

[Open Peer Review on Qeios](#)

# Defensins

National Cancer Institute

## Source

National Cancer Institute. *Defensins*. NCI Thesaurus. Code C1063.

Highly conserved cysteine-rich peptides that play a role in host defense, and may be produced in response to microbial products or proinflammatory cytokines. Defensins bind to microbial cell membranes and can become aggregate either to form pore-like structures or to encapsulate the microbe. These peptide aggregates lead to destabilization of the cell membrane and, subsequently, to lysis of the microbe.