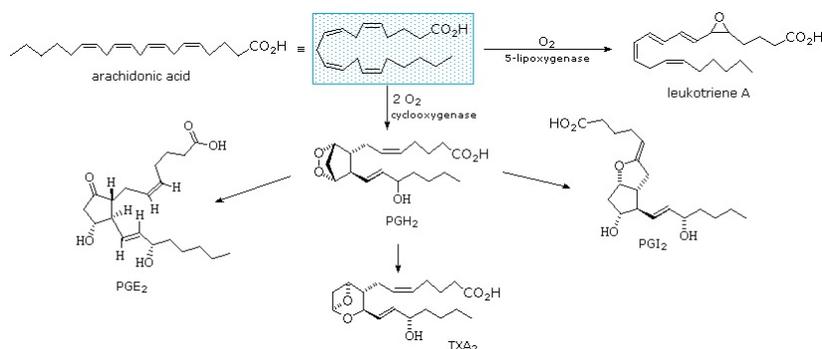


## 9.7: Application- Epoxides, Leukotrienes, and Asthma

The members of this group of structurally related natural hormones have an extraordinary range of biological effects. They can lower gastric secretions, stimulate uterine contractions, lower blood pressure, influence blood clotting and induce asthma-like allergic responses. Because their genesis in body tissues is tied to the metabolism of the essential fatty acid arachadonic acid (5,8,11,14-eicosatetraenoic acid) they are classified as eicosanoids. Many properties of the common drug aspirin result from its effect on the cascade of reactions associated with these hormones.

The metabolic pathways by which arachidonic acid is converted to the various eicosanoids are complex and will not be discussed here. A rough outline of some of the transformations that take place is provided below. It is helpful to view arachadonic acid in the coiled conformation shown in the shaded box.



Leukotriene A is a precursor to other leukotriene derivatives by epoxide opening reactions. The prostaglandins are given systematic names that reflect their structure. The initially formed peroxide  $PGH_2$  is a common intermediate to other prostaglandins, as well as thromboxanes such as  $TXA_2$ .

### Contributors

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