



The finest LC-EC  
Applications for Food  
& Beverage analysis

**Phenols**

Bisphenol A  
Catechins  
Flavonoids  
Phenols  
Antioxidants  
Resveratrol  
Epicatechin  
Quercetin  
Other polyphenols

**Carbohydrates**

Monosaccharides  
Lactose  
Mono- and Disaccharides  
Other oligo- and  
Polysaccharides

**Vitamins, minerals etc.**

A, C, D, E, and K  
Iodide  
Q10, ubiquinol

**Hydrogen Peroxide**

## Hydrogen Peroxide

- **Hydrogen peroxide in health care products (toothpaste)**
- **Fast and sensitive HPAE-PAD method**
- **SenCell™ with Au working electrode**
- **'Green' method**

### Summary

Hydrogen peroxide is a strong oxidizing agent and disinfectant used in a wide variety of applications, such as chemical synthesis, propellant (space rockets), water treatment, food processing, cosmetics, personal and health care products [1].

In this application note an analytical method is presented for the measurement of hydrogen peroxide in liquid samples using the DECADE Elite electrochemical detector and SenCell. The method is based on separation by High Performance Anion Exchange Chromatography followed by Pulsed Amperometric Detection (HPAE-PAD) on a gold working electrode. The use of a narrow-bore HPAE column with 4 µm particle size, allowed the separation of hydrogen peroxide in less than 3 min in combination with a four-fold reduction of mobile phase usage compared to the use of a more traditional column.

A commercially available whitening toothpaste, containing peroxide as bleaching agent, was analyzed as an example to demonstrate the applicability of the method to real samples.



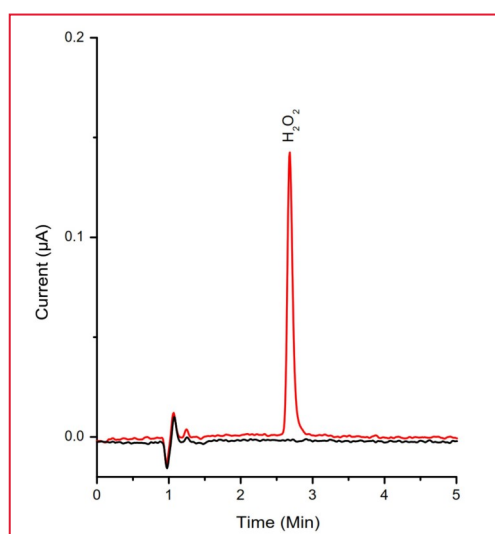
## Introduction

Hydrogen peroxide ( $H_2O_2$ ) is a small molecule consisting of two hydroxy groups joined by a covalent oxygen-oxygen single bond. Pure hydrogen peroxide is a transparent liquid with a slightly pale blue color. Hydrogen peroxide is unstable and slowly decomposes into oxygen gas and water with the evolution of heat. The decomposition is accelerated in the presence of UV light. Although non-flammable, at higher concentrations it can cause spontaneous combustion when it comes in contact with organic material. Hydrogen peroxide is a strong oxidizing agent and disinfectant used in a wide variety of applications, such as chemical synthesis, propellant (space rockets), explosives, water treatment, food processing, paper industry, cosmetics, personal and health care products.

A range of different LC methods are available to measure hydrogen peroxide in various matrices. These methods are based on derivatization followed by either conductivity [2], UV [3] and fluorescence detection [4-6]. Derivatization is necessary due to the lack of a chromophore in hydrogen peroxide.

Ion chromatography in combination with electrochemical detection is the method of choice: it combines good selectivity with sensitive detection [6-8]. Moreover, hydrogen peroxide can be directly detected using electrochemical detection without the need of derivatization in both DC and PAD mode. Several HPAE methods for quantification of hydrogen peroxide are reported in literature based on conventional anion-exchange columns with particle sizes in the range of 6.5 - 10  $\mu m$  [7,8].

In this application note a 'green' HPAE-PAD method is presented based on a new type of anion-exchange column with 4  $\mu m$  particles for the fast and sensitive analysis of hydrogen peroxide. A commercially available whitening toothpaste, containing peroxide as bleaching agent, was analyzed as an example to demonstrate the applicability of the method to real samples.



**Figure 1.** 1  $\mu L$  injection of a 1mg/L (1 ppm) standard of hydrogen peroxide in water (red curve). Black curve: blank (water).

## Method

The analysis was performed using an ALEXYS HPAE-PAD analyzer. The pump in this system has the option to switch between two mobile phases during a run, thus enabling step-gradient profiles. For detection, a DECADE Elite electrochemical detector with SenCell flow cell was used. The system was controlled via a PC using Clarity Data System software. The LC-EC conditions are listed in Table 1. Figure 1 shows an example chromatogram of a hydrogen peroxide standard.

**Table 1.**

Conditions	
LC system	ALEXYS HPAEC-PAD analyzer
Detector	Antec DECADE Elite electrochemical detector
Columns	CarboPac™ PA20-Fast-4 $\mu m$ IC column, 100 x 2.0 mm ID, 4 $\mu m$ + 30 x 2.0 mm ID, 4 $\mu m$ BorateTrap™ Inline Trap Column, 50 x 4.0 mm ID All columns: Thermo Scientific™ Dionex™
Mobile phase (MP)	50 mM KOH blanketed with Helium 5.0
Flow rate	0.2 mL/min
Back pressure	About 154 bar
Injection	1 $\mu L$ (partial loop fill)
Temperature	35 °C for separation and detection
Flow cell	SenCell with Au WE, stainless steel AE and HyREF, AST 2
Potential waveform (4-step)	E1, E2, E3, E4: +0.1, -2.0, +0.6, -0.1 V ts, t1, t2, t3, t4: 0.2, 0.4, 0.02, 0.01, 0.07 s
I-cell	about 0.2 - 0.4 $\mu A$
ADF	0.1 Hz
Range	0.05, 5 and 50 $\mu A/V$



## Separation

An Anion-Exchange column with an internal diameter of only 2 mm (+ guard) and small particle size (4  $\mu\text{m}$ ) was chosen for the separation of hydrogen peroxide. These features result in high-resolution separation and low consumption of mobile phase. The temperature for separation was set at 35  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

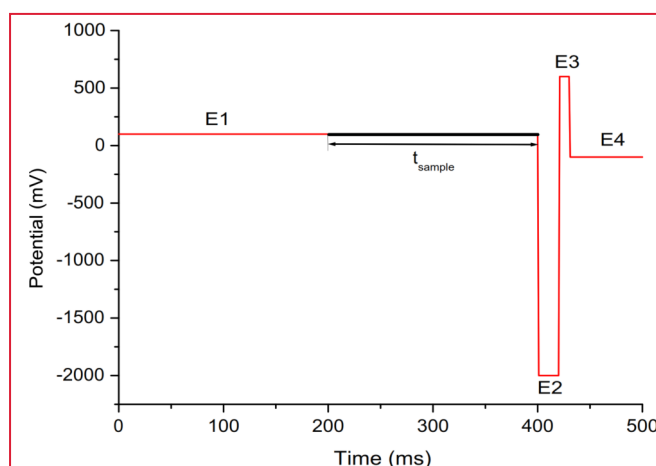
The analysis is based on isocratic elution using 50 mM KOH as mobile phase. To minimize the introduction of carbonate ions in the mobile phase, the eluents were carefully prepared manually using a 45% w/w KOH solution (commercially available). The diluent was DI water (resistivity >18 M $\Omega\text{cm}$ ) which was sonicated and sparged with Helium 5.0 prior to use. The mobile phase should be prepared in plastic bottles instead of glass, as KOH is a strong etching agent. Otherwise the KOH will react with the inner glass wall resulting in the release of silicates and borates.

The appropriate amount of 45% w/w KOH solution was carefully pipetted into the diluent under gentle stirring and Helium sparging when preparing the mobile phase. The bottles with mobile phase and column clean-up solution were blanketed with Helium (0.5 bar overpressure) during the analysis to minimize the build-up of carbonate ions in the mobile phase and to assure a reproducible analysis.

A column clean-up /regeneration step with 200 mM KOH can be applied in case of loss of retention to remove bound carbonate ions or late eluting compounds like oligo- and polysaccharides, which might be present in real samples. See reference [9] for an example of step-gradient elution in HPAE-PAD.

## Detection

For the pulsed amperometric detection of hydrogen peroxide the Antec SenCell electrochemical flow cell is used. This novel flow cell [9] has a confined wall-jet design and consists of an Au working electrode (WE), HyREF (Pd/  $\text{H}_2$ ) reference electrode (RE) and stainless steel auxiliary electrode (AE). A 4-step potential waveform was applied as shown in figure 2. The temperature for detection was set to 35  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The cell current was typically about 0.2 - 0.4  $\mu\text{A}$  with these PAD settings under the specified conditions. This particular 4-step waveform with a pulse duration of 500 ms has been claimed to have as benefits: (1) a consistent long-term peak area response and (2) minimal electrode wear [10], resulting in less flow cell maintenance and system down time.



**Figure 2.** 4-step PAD potential waveform for the detection monosaccharides and other carbohydrates.

## Preparation of standards and samples

**Standards:** a 1000 mg/L  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  stock solution was prepared by pipetting 283  $\mu\text{L}$  of a 31.6 wt%  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  solution (Acros Organics, Germany) into a 100 mL volumetric flask, which was brought to volume with DI water. Working standards in the range of 0.1 mg/L to 100 mg/L were made in the same manner using 10 mL volumetric flasks using the appropriate dilution factors.

**Sample preparation:** Two commercial tooth paste samples were analyzed. The following sample prep procedure was used for the analysis:

### Procedure:

- 100 mg of toothpaste was weighted and transferred into a 10 mL volumetric flask.
- The volumetric flask was filled with approximately 5 mL of DI water and mixed to dissolve the toothpaste.
- Subsequently, the flask was brought to volume with water.
- A part of the solution was transferred into a 5 mL plastic syringe and filtered over a 0.20  $\mu\text{m}$  PES (Polyethersulfone) syringe filter (GVS life sciences, Sanford, USA).
- The filtered solution was 10 or 100 times diluted with water and transferred into a 1.5 mL glass vial, from which 1  $\mu\text{L}$  was injected into the LC system and analyzed.



## Results

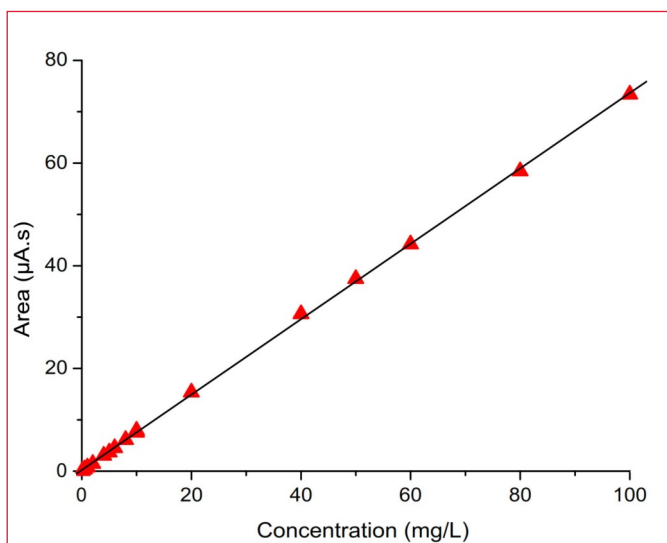
In figure 1 an overlay is shown of two chromatograms obtained with a 1  $\mu\text{L}$  injection of a 1 ppm  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  standard in water (red curve) and a water blank injection (black curve).  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  is eluting within three minutes without coeluting interferences. The  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  peak has a plate number of 45.000 plates/meter and a tailing factor of 1.3.

### Linearity, repeatability and LOD

The linearity of the  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  response was investigated in the concentration range of 0.1–10 mg/L and 10–100 mg/L, which corresponds with a molar concentration range of 2.9  $\mu\text{mol/L}$  - 2.9 mmol/L (figure 3). In both the low and high concentration ranges the linearity was excellent with correlation coefficients better than 0.999. In fact the response was linear over the complete concentration range between 0.1 and 100 mg/L, which is significantly better than reported in ref [8].

The repeatability of the method and system was evaluated by ten repetitive injections with a 0.1, 1 and 10 mg/L  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  standard. The relative standard deviations (RSD) for peak area were 2.6, 1.3 and 1 %, respectively, demonstrating the good repeatability of the method. It is evident that the RSD for the lowest concentration was higher, but still within 3%.

The Limit of Detection (LOD) was determined based on the response of the 0.1 mg/L  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  standard with the detector set



**Figure 3.** Calibration curve of hydrogen peroxide in the concentration range of 0.1 - 100 mg/L. ( $R > 0.999$ ).

at the 50 nA/V range. The LOD was calculated as the analyte response corresponding to 3x the ASTM noise (average peak-to-peak baseline noise of 12 segments of 0.5 min). The noise was calculated based on a 6 minute section of the baseline during a run (after elution of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  starting at  $t = 4$  min). A LOD of 1.8  $\mu\text{g/L}$  (53 nmol/L, 1.8 pmol on-column) was found, demonstrating the outstanding sensitivity of the method.

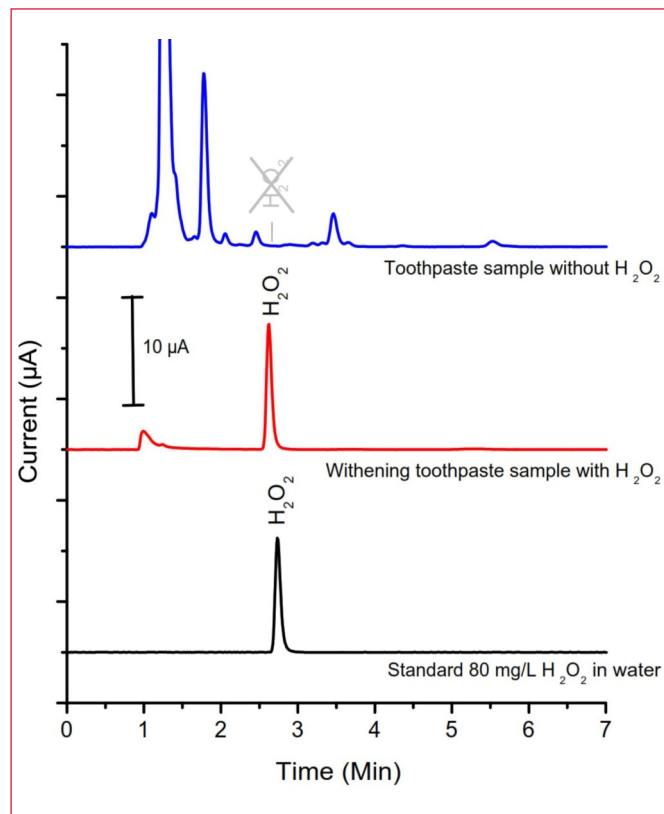
### Sample analysis

Two commercial toothpaste samples were analyzed using this method:

- Whitening toothpaste containing peroxide\* and baking soda
- Normal toothpaste with mint taste

\*) the amount of peroxide is undisclosed by the manufacturer

The sample preparation of the toothpaste samples is simple and described in the previous section. The chromatograms of the toothpaste samples are shown in figure 4 together with a chromatogram of a 80 mg/L  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  standard for reference and identification.



**Figure 4.** Top: chromatogram of a 1  $\mu\text{L}$  injection of the toothpaste sample without peroxide (blue), middle: whitening toothpaste with peroxide (red), and bottom: 80 mg/L standard.



It is evident from figure 4 that the whitening toothpaste contained hydrogen peroxide. The concentration of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in the worked-up sample was calculated using the 10-100 mg/L calibration curve and was 83 mg/L. This amount corresponds with 8 mg H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/gram toothpaste (0.8 wt%). The control sample (normal toothpaste with mint taste) did not contain any measurable amount of peroxide. However, the chromatogram of the control sample showed several other unidentified compound peaks. These peaks/compounds did not interfere or coelute with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. One of the ingredients mentioned on the content label of the control sample is sorbitol. Sorbitol is a sugar alcohol with a sweet taste which is often used as sweetener. Toothpaste manufacturers add it to toothpastes to create a sweet flavor without leading to tooth decay. Due to the fact that oral bacteria can not metabolize sorbitol, it is not converted to cavity-causing acids and, therefore, the teeth are protected. Sorbitol is a fast eluting sugar alcohol. Although no sorbitol standard was injected for identification, it is very likely that the large peak at 1.3 min is due to sorbitol.

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## Conclusion

The ALEXYS HPAEC-PAD system based on the DECADE Elite detector, SenCell flow cell and a narrow-bore 'fast-4µm' HPAE column, offers a simple and sensitive analysis solution for the quantification of hydrogen peroxide with minimal sample preparation. The presented HPAEC-PAD method allows fast separation, within 3 min, of hydrogen peroxide followed by direct PAD detection without the need for derivatization. A four-fold reduction of mobile phase usage was achieved by using a 2 mm ID column instead of a standard bore version (4 mm ID). The method was successfully applied for the analysis of hydrogen peroxide in a commercial whitening toothpaste sample.



## Ordering information

<b>Detector only</b>	
176.0035A	DECADE Elite SCC electrochemical detector
116.4321	SenCell 2 mm Au HyREF
<b>Recommended ALEXYS analyzer</b>	
180.0055W	ALEXYS Carbohydrate Analyzer
116.4321	SenCell 2 mm Au HyREF
<b>Software</b>	
195.0035#	Clarity CDS single instr. incl LC, AS module

#) optional: Antec ECD drivers for use with Chromeleon CDS , OpenLAB CDS or OpenLAB Chemstation CDS are available.

**Figure 5.** Recommended instrument configuration for this application: the ALEXYS Carbohydrate Analyzer

The system consists of a P6.1L pump with integrated Solvent Switch Valve (SSV) capable of running step gradients, an AS6.1L autosampler, an ET 210 Eluent tray for helium blanketing, and the DECADE Elite electrochemical detector. The ALEXYS Carbohydrate Analyzer can be operated under DataApex™ Clarity™ CDS (version 8.3 and up) or Thermo Scientific™ Chromeleon™ Chromatography Data System (CDS) software (version 7.2 SR 5 and up).

**Antec Scientific (USA)**  
info@AntecScientific.com  
www.AntecScientific.com  
T 888 572 0012

**Antec Scientific (worldwide)**  
info@AntecScientific.com  
www.AntecScientific.com  
T +31 71 5813333

**For research purpose only.** The information shown in this communication is solely to demonstrate the applicability of the ALEXYS system and DECADE Elite detector. The actual performance may be affected by factors beyond Antec’s control. Specifications mentioned in this application note are subject to change without further notice.

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