Enzyme Characterization

Why we need to characterize an enzyme?

- To understand function we need a structure
  - To fix a car we need a manual
- To get structure we need to “look” at the molecule
  - Molecules are too tiny to be seen by microscopes
- To “see” we need many molecules stuck together
  - Crystal is molecules stuck together. So we need crystal.
- Still it is hard to “look” at the crystals
  - So we use x-rays since they have short wavelengths
Enzyme Characterization

Why we need to know function?

- To benefit
  - We can make use of the function to our for advantage
  - Blaber lab work on Vitamin C synthetic pathway
- To avoid problems
  - We can stop the function if it is harmful
  - Li lab work on Cb5f protein
Enzyme Characterization

Why we need to know structure?

- With structure
  - We can make it efficient
  - We can make it economical

- Without structure
  - Conduct lot of bio-chemical and physical studies
  - Still guess the mechanism
Enzyme Characterization

Why we need a crystal?

- Molecules are too tiny to see
  - Random molecules don’t give enough information
  - We need many molecules stuck together
  - Regularly arranged molecules give more information
  - Crystals are regularly arranged molecules
  - So we need crystals
Enzyme Characterization

Why we need x-rays?

- Molecules inside crystals are still too small to see
  - We need a probe the size of the molecule
  - Molecular sizes are 1/10 of nanometer
  - X-rays have wavelength in that range
  - So we use x-rays to “see” molecules