1 **Carbohydrates and the oxidative branch of the pentose phosphate pathway**

2 **modify *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron* phage resistance by phase variable S-**

3 **layers.**

Jaime J. Fuentes[1], Shaleni Singh[1], Nicholas A. Pudlo[1], Stacey L. Heaver[2], Ruth E. Ley[2],

and Eric C. Martens[1]#

[1]Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Michigan Medical School

[2]Department of Microbiome Science, Max Planck Institute for Biology, Tuebingen,

Germany

Running Head: Carbohydrates modify *B. thetaiotaomicron* phage resistance by S-layer

#Address correspondence to Eric C. Martens, emartens@umich.edu

Abstract

The human gut microbiota consists of hundreds of bacterial species, some of

which persist in the presence of lytic phage that infect them. *Bacteroides* employ

numerous phase-variable strategies to survive in the presence of phage, including

capsular polysaccharides (CPS) and S-layer lipoproteins. We previously reported that a

Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron strain lacking CPS exhibits almost complete resistance to

multiple phages when forced to express the S-layer protein BT1927. However, this

strain was only resistant after certain growth conditions, suggesting nutritional variables

alter infection and resistance. We grew this strain on various simple sugars and

polysaccharides finding that some substrates (fructose, glucose) promote strong

resistance to a single phage (ARB25) while others like *N*-acetylgalactosamine (GalNAC)

and mucin *O*-glycans increase susceptibility. Mixing fructose and GalNAc indicates the

effects of GalNAc are dominant. Despite increasing ARB25 susceptibility, GalNAc did

not reduce *BT1927* transcript or protein levels. Instead, GalNAc reduced the amount of

BT1927 displayed on the cell surface and increased outer membrane vesiculation.

Mutants in any of the 3 steps of the oxidative branch of the pentose phosphate

pathway—grown in fructose—behaved similarly to wild-type cells grown in GalNAc,

illuminating this pathway in regulation of sugar-mediated phage-resistance. Despite

promoting strong resistance, cells grown in glucose/fructose sometimes displayed sub-

populations that appeared to completely lack surface BT1927, suggesting another

checkpoint exists to control whether this phage defense is deployed. Finally, we show

the mucin sugar GalNAc increases susceptibility to several other phage, which has

implications for *B. thetaiotaiomicron* persistence in niches like the mucus layer.

Importance

The persistence of viruses that infect bacteria (bacteriophages or phages) in the human gut microbiome and their effects on bacterial physiology and host health are active areas of investigation. Our study investigates how various sugars and polysaccharides alter phage susceptibility and resistance in the model gut symbiont *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron* to lytic phages that are capable of infecting it. Our finding that the mucin sugar, *N*-acetylgalactosamine, and mucin *O*-glycans that contain this sugar reduce *B. thetaiotaomicron* resistance to multiple phages has implications for how this symbiont persists in different gut microhabitats, such as the mucus layer, and which defense mechanisms it can deploy to survive in these niches.

Introduction

The human gut is home to a community of symbiotic microbes (microbiome) that

impart beneficial functions to their host, including digestion and metabolism of nutrients

like complex carbohydrates (1, 2), immune stimulation (3–5), and protection against

pathogens (6, 7). Individual bacterial species that compose the microbiome often

encounter perturbations, including changing diet, severe osmotic stress, immune

responses, antibiotics and exposure to bacteriophages (herein, phages) (8–13), all of

which could limit the ability of individual bacteria to persist in the community. Phages are

the most abundant biological entities in the human gut (14) and target specific species.

The presence of phage could have consequences for microbiome composition, as well

as the host, if they were able to eradicate their target bacterial species and eliminate its

beneficial functions. Further, phage could disrupt community stability by eliminating their

target species and indirectly reducing beneficial functions provided by bacteria that rely

on the phage-targeted species (15, 16). Despite the potential for phage to cause such

disruptions, longitudinal human studies indicate that most bacterial strains are stable for

long periods (9, 17, 18). A notable experiment in which phage were administered to

gnotobiotic mice colonized with a community of human bacteria demonstrated that

although specific bacterial species experienced transient reductions in abundance, their

abundance later recovered, and their target phage were eliminated or reduced below

detection limits (19). Notably, both bacterial species that survived this phage challenge

were members of the genus *Bacteroides*, which is particularly prominent in the

microbiomes of people from industrialized countries. This study reveals that at least

some gut bacteria have mechanisms to persist in the gut ecosystem despite the

presence of phage that prey on them.

Indeed, mechanisms through which gut bacteria resist phage infection and their

effect on microbiome stability are emerging. Metagenomic and functional studies have

detected a number of known or previously unknown phage resistance mechanisms in

gut microbiome species such as: clustered regularly interspaced palindromic repeat

(CRISPR) arrays (20–22), cyclic oligonucleotide-based antiphage signaling systems

(CBASS) (22–24), restriction-modification systems (22, 25), and variation of cell surface

structures like capsular polysaccharides (CPS) and surface layer lipoproteins (S-layers)

(22, 26, 27). While mechanistic characterization of these systems is ongoing (20), few

have been examined through the lens of regulation in response to the bacterial cell's

nutritional status.

Phase-variation is a reversible phenomenon that often involves DNA inversion of

the promoter that directs transcription of a specific gene or operon, such that some cells

in a population express the gene and others do not. We previously reported that the

model human gut symbiont, *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron*, is able to resist phage

infection through phase-variable expression of CPS biosynthetic loci, candidate S-layer

proteins, restriction-modification, and lipoprotein systems (27). Some of these systems

have since been reported to be important for phage resistance in other *Bacteroides*

species (28, 29). The presence of these phase-variable systems enables *B.*

thetaiotaomicron to "pre-adapt" some members of its population to survive phage

infection because resistant cells, which already exist in a population (*i.e.*, they have

turned on one of the mechanisms noted above), survive and become dominant when

phages are present. Interestingly, the reversibility of these systems continuously

generates susceptible cells that may be killed by phage and potentially sustain the viral

population (27), a phenomenon observed decades ago in some *Bacteroides* species

and referred to as a "carrier culture" state or pseudolysogeny, although the latter term

has been used to refer to different phenomena more recently (30, 31). The presence of

reversible phage resistance mechanisms is likely a result of constant coevolutionary

adaptation by bacterial species and could result in long-term persistence of phage

populations within the gut along with their host bacteria. Consistent with this, phage

populations in some human studies have been observed to be stable for at least 1 year

(32, 33).

S-layer lipoproteins are ubiquitous among both Gram-positive and Gram-

negative bacteria and are characterized by a proteinaceous crystalline-like surface

structure (34, 35). Previous work characterized a functional role for one phase-variable

B. thetaiotaomicron S-layer protein (encoded by the *BT1927* gene), which was

visualized as a crystalline-like surface structure by electron microscopy when the

BT1927 gene was expressed (35, 36). *BT1927* transcription is mediated by a phase-

variable promoter flanked by invertible repeats that mediate recombination and

inversion of the promoter since mutation of one of the two inverted repeats can "lock"

the promoter in the ON or OFF position. Antibody staining demonstrated that the

BT1927 S-layer gene is expressed in about 1 in 1,000 wild-type cells grown *in vitro* in

rich medium (*i.e.*, in the absence of phage), while human metagenomic analysis

indicated that the promoter-on frequency is higher *in vivo*. While this first study of

BT1927 did not test for a role in phage resistance, it reported that BT1927 promotes

resistance to complement-mediated killing (36). In our previous study of *B.*

thetaiotaomicron phage resistance, increased transcription of *BT1927* in response to

phage challenge was a prominent response in the absence of CPS, suggesting it

promotes phage resistance. Consistent with this, a strain in which BT1927 was locked

on demonstrated nearly complete resistance to at least four phages (27). However, this

resistance was only observed when colonies were "aged" for three or more days on

solid medium with glucose as the primary carbon source prior to culture in liquid

medium. This age-variable resistance occurred even though transcription of the BT1927

gene was locked on, suggesting that growth conditions related to colony aging could

either modify the transcriptional output of the *BT1927* promoter or act post-

transcriptionally to modify BT1927 effects.

B. thetaiotaomicron is adept at harvesting carbohydrates from a variety of diet

and host polysaccharides, which are a significant nutrient source for this species

compared to protein (37–41). In this study, we measured how the different

carbohydrates utilized by *B. thetaiotaomicron* impact the ability of the BT1927 S-layer to

promote phage resistance when the *BT1927* gene is constitutively expressed. We found

that *B. thetaiotaomicron* exhibits variable resistance to a single lytic phage, when

cultured in liquid medium containing one of 27 different individual carbohydrates (simple

sugars and polysaccharides). We also discovered that steps in the oxidative branch of

the pentose phosphate pathway are important for full phage resistance via BT1927

expression. The carbohydrates that reduced BT1927-mediated resistance most were

the sugar *N*-acetylgalactosamine (GalNAc) and mucin *O*-glycans that contain this sugar.

Interestingly, decreased phage resistance did not correlate with reduced BT1927

transcription or protein abundance in the cell, but was associated with less BT1927

protein on the cell surface and increased production of outer membrane vesicles

(OMVs) that may disrupt the integrity of this protective S-layer. Because the

carbohydrate-based nutrients available to gut bacteria frequently change with variations

in host diet, thereby influencing their cellular responses, our findings have important

implications for understanding how the stability and co-existence of bacteria and phage

populations in the human gut may be influenced by diet or bacterial occupation of

niches like the colonic mucus layer.

Results

Carbohydrates influence BT1927 S-layer mediated phage resistance

The nutritional environment experienced by a bacterial cell, such as the presence

of specific nutrients or nutrient deprivation, has potential consequences for interactions

with phage. Two classic examples of bacterial nutrient exposure that modify phage

susceptibility in *E. coli* are the presence of maltose or iron-deficient conditions, each of

which induces expression of a cognate phage receptor (LamB or FhuA, respectively)

(42, 43). Given the previously determined requirement for "aging" BT1927-expressing

cells for three days to elicit strong protection against ARB25 phage, we hypothesized

that an unknown nutrient signal(s) alters the ability of BT1927 to protect against phage.

Consistent with our previous observations (27), when a strain with the phase-variable

BT1927 promoter genetically locked-on (herein, BT1927:ON) was aged for 3 days and

infected with ARB25, it exhibited similar growth as a heat-killed phage control when

infections were performed in media containing glucose (**Figure 1A**). This protection

against ARB25 was dependent on both locked expression of BT1927 and colony aging,

since both a BT1927 locked-off strain (BT1927:OFF) and the BT1927:ON strain grown

without aging achieved significantly lower growth (P<0.0001) at 24 hours and generally

failed to maintain the same high density as the BT1927:ON aged strain in the first ~40

hours of infection (**Figure 1A, B**, compare red and blue curves to green). Growth

eventually increases later after infection with many strains or conditions, likely driven by

the emergence of cells expressing other phase-variable resistance proteins, of which

there are 7 known to exist in the engineered strain used here.

176   Consistent with previous work (36), scanning electron microscopy (SEM) imaging

177 of the BT1927:OFF strain did not reveal a lattice structure on the outside of the cell

178 (**Figure 2A**). However, individual BT1927:ON cells did display a surface lattice that is

179 similar to what has been previously observed (**Figure 2B).** Interestingly, images of a

180 phage-free culture of the BT1927:ON strain grown in medium with glucose as the main

181 carbohydrate source contained a population of ~60% of cells that appeared to display

182 the lattice structure on the majority of the cell surface while the remaining individual

183 cells appeared mostly devoid of this structure, suggesting that there may be variation in

184 the expression of the BT1927 S-layer at the single cell level (**Figure 2C, Figure S1A**).

185   To explore how the aged colony, high ARB25-resistance phenotype persists over

186 time with repeated liquid culture, aged colonies were grown in liquid BPRM glucose,

187 allowed to grow for 24 hours, and sub-cultured 1:100 each day for 5 days. Each day, a

188 portion of the culture grown in BPRM glucose for the previous 24 hours was also sub-

189 cultured and subjected to ARB25 infection (MOI 0.5). Interestingly, we found that

190 passaging of cultures for two days or longer in liquid BPRM-glucose medium was

191 sufficient to promote strong resistance even when starting with cultures of BT1927:ON

192 that had not been grown on solid medium (**Figure 3A, Figure S1B, C**). This observation

193 suggests that multiple generations of growth in glucose—and not necessarily aging on

194 plates—is sufficient to increase the effect of BT1927 to protect against ARB25. Given

195 that glucose is used as the sole carbohydrate source in the media that promoted this

196 phenotype, we aimed to determine how other dietary carbohydrates might alter BT1927-

197 mediated resistance as carbohydrates are the major group of nutrients used by *B.*

198 *thetaiotaomicron*. We leveraged a panel of 14 monosaccharides and 13

polysaccharides that support the growth of *B. thetaiotaomicron* when present as sole

carbon sources and measured growth dynamics of the BT1927:ON strain during

infection with ARB25 phage. Briefly, the BT1927:ON strain was grown on BPRM solid

agar medium containing glucose for three days, colonies were cultured in liquid BPRM

glucose, allowed to grow for ~20 hours, and sub-cultured into BPRM containing each

carbohydrate followed by phage challenge (**Figure S1D**).

Several of the carbohydrates in our panel resulted in growth in the presence of

ARB25 that was similar to glucose. For example, fructose also promoted a strong and

uninterrupted early growth increase in the presence of ARB25 (**Figure 3B, Figure S2A**).

In contrast, other carbohydrates elicited growth in the presence of ARB25, that was

more similar to the unaged or BT1927:OFF strain grown in glucose (**Figure 1A**). For

example, growth in medium containing *N*-acetylgalactosamine (GalNAc) led to an initial

growth increase after ARB25 exposure that was blunted and remained low for the first

~40 hours after initial infection (**Figure 3C**). This low early growth on GalNAc suggests

that, in contrast to glucose and fructose, GalNAc fails to promote and perhaps even

suppresses BT1927-mediated resistance. As observed with unaged or unpassaged

colonies, cultures in GalNAc eventually gained in absorbance (**Figure 3C**), likely due to

the emergence of cells that express other resistance mechanisms. Our previous study

demonstrated that up to 10 different phase-variable systems (excluding polysaccharide

capsules) could be expressed *in vitro* in the presence of ARB25 challenge (27): 8

putative S-layers (including BT1927), a restriction-modification system and a single

locus encoding 3 lipoproteins different from the S-layers. Therefore, we probed

transcription of these nine other phase-variable systems, plus locked on *BT1927*, during

growth in GalNAc and fructose and in the presence of ARB25. This experiment revealed

that fructose promoted the emergence of cells with increased transcription of the genes

encoding the seven other S-layers, the restriction-modification system (*BT4013-15*) and

the additional lipoprotein locus (*BT0291-94*). This suggests that these different systems

may confer additional or better protection beyond BT1927 and are therefore selected

later in culture in the presence of ARB25. Interestingly, five of the nine systems

expressed in fructose had significantly lower expression in GalNAc, and one gene

encoding a candidate S-layer (BT1507) was expressed at significantly higher levels in

GalNAc (**Figure S2B, C**). These results support the conclusion that different sugars

modify the range of phage resistance responses that emerge in a population, possibly

by modifying the effectiveness of each specific mechanism during growth in a given

sugar.

Since we observed a range of responses to ARB25 during early infection on

different carbohydrates, we quantified the difference between heat-killed and ARB25

infected cultures using 24-hours as a common "early" time point (delta symbols in

Figures 3B, C indicate examples of the growth difference measured for each

carbohydrate). Ranking the effects of individual carbohydrates revealed a continuum of

effects on BT1927-mediated resistance, with the previously mentioned fructose and

GalNAc exhibiting the highest and lowest resistance, respectively (**Figure 3D**). The

effects of monosaccharides tended to be stronger than polysaccharides at reducing

BT1927-mediated resistance, although both groups showed a broad range of

responses. The polysaccharide that resulted in the most reduced resistance to ARB25

was mucin *O*-glycans (MOG), a mixture of oligosaccharides that interestingly contains

the monosaccharide GalNAc (**Figure 3E**). Other monosaccharides present in MOG

(galactose, fucose, and *N*-acetylglucosamine) did not increase susceptibility to ARB25

to the same level as GalNAc, although the latter two sugars elicited strong susceptibility

in some experiments (**Figure S1D**). There was also discordance between the effects of

glucose and the four polymers that contain glucose (dextran, pullulan, glycogen, and

amylopectin). Thus, we cannot conclude that polysaccharides universally exert the

same effect as the monosaccharides they contain. Since we determined that MOG and

GalNAc reduce resistance to ARB25, we tested 5 other phages, finding that growth in

these two carbohydrates also reduced resistance to 4 of the phages tested when

cultured similarly to the experiments described above with ARB25 (**Figure S2D**).

Given the disparate effects of fructose and GalNAc on resistance to ARB25, we

aimed to determine if the strong resistance developed after passage in a medium

containing glucose could be reversed by the addition of carbohydrates like GalNAc and

if one sugar-associated phenotype is dominant over the other. Passage of cultures in

glucose for five days, which promoted strong ARB25 resistance, followed by a shift to

GalNAc, decreased growth in the presence of ARB25 (**Figure S3A**), demonstrating that

GalNAc can induce increased ARB25 susceptibility in cultures that previously exhibited

resistance and consequently suggesting that the resistance is not permanent as would

be expected for genetic mutation in the ARB25 receptor or other function required for

infection. Continuous passage in GalNAc for 5 days resulted in slightly more blunted

growth, suggesting a potential compounding effect. In contrast, passage in fructose

resulted in continued strong resistance as indicated by lower difference in maximum

absorbance between infected and uninfected bacteria (**Figures 4A, S3A,** note that the

resistance at 24h for fructose in this experiment may be underrepresented at some days

due to some of the uninfected conditions increasing absorbance on this sugar after the

initial entry into stationary phase).

To address whether fructose or GalNAc are dominant, we passaged cultures in

medium containing equal amounts of fructose and GalNAc (5mg/ml each). This resulted

in growth that was very similar to GalNAc grown cultures, suggesting that the effect of

GalNAc is dominant over that of fructose (**Figure 4A, Figure S3A**). We next determined

whether growth on solid medium with GalNAc for 3 days resulted in increased ARB25

susceptibility after cells were grown in liquid medium and exposed to phage. Consistent

with our results in liquid medium, cultures from colonies picked from agar containing

glucose, first cultured in BPRM glucose, and then infected in BPRM GalNAc showed

lower resistance at 24h but later increased growth (**Figure S3B**). In contrast, growing

BT1927:ON strain on GalNAc agar plates and subsequently in liquid BPRM GalNAc for

growth and infection resulted in cultures that were more susceptible at 24h and failed to

increase growth as much as glucose grown cells at later times (**Figure S3C**). This latter

result supports our conclusions from repeated culture in liquid medium that previous

exposure to glucose exerts an effect that persists for some amount of time after first

exposure to GalNAc and this influences how the cells resist ARB25 infection.

We next measured if growth in medium containing fructose or GalNAc alters the

plaquing efficiency of ARB25 on the BT1927:ON strain, which could explain the

apparently high and low ARB25 resistance trends we observed in liquid cultures.

Consistent with our results in liquid media, plaquing efficiency was significantly higher in

GalNAc-containing plates compared to those containing fructose and the GalNAc

medium promoted a similar number of plaques on the BT1927:ON strain as the parent

acapsular strain—which does not have BT1927 locked on—grown on fructose (**Figure**

4B). Moreover, plaques appeared less turbid in the GalNAc medium compared to

glucose, potentially indicating that this sugar increases the efficiency of ARB25 infection

of individual cells as waves of post-infection phage bursts encounter new prey in their

surroundings (**Figure 4C**). Similar to earlier studies showing that the BT1927 locked-on

strain is protected against complement killing compared to the locked-off strain in

medium containing glucose (36), cultures grown in GalNAc exhibited significantly

reduced survival compared to fructose grown cells when exposed to complement

(**Figure S3D**). These data further suggests that the protective nature of the BT1927 S-

layer is influenced by the specific carbohydrates encountered by the cell.

N-acetylgalactosamine reduces BT1927 expression on the bacterial surface

We next determined if cultures of BT1927:ON grown in fructose or GalNAc

exhibit variations in surface exposed BT1927. We used flow cytometry to measure

surface expression of a previously published BT1927 variant with a FLAG epitope

appended to the C-terminus (36) (BT1927:ON^F). To first determine if the presence of the

FLAG epitope disrupts BT1927 function with respect to surviving phage, we challenged

cultures of the BT1927:ON^F strain with ARB25 and determined that it maintains

resistance when cultured in fructose (**Figure S3E)**. We then performed flow cytometry

using the BT1927:ON^F strain grown in fructose or GalNAc to mid-log phase. Using an

antibody against the FLAG epitope, the BT1927:ON^F strain grown in fructose could be

clearly distinguished from the BT1927:OFF strain grown in the same medium by flow

cytometry (**Figure 5A**). The BT1927:ON^F strain grown in GalNAc was clearly different

from fructose-grown cultures and had less intense staining overall with an average

geometric mean fluorescence intensity of 200$\pm$62 (GalNAc) versus 578$\pm$64 (fructose; P

= 0.0017, one tailed t-test), although it was also clearly increased relative to the

BT1927:OFF control (**Figure 5A)**. This result suggests that GalNAc-grown cells express

less BT1927 on the cell surface.

An interesting observation in several repetitions of this experiment, was the

presence of a distinct population of BT1927:ON^F cells that stained similarly to the

BT1927:OFF control population after cultivation in fructose (**Figure 5B** small

histograms**, Figure S4A**). In the first experiment in which this occurred (**Figure S4A**), all

three biological replicates were similar to each other while in our first experiment all

three replicates lacked this population (**Figure 5A**). We interpret this observation to

indicate that in some cases, a population of cells can be present that expresses very

little cell-surface associated BT1927 despite the fact that expression is locked on and

the growth sugar (fructose) promotes overall strong ARB25 resistance in the population.

We do not suspect that this is a technical artifact (*e.g.*, poor antibody labeling in the

experiment with a prominent BT1927 low population) because the BT1927 high

populations displayed similarly high staining intensity. Instead, this bimodal population

of BT1927-expressing cells could reflect the two populations of cells that we initially

observed by SEM imaging of cells grown in glucose (**Figure 2C**). If true, these two

observations would support the conclusion that *B. thetaiotaomicron* possesses a switch

or decision-making mechanism that governs the fate of individual cells to express

BT1927 (and perhaps other proteins) on the cell surface. To further investigate variation

in BT1927 expression between experiments with growth in fructose, we grew the

BT1927:ON^F strain in several different anaerobic chambers with each replicate

cultivated from a different starting colony. Among the four experiments, one exhibited a

low staining population of BT1927:ON (**Figure S4B**), supporting the conclusion that this

is a repeatable phenomenon that could be driven by an unknown environmental

stimulus or stochastic variation in *B. thetaiotaomicron* cell populations. Since our

previous data indicated that GalNAc was dominant in decreasing the resistance of the

BT1927:ON strain to ARB25 when fructose was also present, we grew the BT1927:ON^F

strain in media containing both fructose and GalNAc to measure BT1927 expression

levels. Strikingly, the BT1927:ON^F strain grown in a mixture of fructose and GalNAc was

clearly distinct from fructose-grown cultures, had less intense staining overall and was

very similar to cells grown only in GalNAc (**Figure 5B**). This observation suggests that

the effect of GalNAc is dominant over fructose and may not allow maximum expression,

asembly or retention of BT1927 on the cell surface.

Since GalNAc reduces the amount of surface associated BT1927 protein, we

next sought to determine at which point in expression this effect is exerted. Since the

BT1927 promoter is already locked in the phase-variable "on" position, we measured if

transcription of the *BT1927* S-layer is downregulated upon exposure to GalNAc.

Comparison of the BT1927:ON strain in GalNAc or fructose (in the absence of phage)

revealed that *BT1927* transcript was not diminished by GalNAc (**Figure 5C**). Similarly,

high *BT1927* transcription was observed during growth on another carbohydrate,

glucosamine, that increases ARB25 susceptibility (**Figure S4C**) Next, we performed a

western blot on the BT1927:ON^F strain grown in media containing either fructose or

GalNAc to assess BT1927 protein levels in whole cells. BT1927 protein did not appear

to be different between fructose and GalNAc grown cultures (**Figure S4D**), although the

western blot was not performed quantitatively and is unlikely to discriminate between

small changes in protein expression that might explain the partial reduction in surface

staining observed by flow cytometry. To more quantitatively determine if these two

sugars alter BT1927 protein abundance, we performed proteomics using LC-MS/MS to

measure the relative normalized protein abundance of BT1927 in the BT1927:ON strain

grown in either fructose or GalNAc. The abundance of BT1927 was not significantly

decreased by growth in GalNac compared to fructose (**Figure 5D)**. As a control for

expected sugar-specific responses, growth in fructose led to a 1.6-5.0-fold increase in

five of the eight individual proteins encoded in a previously identified polysaccharide

utilization locus (PUL) for the fiber levan that is upregulated in response to fructose (44)

(**Figure S4E**). Taken together, although GalNAc increases ARB25 susceptibility and

decreases its abundance on the cell surface, we do not have any evidence that GalNAc

reduces transcription or translation of the BT1927 lipoprotein, which therefore

necessitates that lack of surface expression must either occur at the level of BT1927

secretion or trafficking to the outer leaflet of the membrane, its folding to form an

effective S-layer or its retention on the cell surface. Interestingly, when we performed

additional SEM to attempt to visualize the BT1927 lattice on the *B. thetaiotaomicron*

surface (which proved difficult to resolve using the instruments available at the

University of Michigan), we noticed a substantial increase in what appeared to be outer

membrane vesicles in the supernatant surrounding the *B. thetaiotaomicron* cells (**Figure**

5E, F). *B. thetaiotaomicron* and other *Bacteroides* have been actively investigated in

recent years because of their prolific ability to not only produce OMVs but also regulate

this process either positively or negatively (45, 46). Quantification of OMVs by a

previously published method (47) using the images of fixed and whole-mounted

bacterial cultures (with medium supernatant) revealed that growth in GalNAc increases

the number of extracellular OMVs ~25-fold (**Figure 5E, S4F, G**). Thus, while we were

unable to visualize the BT1927 lattice with sufficient resolution after growth in fructose

and GalNAc, our data suggest that GalNAc induces increased vesiculation by this

species which could interfere with the ability of BT1927 to block phage infection.

The oxidative branch of the pentose phosphate pathway regulates susceptibility

to phage

Carbohydrate utilization by *B. thetaiotaomicron* and other *Bacteroides* is a highly

regulated process involving multiple layers of regulation. Polysaccharide utilization

occurs via expression of substrate-specific PULs and these gene clusters typically

exhibit large increases in transcription (50 to >1,000-fold) in response to their target

polysaccharide (48). PUL regulation is most commonly mediated by locally acting,

positive-acting transcription factors (1). However, global regulatory phenomena—which

are still incompletely understood—also exist to control both polysaccharide and

monosaccharide utilization in *B. thetaiotaomicron* and at least polysaccharide utilization

is subjected to catabolite repression-like effects (*i.e.*, some polysaccharides are given

high priority while utilization of others is repressed until favored substrates are depleted)

(49). Several features involved in global regulation have emerged in recent years, one

being a homolog of the *E. coli* catabolite repression protein (CRP) currently referred to

as carbohydrate utilization regulator (Cur, previously MalR, *BT4338*). Cur is a global

regulator that is required for the normal utilization of multiple poly- and

monosaccharides and is thought to work independently of cAMP, which has not been

observed in *Bacteroides* (50). Mutants in the oxidative branch of the pentose phosphate

pathway (PPP), including 6-phosphogluconate dehydrogenase (BT1222)*,* have been

discovered in multiple studies to play a role in polysaccharide or glucosinolate

utilization, because these mutants fail to properly express the corresponding PULs or

their regulators (50–52). One study found that mutants lacking either functional Cur or

the oxidative PPP both fail to fully express a hybrid two component system regulator

(Roc) involved in mucin *O*-glycan utilization, implying that these two features may

overlap at least partially (50). Interestingly, Roc expression, which is Cur-dependent, is

suppressed by glucose and fructose, the two sugars that promote the highest resistance

to ARB25.

To determine whether mutants in the PPP or Cur influence ARB25 resistance, we

measured growth of four previously identified transposon mutants with disrupted genes

in the oxidative branch of the PPP (in the same strain background lacking all 8 capsular

polysaccharides used for other experiments in this study). These mutants, which do not

have the *BT1927* promoter locked on, exhibited impaired growth relative to the

untreated acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* strain when infected with ARB25, suggesting a

deficiency in deployment of the multiple phase-variable mechanisms that it still retains,

including BT1927 (**Figure 6A, Figures S5A-E**). In light of these findings, we evaluated

the effects of deleting the *BT1222* gene, encoding the terminal step in the oxidative

branch of the PPP, in the BT1927:ON strain. Deletion of *BT1222* resulted in diminished

resistance to ARB25 compared to the uninfected control when grown in fructose (**Figure**

6B). Consistent with its apparent increased susceptibility in liquid medium containing

fructose, the $\Delta BT1222$ BT1927:ON strain displayed an increased number of plaques

compared to the BT1927:ON parent, albeit less than the parent acapsular strain when

both were grown in medium with fructose (**Figure S5F**). Given the increased

susceptibility associated with deletion of *BT1222*, we measured *BT1927* transcript

levels and confirmed that expression remained unaltered in the $\Delta BT1222$ mutant

(**Figure 6C**). Similar to GalNAC grown cells that showed increased ARB25

susceptibility, we also did not see an appreciable decrease in BT1927 protein by

western blot (**Figure S5G**). Finally, using flow cytometry, we observed a decrease in

BT1927 surface staining when the $\Delta BT1222$ BT1927:ON^F strain was grown in fructose

(**Figure 6D**).

We next examined the role of the global regulator Cur, which appears to share

some regulation in common with the enzymes in the oxidative branch of the PPP (50).

Mutants in which the gene encoding Cur (*BT4338*) was deleted in the Dcps or

BT1927:ON backgrounds did not increase susceptibility during growth in fructose as

substantially as the PPP mutants, although some increased ARB25 susceptibility was

observed (**Figure S5H, I).** Consistent with this, flow cytometry of the epitope-tagged

BT1927:ON^F strain lacking Cur also displayed similarly intense staining as the parent

strain grown in fructose (**Figure S3J**) with an average geometric mean fluorescence

intensity of 293$\pm$60 (BT1927:ON^F) and 209$\pm$44 ($\Delta BT4338$ BT1927:ON^F, P value = 0.32).

Taken together, we conclude that the presence of an intact oxidative branch of the PPP

is required for fructose- and BT1927-mediated phage resistance, but Cur appears to

play a less substantial contribution.

Discussion

Phages are the most numerous biological entities in many microbial environments, including the human gut (53). The presence of at least some individual phage is stable over time (54), raising the question of how phage can remain present without eradicating their host bacteria or being lost when their host gains resistance. While several mechanisms like lysogeny and pseudolysogeny factor into these relationships, multiple *Bacteroides* species have been shown over the last several decades, using both *in vitro* and *in vivo* experiments, to co-exist with lytic phage in a state where neither completely wins or loses (27, 30). This phenomenon is driven by the existence of phase-variable resistance mechanisms that presumably are selected for in their "on" state when phage are present but revert to the "off" state at a sufficient frequency to continuously generate susceptible prey bacteria to be infected and replenish phage populations. Indeed, in our previous work we showed that ARB25 phage could persist in the colons of *B. thetaiotaomicron* monoassociated mice for over two months, suggesting that reversion of resistant bacteria back to a susceptible state could be sufficient to promote stability of phage populations over longer periods (27). In this study, we bypassed the contributions of phase-variation by locking BT1927 expression in the on state and observed additional, sugar-mediated contributions to *B. thetaiotaomicron* survival, revealing another layer of regulation that influences phage resistance.

The carbohydrate landscape in the mammalian gut is complex and dynamic and also directly influences the metabolism of the bacteria that compose the gut microbiota. Diet is a major external force that shapes the microbiota because dietary fiber—which

mostly encompasses plant-derived polysaccharides other than soluble starch—is the

major fraction of human foods that reach the colon unabsorbed or undigested by human

enzymes (1, 40). *B. thetaiotaomicron* is a nutritional generalist that can utilize a variety

of dietary fibers but also has the ability to consume the diverse *O*-glycans attached to

secreted gastric and colonic mucin (39, 55). We have previously shown that most

dietary fiber polysaccharides that are accessible by *B. thetaiotaomicron* repress

expression of this organism's PULs involved in mucin *O*-glycan degradation through a

phenomenon resembling carbon catabolite repression (49). When dietary fiber is

withheld from *B. thetaiotaomicron* colonized gnotobiotic mice, there is increased

expression of PULs involved in *O*-glycan utilization (41, 56) and measurably increased

mucus consumption that manifests as thinner colonic mucus (57). Combined with the

results presented here, these observations raise the idea that low dietary fiber could

force *B. thetaiotaomicron* into conditions that make it more susceptible to phage

predation, such as utilization of *O*-glycans and GalNAc, which both increase its

susceptibility to phage like ARB25 (**Figure 3D, E**). This increased susceptibility occurs

even though *B. thetaiotaomicron* possesses alternative, mainly phase-variable

strategies to resist phage (capsular polysaccharides, putative S-layers, plus others).

Indeed, we demonstrate with a broader set of phages that infect *B. thetaiotaomicron,*

that GalNAc induces an apparent state of increased susceptibility as judged by reduced

growth over time in the presence of several phages (**Figure S2D**), a phenomenon that

could be mediated by the increased vesiculation that we note during growth in GalNAc

(**Figure 5E, F**). Moreover, we show that increased or decreased susceptibility is

entrained by prolonged exposure to different sugars like fructose or GalNAc, revealing

that the recent "nutritional history" experienced by *B. thetaiotaomicron* may also play a

role. The mechanism(s) through which this nutritional memory occurs remains unknown,

although some candidates are noted below, but will be important to investigate and may

influence other aspects of *B. thetaiotaomicron* physiology.

Perhaps one of the most unexpected observations in this study, is the detection

of what appear to be cell fate decisions in *B. thetaiotaomicron* that are manifest at the

single cell level. Evidence to support this comes first from SEM imaging of BT1927:ON

and BT1927:OFF strains and the observation that as many as ~40% of BT1927:ON

cells lack the lattice-like surface structure that was previously associated with BT1927

expression and instead resemble the BT1927:OFF strain. Additional evidence to

support this idea comes from the observation that some cultures of the BT1927:ON^F

strain grown in fructose harbor a significant population of cells that resemble the

BT1927:OFF by flow cytometry. It has been widely reported that *Bacteroides* species

encode a variety of mechanisms to generate phenotypic diversity in the population (27,

58–60). This diversity pre-adapts sub-populations to survive challenges like host innate

and adaptive immune responses and phage. In addition to the phase-variable CPS, S-

layer, and other functions noted above, which directly impact resistance to phage and

immune components, additional phase-variable events include the existence of phase-

variable DNA methylation systems (58) that alter a variety of cell features on a global

scale, including CPS expression. While these systems have only been investigated in *B.*

fragilis, *B. thetaiotaomicron* has two copies of the locus encoding this system (*BT4516-*

4523 and *BT4535-BT4543*) and likely exhibits similar epigenetic regulation via

methylation. In addition, phase-variable gene shufflons that diversify the particular

nutrient receptors that are expressed via a single transcription factor exist in *B.*

thetaiotaomicron (58). Indeed, we previously observed a pronounced shift in one of

these nutrient receptor shufflons *in vitro* after *B. thetaiotaomicron* was exposed to

ARB25 and a resistant cell population was allowed to emerge. Such events that directly

alter the identities of nutrient receptors on the cell surface could impact phage infection

by modifying receptors and co-receptors that mediate adsorption. Although, it is

important to note that a test of this hypothesis for ARB25 and the nutrient receptors that

we observed to shift upon infection (by deleting the genes involved) did not support a

direct role as the ARB25 receptor. Finally, a recent study demonstrated the presence of

much more prevalent DNA inversions (372 different "inverton" events) within the *B.*

thetaiotaomicron genome and these often occur within coding sequences and are not

associated with known recombinases that mediate the inversion (61). While it remains

to be investigated, this large amount of genomic variation holds the potential to record

aspects of the nutritional memory that we report here, for example, by shifting the

genome organization into a different methylation or recombination state that then takes

time to shift back when cells encounter another substrate.

It is further surprising that the presence of BT1927 on the cell surface is not

regulated at the transcriptional or translational levels, which are more traditional control

points to conserve energy. Because cellular levels of BT1927 are very similar during

growth in fructose and GalNAc, and only fructose-grown cells are capable of displaying

the highest amounts of surface BT1927 staining, this necessitates that GalNAc either

reduces the efficiency of BT1927 trafficking to the cell surface or causes it to be

released from the surface once it gets there. Indeed, our observation that GalNAc

induces increased vesiculation provides evidence that either BT1927 is being lost from

the surface, or its protective effects are disrupted by the vesiculation that occurs during

growth in GalNAc. These observations also suggests that the mechanism of reduced

ARB25 resistance during growth in GalNAc is not identical to the mechanism that

sometimes generates the BT1927-off population in cells grown in fructose, or else we

would expect the GalNAc population to stain more weakly and identical to the

BT1927:OFF^F strain.

We do not yet understand the mechanism by which BT1927 protects against

phage or, in previous work, against complement-mediated killing. Given the prominent

structural organization that is observed on the cell surface when this protein is highly

expressed, an obvious hypothesis is that it physically blocks access to either

complement deposition and pore formation or phage adsorption. Since the ARB25

surface receptor remains unknown, it also remains unclear how much of the bacterial

surface needs to be covered by BT1927 to protect the cell. Indeed, this might not be an

all-or-nothing event, but rather, higher percent surface coverage decreases the odds

that a phage will access its receptor and infect the cell. Such a phenomenon could

explain the higher plaquing rates and clearer plaques we observe with GalNAc-grown

cells as well as the "intermediate" growth we often observe in liquid cultures of

BT1927:ON grown in GalNAc or conditions containing both GalNAc and fructose that

neither achieves full growth or full lysis. In the latter case, growth of protected cells and

killing of unprotected cells may balance each other, leading to little positive or negative

change in cell numbers measured by absorbance. Future work to identify the ARB25

receptor will open avenues to begin exploring these potential mechanisms in more

detail, for example, by increasing or decreasing the amount of ARB25 receptor and

seeing how those changes influence killing during growth in fructose or GalNAc.

Our research supports a model of dynamic interactions between phages and

intestinal bacteria, which is influenced by the carbohydrates present in the gut. The

reduced effectiveness of resistance proteins like BT1927 in the presence of nutrients

like GalNAc and *O*-glycans may explain why *B. thetaiotaomicron* possesses so many

different strategies (*i.e.*, other resistance strategies like capsules may be more effective

and therefore relied upon in these growth conditions). Nevertheless, the ability of a

phage to persist in the microbiome alongside its prey bacterium like *B. thetaiotaomicron*

has implications for what cellular states (*e.g.*, which CPS and S-layers are expressed)

the resistant bacterial population adopts during selection in the presence of phage. Cell

surface features like CPS and S-layers have other interactions with environmental

features like the host immune system and fiber polysaccharides (36, 59, 62–64) and, as

shown here, are further influenced by the carbohydrates *B. thetaiotaomicron* utilizes.

With this complex set of interactions between phage, nutrients, bacteria and host in

mind, it is likely that the variable presence of phage within the microbiomes of

individuals has broader impacts on holobiont physiology that extend beyond just simple

survival of the bacteria that are targeted by phage.

Table 1: Bacterial strains and plasmids used in this study

Strain	Genotype	Features	Reference
Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron VPI-5482 and derivatives			
acapsular	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8*	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci	(65)
acapsular S-layer ON	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8* BT1927:ON	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the ON orientation	(27)
acapsular S-layer OFF	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8* BT1927:OFF	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the OFF orientation	(27)
acapsular S-layer ON FLAG	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8* BT1927:ON FLAG	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the ON orientation with the C-terminal FLAG epitope	This study
acapsular S-layer OFF FLAG	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8* BT1927:OFF FLAG	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the OFF orientation with the C-terminal FLAG epitope	This study
ΔBT1222 acapsular	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8* BT1927:ON	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, gene deletion of *BT1222*	This study
ΔBT1222 acapsular S-layer ON	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8* BT1927:ON *ΔBT1222*	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the ON orientation, gene deletion of *BT1222*	This study
ΔBT1222 acapsular S-layer ON FLAG	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8* BT1927:ON *ΔBT1222* FLAG	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the ON orientation with the C-terminal FLAG epitope and gene deletion of *BT1222*	This study
ΔBT4338 acapsular	*tdk⁻ Δcps1-8 ΔBT4338*	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, gene deletion of *BT1222*	This study

ΔBT4338 acapsular S-layer ON	tdk⁻ Δcps1-8 BT1927:ON ΔBT4338	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the ON orientation, gene deletion of BT1222	This study
ΔBT4338 acapsular S-layer ON FLAG	tdk⁻ Δcps1-8 BT1927:ON ΔBT4338 FLAG	Strain lacking all CPS synthesis loci, S-layer promoter locked in the ON orientation with the C-terminal FLAG epitope and gene deletion of BT1222	This study
Plasmids in Escherichia coli S17-1 λpir, used for generation of B. thetaiotaomicron gene deletions			
pExchange BT1927-ON		Lock on BT1927 promoter	(36)
pExchange BT1927-OFF		Lock off BT1927 promoter	(36)
pExchange BT1927- ON FLAG		Lock on BT1927 promoter with C-terminal FLAG epitope	(36)
pExchange BT1927- OFF FLAG		Lock off BT1927 promoter with C-terminal FLAG epitope	(36)
pExchange ΔBT1222		BT1222 deletion construct	This study
pExchange ΔBT4338		BT14338 deletion construct	This study

Table 2. Primers used in this study		
Primer	**Sequence (5' - 3')**	**Use**
BT1502F	CATATTTTACAACGCCATCTTCACCAAC	BT1502 qPCR
BT1502R	CCGATGACAAAGGTAATAAACAGACTAAGA	BT1502 qPCR
BT1507F	CAGCCGGAACGAATGACTTACC	BT1507 qPCR
BT1507R	TGGATGTGATGAGGCTGATGCTAT	BT1507 qPCR
BT1512F	CGCCAACAATCTCAACCAACTTACT	BT1512 qPCR
BT1512R	TTTGGCGACTGCTAGCTATCATTTC	BT1512 qPCR
BT1792F	GAAACGGTTACGGAGAGCACTGAC	BT1792 qPCR
BT1792R	GGAAAACTATACCGAAGAAAACTACCTGA	BT1792 qPCR
BT1826F	TAGCAGCAGAAACCGGAGAAACA	BT1826 qPCR
BT1826R	ATGATGGTGAAATTGCAGATATAAAGAAAC	BT1826 qPCR
BT1927F	TCGCCTTTTTCAGATCAGTAGTTGG	BT1927 qPCR
BT1927R	ACGAAAATGGAGTTGAATGGAATAAGTT	BT1927 qPCR

BT2486F	AGCCTGGCGCCCGATAGA	BT2486 qPCR
BT2486R	CACAGGCTTTGACGCAGATGAA	BT2486 qPCR
BT4480F	GTGAAGATCGAATTTGGTGTGACG	BT4480 qPCR
BT4480R	ACGGATGAATTGCTCTGTGATAGTGTA	BT4480 qPCR
16SF	GGTAGTCCACACAGTAAACGATGAA	16S qPCR for normalization
16SR	CCCGTCAATTCCTTTGAGTTTC	16S qPCR for normalization
BT1222-5UP-SalI	GCGGTCGACCAATGGAATACTGAAAGACGAGCAGGAAG	BT1222 deletion construct
BT1222-3OUT	CATATCTTATATATTTTAAAATATTGTTTATGTAAGAAACACTTG	BT1222 deletion construct
BT1222-5OUT	CAAGTGTTTCTTACATAAACAATATTTTAAAATATATAAGATATGTGAGTACTTTTCTTTTGCCTTGATGCAAAA	BT1222 deletion construct
BT1222-3DWN-XbaI	GCGTCTAGAGCAAAGGCACCACCCCATACAGCG	BT1222 deletion construct
BT4338-5UP-SalI	GCGGTCGACCCATCATCGCTTCCGAAGCCATC	BT14338 deletion construct
BT4338-5IN	GGGTGCTACAAAACTGTGTTATACAGC	BT14338 deletion construct
BT4338-3IN	GCTGTATAACACAGTTTTGTAGCACCCTACAGACCTTATACGATCATAAAAAGTGATC	BT14338 deletion construct
BT4338-3DWN-XbaI	CCCTGATCGTCCGTCAGATGCCAGTG	BT14338 deletion construct

Materials and Methods

Bacterial growth curves with phage

Table 1 provides a list of strains used in this study. All *B. thetaiotaomicron*

cultures were grown in an anaerobic chamber (Coy Labs; 85% N2, 10% H2, 5% CO2)

at 37°C. In general, growth experiments were initiated by streaking freezer stocks

(cryopreserved in 25% final w/v glycerol) on *Bacteroides* phage recovery medium

(BPRM) agar with glucose as the main carbon source (66). High titer phage stocks

were propagated as previously described (27, 67). Briefly, the acapsular *B.*

thetaiotaomicron strain was incubated with 10ul of high titer phage for 20 min and plated

using a soft agar overlay, flooded after overnight incubation using sterile phage buffer

(100 mM NaCl, 8 mM MgSO4, 50 mM Tris pH 7.5, and 0.002% (w/v) gelatin), filter

sterilized, and the resulting phage titer determined using the acapsular strain as the

host.

Individual colonies of each strain were picked from BPRM agar after 3 days and

grown overnight in liquid BPRM medium with glucose as the main carbon source,

unless otherwise indicated. For growth experiments, an aliquot of each overnight culture

was centrifuged and washed twice with a 2X concentrated BPRM without any glucose

or other carbon source (BPRM no carbon). The washed cells were resuspended in

BPRM no carbon and 50ul was added to a 96-well microtiter plate wells containing

10mg/ml of carbohydrate as indicated in each growth curve, for a final concentration of

5mg/ml. 10ul of 5×10^6 pfu/ml stock of either heat-killed (95°C for 30 min) or viable

phage was added to each well. Microtiter plates were covered with a gas-permeable,

optically clear membrane (Diversified Biotech), and optical density measured at 600nm

(OD$_{600}$) for 24-96 hours using a BioTek Synergy HT plate-reader connected to a

BioStack automated plate stacking device.

Construction of *B. thetaiotaomicron* mutants

All of the *B. thetaiotaomicron* mutants were created in the acapsular *B.*

thetaiotaomicron (∆cps ∆tdk) strain, a mutant for thymidine kinase used to generate

allelic exchange mutants (68) and lacks all capsule. *B. thetaiotaomicron* ∆cps

BT1927:ON and ∆cps BT1927:OFF mutants were created from the previously

constructed BT1927-ON and BT1927-OFF strains (36) and the corresponding epitope

FLAG tagged constructs for each. The *BT1222* and *BT4338* gene deletion mutants

were generated by homologous regions for allelic exchange (68) with primers indicated

in Table 2. All mutants were confirmed by PCR and Sanger sequencing.

Plaque Assay

Isolated colonies of the BT1927:ON strain were cultured overnight in liquid

BPRM media and added to soft agar overlay as previously described (27) containing

either glucose, fructose or GalNAc as indicated. High titer ARB25 stocks were diluted

1:10 in series and 1ul was added to the soft agar containing the BT1927:ON or ∆cps

strain, incubated overnight anaerobically, and quantified. To document plaque

morphology, images were captured using the GelDoc Go Gel Imaging System (Bio-Rad)

using a 0.8 sec exposure.

Complement Survival Assay

B. thetaiotaomicron strains were cultured overnight as described above from

isolated colonies in liquid BPRM media containing glucose. Cultures were prepared as

previously described (36). Briefly, Cells were centrifuged and washed once with PBS

and resuspended at 5×10^6 cells/ml in PBS supplemented with 0.5 mM MgCl2 and 1

mM CaCl2. Either 20% Human Serum or heat-inactivated human serum (56ºC for 30

min) was incubated with cells anaerobically at 37ºC for 1 hour. Cells were diluted in

series 1:10 and plated on BHI plates containing 10% horse blood anaerobically for 2

days. The percent survival of each strain was calculated by dividing the average

number of colonies from human serum vs heat-inactivated serum plates.

RNA isolation and quantitative PCR (qPCR)

To measure BT1927 and other gene transcript levels, cultures were grown as

described above in BPRM containing the different sugars indicated until they reached

OD_{600} between 0.5-0.6. Bacteria were collected by centrifugation (7,700xg for 2.5 min),

medium supernatants were removed, and pellets were resuspended in 500uL of

RNAprotect (Qiagen). RNA was extracted using RNeasy kit (Qiagen) and treated with

DNase I (NEB). cDNA was prepared using 1ug RNA via Superscript III Reverse

Transcriptase according to the manufacturer's instructions. qPCR analyses were

performed using a BioRad thermocycler and homemade qPCR Master Mix containing

SYBR green DNA dye (27) containing 500nM of BT1927 specific primers or 65nM 16S

rRNA primers (indicated in table 2) and 10ng cDNA. Amplification was performed for 40

cycles of 95ºC for 3 seconds, 55ºC for 20 seconds, and 72ºC for 8 seconds.

Normalization was performed using the 16S rRNA amplification and gene expression

between conditions was calculated using the DD cycle threshold (DDCt) method (69)

using the Δcps strain, which expresses little *BT1927* in the absence of phage, as a

reference.

Flow cytometry

The *B. thetaiotaomicron* strain containing a FLAG epitope-tagged BT1927

locked-on strain was previously constructed (36) using the FLAG epitope tag to BT1927

C-terminus. Various strains containing this tagged allele were cultured as described

above with the addition of indicated carbohydrates and grown to OD_{600} between 0.5-0.6.

One milliliter of culture was centrifuged for 2 min in a microcentrifuge at 6,000 x g,

washed twice with PBS, and resuspended to approximately $5x10^6$ cells/ml in Bacteria

Staining buffer (BSB; 1% bovine serum albumin– 0.025% sodium azide–PBS, 0.5%

formaldehyde) and resuspended in BSB containing anti-FLAG Alexa Fluor 647-

conjugated antibody (1:25, Cell Signaling) and incubated for 1h at 37°C. Cells were

washed twice with BSB and were counterstained with SYTO BC Bacteria Stain

(Molecular Probes) and analyzed on an LSR Fortessa flow cytometer (BD). To minimize

carryover of cells, 3 blank samples of PBS were run between samples. Forward scatter

(FSC) and side scatter (SSC) data were set to logarithmic scale. After data acquisition,

B. thetaiotaomicron population was visualized on an allophycocyanin (APC-A)-

histogram plot using FlowJo software.

Immunoblotting

B. thetaiotaomicron strains containing the FLAG epitope-tagged BT1927 allele

(36) were cultured as described above with the addition of indicated carbohydrates and

grown to OD_{600} between 0.5-0.6. Samples were diluted 1:4 in Laemmli sample buffer

(Bio-Rad), heated for 10 min at 98°C and were run on a 4-12% Bis-Tris NuPAGE gel

(Invitrogen) and transferred onto a polyvinylidene difluoride membrane (0.2 μm) for

Western blot analysis. Membranes were blocked using Tris-buffered saline tween

(TBST)-based blocking solution (1M Tris, 5M NaCl, Tween 20) containing 5% milk,

stained with the anti-FLAG rabbit polyclonal primary antibody (1:1000, Cell Signaling),

washed twice with TBST, and goat polyclonal anti-rabbit (ThermoFisher) conjugated

Alexa Fluor 488 secondary antibody (1:1000). Imaging was performed using an

Odyssey CLx scanner (LI-COR).

Proteomics

The BT1927 locked-on strain was grown in BPRM containing either fructose or

GalNAc to OD_{600} between 0.5-0.6., cells were centrifuged (7,700xg for 2.5 min), washed

in PBS and frozen at -80°C. Cell pellets were resuspended in 500μl lysis buffer (4%

SDS, 50mM Tris, 10mM DTT, pH8.5), heated to 95°C for 10 min, cooled to room

temperature, and centrifuged for 2 min at 4,000 x g to remove cell debris and unlyzed

cells. Ice-cold acetone was added at 4:1 ratio and precipitated overnight at -20°C.

Proteins were centrifuged for 10 min at 4,000 x g, and the resulting pellets were washed

in 80% acetone before centrifuging at 17,000 x g for 10 min at 4°C. Supernatants were

removed, and the protein pellet allowed to air dry before resuspension in 75μl of

proteomics buffer (8M Urea, 50mM HEPES, pH8). Cell lystes were run on a 4-12% Bis-

Tris NuPAGE gel (Invitrogen) and subjected to Coomassie staining (Abcam).

Proteomics analysis was performed at the University of Michigan Proteomics Resource

Facility (PRF) using high-resolution LC-MS/MS, following a protocol refined by PRF as

previously described (70). The updated protocol included the following changes:

cysteines were alkylated with 65 mM 2-chloroacetamide; trypsin digestion occurred after

urea was diluted to <1.2 M, utilizing 0.5 µg of trypsin (Promega); and processed

peptides were reconstituted in 20 µL of Buffer A (100 mM NaOH). Peptides were

separated by liquid chromatography over 90 minutes in 2%–25% Buffer B (100 mM

NaOH and 500 mM sodium acetate) in 45 minutes, 25%–40% in 5 minutes, and 40%–

90% in 5 minutes, followed by holding at 90% buffer B for 5 minutes and equilibrating

with buffer A for 30 minutes). Proteins were identified by comparing the resulting tandem

mass spectrometry data against a database of all protein sequences in *B.*

thetaiotaomicron strain VPI-5482 (71). The parameters used were consistent with those

stated previously, except for a fragment tolerance of 0.1 kDa. The relative abundance of

each detected protein was determined based on MS1 abundances. Raw data is

available via the Proteomics Identifications Database (PRIDE) # PXD063111.

Scanning Electron Microscopy

For SEM imaging performed in Tuebingen, the BT1927:ON and BT1927:OFF

strains were grown on BHIS plates with 10% defibrinated sheep blood and grown

anaerobically for 4 days at 37°C. Individual colonies were picked into liquid BHIS

medium and grown for 15 hours at 37°C prior to fixation in 2.5% glutaraldehyde/4%

formaldehyde in PBS for 2 hours at room temperature. Sample processing and imaging

was performed by the Electron Microscopy Core at the Max Planck Institute for Biology

in Tübingen, Germany. Cells were mounted on poly-L-lysine-coated cover slips and

post-fixed with 1% osmium tetroxide for 45 minutes on ice. Subsequently, samples were

dehydrated in a graded ethanol series followed by critical point drying (CPD300, Leica

Microsystems) with CO_2. Finally, the cells were sputter-coated with a 3 nm thick layer of

platinum (CCU-010, Safematic) and examined with a field emission scanning electron

microscope (Regulus 8230, Hitachi High Technologies) at an accelerating voltage of 3

kV.

For Cell and OMV imaging at the University of Michigan, 3-day aged colonies of

the BT1927 locked-on strain were cultured in BPRM glucose for 20 hours and diluted

1:100 in BPRM containing either fructose or GalNAc to OD_{600} between 0.5-0.6, fixed in

2.5% glutaraldehyde/4% formaldehyde in PBS for 2 hours at room temperature,

mounted on poly-L-lysine-coated cover slips, and post-fixed with 1% osmium tetroxide

for 45 minutes on ice. Samples were dehydrated in a graded ethanol series followed by

critical point drying (CPD300, Leica Microsystems) with CO_2 and sputter coated 3 nm

thick layer of gold and examined with a field emission scanning electron microscope

(Thermo Fisher Nova 200 Nanolab SEM/FIB) at an accelerating voltage of 3 kV. OMV

particles were quantified by normalized image size, creation of 10x10mm boxes almost

devoid of cells, images were blinded and OMV particles were quantified. OMV particle

count was divided by the total area to account for any differences in the number of

boxes per image.

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Figure Legends

Figure 1. Colony aging increases BT1927-mediated resistance to ARB25 phage.

(**A**) Growth of unaged (red), aged (green) BT1927:ON strain or BT1927:OFF (blue)

grown in media containing glucose and challenged with viable ARB25 or heat-killed

(HK) ARB25 (black curves). (**B**) Maximum absorbance differences of HK ARB25

(uninfected) versus ARB25 challenged unaged or aged BT1927:ON or BT1927:OFF

strain, calculated at 24-hours (One way ANOVA, **** $P<0.0001$, *** $P=0.0009$).

Figure 2. BT1927 expression is associated with a crystalline surface structure.

SEM images of the BT1927:OFF strain (**A**) or BT1927:ON strain (**B**). (**C**) Multiple cells

of the BT1927:ON strain showing the presence of both coated and uncoated cells.

Enlarged inlaid images are provided for each panel to highlight presence or absence of

structural features and uncoated or coated cells.

Figure 3. Different carbohydrates modify susceptibility to ARB25 phage. (**A**)

Growth of the unaged BT1927:ON strain treated with viable ARB25 (red) or HK ARB25

(black), passaged for 5 days in glucose. (**B**) Growth of the BT1927:ON strain in media

containing Fructose (**C**) Growth of the BT1927:ON strain in media containing GalNAc.

The delta symbol in C and D indicates the absorbance difference measured to quantify

growth differences between ARB25 and HK. (**D**) Ranked monosaccharide results in

order of higher to lower ARB25 susceptibility. (**E**) Ranked polysaccharide results in order

of higher to lower ARB25 susceptibility.

Figure 4. GalNAc increases susceptibility to ARB25 phage. (**A**) Maximum

absorbance differences from passaged growth experiments for 5-days in medium

containing glucose (black), fructose (blue), GalNAc (red), or a 1:1 mixture of fructose

and GalNAc (orange) at 5mg/ml each, n = 3 per condition (One way ANOVA, ****

P<0.0001, *** P=0.0002, ** P<0.005, *P<0.05). (**B**) Quantification of plaque forming

units with indicated strains grown in top agar containing fructose (blue) or GalNAc (red)

compared to the more susceptible acapsular control (Δcps; black), n = 3 per condition,

(one-tailed t-test, **P=0.0066). (**C**) Representative images of plaques formed under the

indicated conditions and strains as depicted in B.

Figure 5. BT1927 surface protein abundance is modified by GalNAc. (**A**) Flow

cytometry histograms for BT1927 expression indicated by intensity of FLAG epitope

staining (APC-A) in the BT1927:OFF^F (grey) strain grown in fructose or the BT1927:ON^F

strain grown in medium with either fructose (blue) or GalNAc (red). (**B**) Same conditions

as depicted in A but with the addition of staining of cells grown in a mixture of GalNAc

and fructose (5mg/ml each; orange) instead of GalNAc only. The smaller plots at right

show the three individual plots of growth in fructose in which cell population (bottom)

displayed a sub-population of cells that stain similarly to the BT1927:OFF^F strain. (**C**)

BT1927 transcript expression in the BT1927:ON strain grown in either fructose (blue) or

GalNac (red). (**D**) Normalized protein abundance in BT1927:ON strain grown in fructose

(blue) or GalNac (red). (**E**) OMV particle count per mm^2 from cells grown in either

glucose (black), fructose (blue) or GalNAc (red) (Welch ANOVA, **** P<0.0001). (**F**)

representative images for each condition in E. Arrows indicate apparent OMV particles

either cell associated (white) or free from cells (black).

Figure 6. Mutants in the oxidative branch of the pentose phosphate pathway

increase susceptibility to ARB25 phage. (**A**) Growth of acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*

or a transposon mutant in this same strain with disrupted *BT1222* and treated with HK

ARB25 (black) or ARB25 (red). (**B**) Growth of the BT1927:ON strain (black) or a *BT1222*

deletion (grey) mutant in the BT1927:ON strain background and treated with HK ARB25

or ARB25 (red or dark red, respectively). (**C**) qPCR measurement of *BT1927* transcript

in the BT1927:ON strain (light blue) or BT1222 mutant (light red). (**D**) Histograms of

epitope-tagged BT1927 (APC-A) for either the BT1927:ON strain (blue) or BT1222

mutant (red) grown in fructose.

Figure S1. (**A**) SEM imaging of the BT1927:ON strain with cells that exhibit BT1927

associated crystalline coating over most of their surface (pink dot, green circle) and

what appear to be uncoated cells (green circle only). (**B**) Maximum absorbance (abs)

differences of unaged BT1927:ON after 5-days of passage in glucose and subsequent

passage into fructose or GalNAc. (**C**) Maximum absorbance (abs) differences of aged

BT1927:ON after 5-days of passage in glucose and subsequent passage into fructose

or GalNAc. (**D**) Growth of the BT1927:ON strain in BPRM medium containing the

carbohydrates listed above each graph as the sole carbohydrate source (5mg/ml, n= 3

per condition).

Figure S2. (**A**) Absorbance difference between ARB25 infected and HK control for

cultures grown in GalNAc, glucose, or fructose (One-way ANOVA, **** P<0.0001,

***P=0.0002, **P<0.007, *P<0.05). (**B**) Cultures of the BT1927:ON strain grown in

fructose or GalNAc for RNA collection with harvest points indicated by red circles in the

infected and HK control for each curve. (**C**) Transcript expression measurements for

each phase-variable S-layer or other system as measured by qPCR in fructose and

GalNAc. (**D**) BT1927:ON cultures treated with HK *B. thetaiotaomicron* phage (black) or

challenged with the 6 indicated *B. thetaiotaomicron* phages in BPRM containing

fructose (top) GalNAc (middle) or mucin *O*-glycans (MOG; Bottom), n = 3 per condition.

Figure S3. (**A**) Growth of daily passaged BT1927:ON cultures in BPRM medium

containing glucose (5 days) and subsequent growth after passage into fructose,

GalNAc, or 1:1 mixture of fructose and GalNAc (at 5mg/ml each) as indicated, n = 3 per

condition. (**B**) ARB25 infection kinetics for BT1927:ON cultures grown on a solid

medium containing glucose, grown in liquid culture containing glucose and sub-cultured

again into liquid media containing GalNAc (as indicated above title) and challenged with

ARB25 phage. (**C**) ARB25 infection kinetics for BT1927:ON cultures grown on a solid

medium containing GalNAc, grown in liquid culture containing GalNAc and sub-cultured

again into liquid media containing GalNAc (as indicated above title) and challenged with

ARB25 phage. (**D**) Percent survival of BT1927:ON grown in either fructose (blue) or

GalNAc (red) or the BT1927:OFF strain grown in fructose (grey) challenged with pooled

human complement and normalized to the no complement control. (**E**) Growth of the

epitope tagged BT1927:ON^F strain treated with HKARB25 (black) or ARB25 (red)

demonstrating the FLAG tag does not inhibit BT1927-mediated resistance.

Figure S4. (**A**) Flow cytometry histogram for the BT1927:ON^F strain grown in BPRM

medium containing fructose or GalNAc from an experiment in which all 3 replicates

showed a BT1927 low staining population. (**B**) Flow cytometry histogram for the

BT1927:ON^F strain grown in BPRM medium containing fructose or GalNAc from an

experiment in which replicates were grown in different anaerobic chamber and one

showed a BT1927 low staining population. (**C**) *BT1927* transcript expression in the

BT1927:ON strain grown in glucose (black) or glucosamine (grey) at mid-log phase. (**D**)

Western blot of whole cells of the BT1927:ON^F strain grown in either fructose or GalNAc

and stained for BT1927-FLAG. (**E**) Normalized protein abundance for products of the

levan associated PUL that is known to be induced by fructose (two-tailed t-test, P

*<0.001, **<0.05, *** <0.005). (**F**) SEM images of the BT1927:ON strain grown in

fructose from which OMV measurements were made. (**G**) SEM images of the

BT1927:ON strain grown in GalNAc from which OMV measurements were made. In F

and G, boxes indicate normalized area used for blinded counting of OMV particles.

Figure S5. (**A-E**) Growth of the acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* strain (A) and transposon

mutants in the acpasular *B. thetaiotaomicron* with insertions in genes encoding the 3

steps of the oxidative branch of the pentose phosphate pathway and a linked genes

encoding a putative carboxylate transporter. In each panel, cultures were treated with

HK ARB25 (black) or ARB25 (red). (**F**) Quantification of plaques formed on the

BT1927:ON strain (blue), a *BT1222* deletion in the 1927:ON strain background (red) or

the susceptible acapsular strain (black). (**G**) Western blot of the BT1927:ON^F or

Δ*BT1222* mutant in the BT1927:ON^F strain as indicated above each column. (**H**)

Growth of the acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* or Δ*BT4338* deletion mutant strain in the

same acapsular background treated with HK ARB25 or ARB25 (red or dark red,

respectively). (**I**) Growth of the BT1927:ON (black) or corresponding Δ*BT4338* deletion

mutant in the same background (grey) in the BT1927:ON strain treated with HK ARB25

or ARB25 (red or dark red, respectively). (**J**) Histogram of staining for the epitope-

tagged BT1927 (APC-A) in either the BT1927:ON strain (blue) or a Δ*BT4338* mutant in

this same background (red), grown in fructose.

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1166

Figure 1

A

B

Figure 2

A BT1927:OFF

B BT1927:ON

C
BT1927:ON Culture

uncoated

coated

Figure 3

Figure 4

A

B

Figure 5

A

BT1927:ON^F-Fructose
BT1927:ON^F-GalNAc
BT1927:OFF-Fructose

Count

APC-A

B

BT1927:ON^F-GalNAc+Fructose

Count

APC-A

Count

Count

Count

APC-A

C

ns

Fold Change BT1927 Expression
(Normalized to Δcps)

Fructose   GalNAc

D

ns

BT1927 normalized protein abundance

Fructose   GalNAc

E

ns   ****

OMV count/mm²

Glucose   Fructose   GalNAc

BT1927:ON

F

Glucose   Fructose   GalNAc

2um   2um   2um

Figure 6

Figure S1

Figure S2

Figure S3

Figure S4

Figure S5

A Δcps

Absorbance (600nm)

B Tn1220

C Tn1221

D Tn1223

E Tn1222

— HK ARB25
— +ARB25

HRS

F

PFU/mL

BT1927ON
ΔBT1222:BT1927ON
Δcps

*

G

BT1927:ON^F ΔBT1222:BT1927:ON^F

kDa

H

Absorbance (600nm)

— Δcps
— Δcps + ARB25
— ΔBT4338:Δcps
— ΔBT4338:Δcps + ARB25

HRS

I

Absorbance (600nm)

— BT1927:ON
— BT1927:ON + ARB25
— BT4338:BT1927:ON
— BT4338:BT1927:ON + ARB25

HRS

J

■ BT1927:ON^F
■ ΔBT4338:BT1927:ON^F
■ BT1927:OFF

Count

APC-A