

(c) removing said organic solvents from said mixture to provide said lipid-nucleic acid particles in which said nucleic acids are protected from degradation.

9. The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said cationic lipids are members selected from the group consisting of DODAC, DDAB, DOTMA, DOSPA, DMRIE, DOGS and combinations thereof.

10. The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said non-cationic lipids are members selected from the group consisting of ESM, DOPE, polyethylene glycol-based polymers and combinations thereof.

11. The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said organic solvents are members selected from the group consisting of methanol, chloroform, methylene chloride, ethanol, diethyl ether and combinations thereof.

12. The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said nucleic acid is a plasmid, said cationic lipid is a member selected from the group consisting of DODAC, DDAB, DOTMA, DOSPA, DMRIE, DOGS and combinations thereof said non-cationic lipid is a member selected from the group consisting of ESM, DOPE, polyethylene glycol-based polymers and combinations thereof, and said organic solvent is a member selected from the group consisting of methanol, chloroform, methylene chloride, ethanol, diethyl ether and combinations thereof.

13. The lipid-nucleic acid particle prepared according to claim 8.

14. The method for the preparation of serum-stable plasmid-lipid particles, comprising:

(a) combining a plasmid with cationic lipids in a detergent solution to provide a coated plasmid-lipid complex;

(b) contacting non-cationic lipids with said coated plasmid-lipid complex to provide a solution comprising detergent, a plasmid-lipid complex and non-cationic lipids; and

(c) removing said detergent from said solution of step (b) to provide a solution of serum-stable plasmid-lipid particles, wherein said plasmid is encapsulated in a lipid bilayer and said particles are serum-stable and have a size of from about 50 to about 150 nm.

15. The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein said removing is by dialysis.

16. The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein step (b) further comprises adding a polyethylene glycol-lipid conjugate.

17. The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein said polyethylene glycol-lipid conjugate is a PEG-ceramide conjugate.

18. The method in accordance with claim 14, further comprising;

(d) sizing said particles to achieve a uniform particle size.

19. The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein said cationic lipids are selected from the group consisting of DODAC, DDAB, DOTAP, DOTMA, DOSPA, DOGS, DC-Chol and combinations thereof.

20. The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein said non-cationic lipids are selected from the group consisting of DOPE, POPC, EPC and combinations thereof.

21. The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein said detergent solution comprises a detergent having a critical micelle concentration of between about 20 mM and 50 mM.

22. The method in accordance with claim 21, wherein said detergent is n-octyl- β -D-glucopyranoside.

23. The plasmid-lipid particle prepared according to claim 14.

24. A method for the preparation of serum-stable plasmid-lipid particles, comprising;

(a) preparing a mixture comprising cationic lipids and non-cationic lipids in an organic solvent;

(b) contacting an aqueous solution of plasmid with said mixture prepared in step (a) to provide a clear single phase; and

(c) removing said organic solvent to provide a suspension of plasmid-lipid particles, wherein said plasmid is encapsulated in a lipid bilayer, and said particles are stable in serum and have a size of from about 50 to about 150 nm.

25. The method in accordance with claim 24, wherein said non-cationic lipids comprise a polyethylene glycol-lipid conjugate.

26. The method in accordance with claim 25, wherein said polyethylene glycol-lipid conjugate is a PEG-ceramide conjugate.

27. The method in accordance with claim 24, wherein said cationic lipids are selected from the group consisting of DODAC, DDAB, DOTAP, DOTMA, DOSPA, DOGS, DC-Chol and combinations thereof.

28. The method in accordance with claim 24, wherein said non-cationic lipids are selected from the group consisting of DOPE, POPC, EPC and combinations thereof.

29. The plasmid-lipid particle prepared according to claim 24.