

Characteristics of Typical Bacterial Cell Structures	
Structure	Function
Nucleoid	DNA is generally confined to this central region
Ribosomes	Site of translation (protein synthesis)
Inclusions (storage granules)	Storage of reserves of nutrients
Capsule	Layer of polysaccharides (occasionally proteins); attachment to surfaces; protection against phagocytosis
Cell wall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram-positive bacteria • Gram-negative bacteria 	Prevents osmotic lysis of cell protoplast and confers rigidity and shape to cells Peptidoglycan prevents osmotic lysis and confers rigidity and shape; outer membrane is permeability barrier; associated LPS (endotoxin) and proteins have various functions.
Plasma membrane	Permeability barrier; transport of solutes; energy generation; location of numerous enzyme systems
Chromosome	Genetic material of cell
Plasmid	Extrachromosomal genetic material
Flagella	Motility (swimming movement)
Pili <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex pilus • Common pili or fimbriae 	Mediates DNA transfer during conjugation Attachment to surfaces; protection against phagocytosis

The **cell envelope** is a descriptive term for the several layers of material that envelope or enclose the protoplasm of the cell. The cell protoplasm (**cytoplasm**) is surrounded by the plasma membrane, a **cell wall** and a **capsule**. The cell wall itself is a layered structure in gram-negative bacteria. All cells have a **plasma membrane**, which is the essential and definitive characteristic of a "cell." Almost all prokaryotes have a cell wall to prevent damage to the underlying protoplast. Outside the cell wall, foremost as a surface structure, may be a polysaccharide **capsule** or **glycocalyx**.