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Chemokines

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Chemokines comprise a family of about 40 low-molecular-weight cytokines (see , Cytokines) with important roles in the immune system, as well as functions beyond it. The name chemokine, a contraction of “chemotactic cytokine,” reflects the common property, by which chemokines were originally identified, of promoting leukocyte chemotaxis. Chemokines are classified into 4 subfamilies, based on their cysteine (C) residues and other amino-acid (X) residues (see , Genetics, Nucleic Acids and Amino Acids): Examples of specific chemokines, by subfamily, are shown below: Expanded common names of the chemokines are often unwieldy and uninformative and so are rarely used, though use of the abbreviations persists.