement, leading to disseminated intravascular coagulation and septic shock (Chapter 33).

Mycobacteria have a distinctive cell wall structure and composition that differs from that of Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria. It contains peptidoglycan but has large amounts of high molecular weight lipids in the form of long chain length fatty acids (mycolic acids) attached to polysaccharides and proteins. This high lipid content gives