

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Autoimmune disease				
Autoimmune disease	Furin	<p>Studies in cell culture and in mice suggest that activating furin could help prevent autoimmune diseases. In mice, T cell-specific knockout of furin led to impaired function of regulatory T cells and lower transforming growth factor-β (TGF-β) levels compared with what was seen in wild-type controls, suggesting that the enzyme helps maintain peripheral immune tolerance. Adoptive transfer of the same furin-deficient T cells into T cell-deficient mice resulted in increased autoimmune-related weight loss and gut inflammation compared with what was seen in T cell-deficient mice that received wild-type T cells. Next steps include determining how furin levels are regulated during autoimmune disease and manipulating furin levels with existing therapeutics.</p>	Not patented; unlicensed	<p>Pesu, M. <i>et al. Nature</i>; published online Aug. 13, 2008; doi:10.1038/nature07210 Contact: Marko Pesu, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md. e-mail: pesum@mail.nih.gov</p>