

26.1: INTRODUCTION

Objectives

After completing this section, you should be able to identify fats and steroids as being examples of lipids.

Key Terms

Make certain that you can define, and use in context, the key term below.

- lipid

Lipids are not defined by the presence of specific functional groups, as carbohydrates are, but by a physical property—solubility. Compounds isolated from body tissues are classified as lipids if they are more soluble in organic solvents, such as dichloromethane, than in water. By this criterion, the lipid category includes not only **fats and oils**, which are esters of the trihydroxy alcohol glycerol and fatty acids, but also compounds that incorporate functional groups derived from phosphoric acid, carbohydrates, or amino alcohols, as well as **steroid compounds** such as cholesterol. The diagram below presents one scheme for classifying the various kinds of lipids.

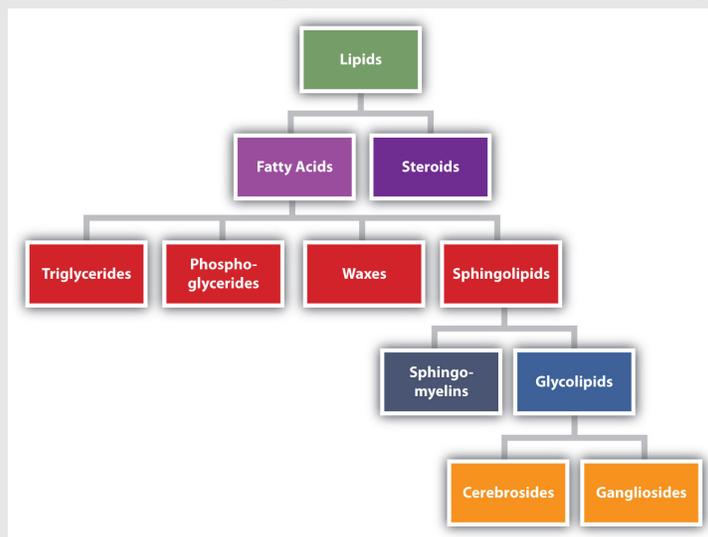


Figure: Lipid Organization Based on Structural Relationships

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