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Carbohydrate–DNA Interactions at G-Quadruplexes: Folding and Stability Changes by Attaching Sugars at the 5'-End

Irene Gómez-Pinto,^[a] Empar Vengut-Climent,^[b] Ricardo Lucas,^[b]
Anna Avinó,^[c] Ramón Eritja,^[c] Carlos González,^{*[a]} and Juan Carlos
Morales^{*[b]}

^[a]Instituto de Química Física “Rocasolano”, CSIC, Serrano 119, 28006 Madrid (Spain) E-mail: cgonzalez@iqfr.csic.es

^[b]Department of Bioorganic Chemistry Instituto de Investigaciones Químicas CSIC–Universidad de Sevilla Americo Vespucio 49, 41092 Sevilla (Spain) E-mail: jcmorales@iiq.csic.es

^[c]Instituto de Investigación Biomédica de Barcelona, IQAC, CSIC, CIBER-BBN Networking Centre on Bioengineering Biomaterials and Nanomedicine Baldiri Reixac 10, 08028 Barcelona (Spain)

Abstract: Quadruplex DNA structures are attracting an enormous interest in many areas of chemistry, ranging from chemical biology, supramolecular chemistry to nanoscience. We have prepared carbohydrate–DNA conjugates containing the oligonucleotide sequences of G-quadruplexes (thrombin binding aptamer (TBA) and human telomere (TEL)), measured their thermal stability and studied their structure in solution by using NMR and molecular dynamics. The solution structure of a fucose–TBA conjugate shows stacking interactions between the carbohydrate and the DNA G-tetrad in addition to hydrogen bonding and hydrophobic contacts. We have also shown that attaching carbohydrates at the 5'-end of a quadruplex telomeric sequence can alter its folding topology. These results suggest the possibility of modulating the folding of the G-quadruplex by linking carbohydrates and have clear implications in molecular recognition and the design of new G-quadruplex ligands.

Keywords: carbohydrates; DNA; G-quadruplexes; hydrogen bonds; molecular interactions; stacking

Introduction

G-quadruplexes consist of a square arrangement of guanines (G-tetrad), stabilized by Hoogsteen hydrogen-bonding and by monovalent cations (especially potassium) coordinated in the center, located between two G-tetrads. The in vivo evidence of the existence of G-quadruplexes at telomeres^[1] and oncogene promoters,^[2] as well as their role in controlling different biological processes,^[3] have converted them in primary research targets for therapeutical applications.^[4] Consequently, a variety of ligands has been designed and prepared to bind G-quadruplexes as a new class of anticancer drugs. Some examples of quadruplex binders have been reported to bind through groove specific contacts of the quadruplex structure.^[5] However, most quadruplex ligands described to date use aromatic π -stacking as the main driving force for binding on the G-tetrad platform.^[6]

In addition, G-quadruplexes are a very attractive motif in the development of structural and functional supramolecular assemblies,^[7] and in DNA-based nanodevices.^[8] The possibility of modulating the physicochemical properties of a G-quadruplex by its conjugation to small molecules is also being explored, especially through attaching large aromatic groups.^[9]

We have used carbohydrate oligonucleotide conjugates (COCs) to study carbohydrate-DNA interactions in double helices adapting a dangling end DNA model system traditionally used to study π - π stacking interactions.[10] The sugar moiety is attached to the 5'-end of the DNA sequence in our COCs. In previous work, we observed that natural highly polar carbohydrates stack onto the terminal DNA base pair of a duplex through CH/ π interactions.[11] However, DNA stability is only increased when the sugars stack on C-G or G-C base pairs. If COCs contained permethylated carbohydrates, apolar versions of the natural sugars, a notable increase in double-stranded DNA stability was found in comparison with the natural polyhydroxylated mono- and disaccharide DNA conjugates. Moreover, these apolar carbohydrates are also capable of stabilizing duplexes with A-T or T-A terminal base-pairs.[12] We hypothesized that the CH- π pseudo hydrogen-bonds in addition to the higher hydrophobicity imparted by the methyl groups are responsible for duplex stabilization.

Due to the relevance of the G-quadruplex DNA and RNA structures we decided to explore the possible carbohydrate- DNA interactions in a G-quadruplex context. Herein we describe the preparation of COCs containing the oligonucleotide sequence of a G-quadruplex and sugars attached to the 5'-end. The idea was to examine the possibility of carbohydrate interactions on top of the nearby G-tetrad and investigate how these contacts could affect quadruplex stability and structure. We have prepared COCs containing the thrombin-binding aptamer (TBA) and the human telomere (TEL) sequences in which the carbohydrates were covalently linked through an ethylene glycol spacer (Figure 1). Saccharides conjugated to a G-quadruplex-forming sequence (5'-TGGGAG) have been reported previously as anti-HIV agents.[13] The TBA sequence (Figure 1A) was selected due to the detailed knowledge of its 3D structure[14] and because of the high number of chemically modified TBA sequences (containing reverse natural bases,[15] extra natural bases,[16] modified bases,[17] and unnatural nucleosides[18]) and TBA conjugates (linked to small molecules[19] and to nanostructures).[20]

Figure 1. A) Sequence of the thrombin-binding aptamer (TBA). B) Schematic model of the carbohydrate-TBA conjugates. C) Enlarged top-view of monosaccharide-TBA conjugate.

Results and Discussion

The COCs were synthesized by using standard solid-phase oligonucleotide automatic synthesis. Mono- and disaccharides were covalently bound to the TBA sequence by using the corresponding carbohydrate phosphoramidite derivative (Figure 1 and Figure 2).[11, 21] β -D-glucose, β -D-galactose and β -D-fucose were selected monosaccharides, whereas β -D-maltose, β -D-lactose and β -D-cellobiose were the chosen

disaccharides. Also, two apolar sugars, permethylated glucose and maltose, were attached to the TBA sequence by using a similar synthetic strategy [12].

The thermal stability of the carbohydrate TBA conjugates was measured by UV-monitored thermal denaturation experiments in a pH 7.0 cacodylate buffer containing KCl (100 mM) (Table 1). All COCs containing natural carbohydrates (**4–9**) showed a lower thermal stability than the natural TBA (**1**). The reduction in T_m values ranges from 5.7 to 6.8 °C. However, it is important to note that the addition of a phosphate group at the 5'-end of the TBA quadruplex (compound **2**) provokes a destabilization of 4.5 °C with respect to unmodified TBA **1**. Furthermore, when the spacer is attached to the TBA sequence (compound **3**) the decrease of T_m in comparison with TBA is 7.5 °C. Therefore, compound **3** must be considered the proper control to evaluate the carbohydrate contribution to the thermal stability of the different conjugates. Thus, ΔT_m values of the natural carbohydrate TBA conjugates (**4–9**) with respect to the spacer-TBA conjugate (**3**) indicate an increase in stability between 0.7 and 1.8 °C (see right column on Table 1). Thermodynamic analysis of the UV melting-curves were obtained by curve-fitting as described in the literature.[22] Free energies confirmed the trend observed in the T_m values. Moreover, a greater enthalpic contribution to the stability of their folded structure is observed in all carbohydrate-TBA conjugates with respect to the spacer-TBA conjugate (**3**) and to natural TBA (**1**), which could be attributed to the new molecular interactions between carbohydrates and the G-quadruplex.

Figure 2. Carbohydrate-TBA conjugates and oligonucleotide controls prepared for this study.

A similar scenario is observed when apolar carbohydrates are bound to the 5'-end of the TBA oligonucleotide. COCs containing permethylated glucose and maltose (**10** and **11**) also show a decrease in T_m values in comparison with TBA (4.7 and 10.1 °C, respectively). Nevertheless, the TBA conjugate with the apolar version of glucose (**10**) is 2.8 °C more stable than the control spacer-TBA (**3**) contributing to moderately improved TBA stability. The addition of the natural and sugars to the conjugate **3** is able to

recover, to some extent, the TBA G-quadruplex stability. These results indicate that favorable carbohydrate– DNA interactions are taking place.

We also measured the thermal stability of oligonucleotide TBA sequences with an extra base at the 5′-end (thymidine, sequence **12** and adenine, sequence **13**). A decrease in T_m value was observed for both sequences (6.0 and 6.3 °C, respectively) with respect to the unmodified TBA (**1**). Comparable results were obtained by Smirnov et al.;[23] these values are similar to those obtained for COCs with the natural carbohydrates and a similar behavior could be envisioned. It is important to note that here the “spacer” of the natural aromatic base is deoxyribose, which is conformationally more restricted than ethylene glycol, the spacer used for the mono- and disaccharide TBA conjugates.

To confirm that the observed increased stability in COCs is due to carbohydrate–G-tetrad interaction, the structure of TBA–carbohydrate conjugates containing two mono- and three disaccharides (compounds **5**, **6**, **7**, **8**, and **9**) was studied by NMR spectroscopy, circular dichroism (CD), and gel electrophoresis. CD spectra clearly show that all conjugates adopt antiparallel G-quadruplex structures (see Figure S1 in the Supporting Information). Gel electrophoresis experiments conducted under non-denaturing conditions show single bands for monosaccharide–TBA conjugates, running as the native TBA. However, two bands are observed for the disaccharide–TBA conjugates (Figure S2 in the Supporting Information). Since the melting temperatures of these conjugates do not depend on oligonucleotide concentration (Table S1 in the Supporting Information), we conclude that the two bands observed in the gels correspond to two monomeric species with different conformations.

Table 1. Melting temperatures T_m values (°C) for the carbohydrate–oligonucleotide conjugates containing the thrombin-binding aptamer sequence and the corresponding oligonucleotide controls.[a]

5′-X- GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG		T_m (°C)	ΔT_m [°C] ^[b]	ΔT_m^* [°C] ^[c]	$-\Delta S^\circ$ (cal/k · mol)	$-\Delta H^\circ$ (kcal/mol)	ΔG°_{37} (kcal/mol)	$\Delta\Delta G^\circ_{37}$ (kcal/mol) ^[d]	$\Delta\Delta G^\circ_{37}^*$ (kcal/mol) ^[e]
(none)	1	48.2 ± 0.5	-	-7.5	117.5±2	37.7	-2.8	-	-1.0
PO ₃ ^{−[f]}	2	43.7 ± 0.2	-4.5	-3.0	134.1±2	42.3	-2.3	0.5	-0.5
HO-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	3	40.7 ± 0.2	-7.5	-	119.8±1	37.5	-1.8	1.0	-
β-D-glucose-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	4	42.5 ± 0.2	-5.7	+1.8	132.3±1	41.7	-2.2	0.6	-0.4
β-D-galactose-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	5	41.4 ± 0.2	-6.8	+0.7	135.1±2	42.3	-2.0	0.8	-0.2
β-L-fucose-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	6	42.3 ± 0.2	-5.9	+1.6	135.7±2	42.6	-2.2	0.6	-0.4
β-D-maltose-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	7	41.7 ± 0.2	-6.5	+1.0	133.7±2	42.0	-2.1	0.7	-0.3
β-D-lactose-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	8	41.5 ± 0.3	-6.7	+0.8	139.7±2	43.8	-2.2	0.6	-0.4
β-D-cellobiose-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	9	41.8 ± 0.3	-6.4	+1.1	136.9±2	42.9	-2.1	0.7	-0.3
β-D-glucose(Me)-C2-OPO ₂ ^{−[f]}	10	43.5 ± 0.7	-4.7	+2.8	134.1±1	42.4	-2.4	0.4	-0.6
β-D-maltose(Me)-C2-		38.1 ± 0.4	-10.1	-1.6	127.2 ±2	39.7	-1.8	1.0	0.0

OPO ₂ ^{−[f]} 11								
2'-deoxythymidine-OPO ₂ [−]	42.2	−6.0	+1.5	141.5	44.4	−2.2	0.6	−0.4
12	± 0.1			±3				
2'-deoxyadenosine-OPO ₂ [−]	41.9	−6.3	+1.2	139.2	43.8	−2.3	0.5	−0.5
13	± 0.1			±2				

[a] Buffer: 10 mM Na-cacodylate, 100mM KCl, pH 7.0; T_m values are the average of three experiments measured at 5 μ M conc.; [b] $\Delta T_m = T_m$ (5'-modified TBA sequence) – T_m (TBA control sequence); [c] $\Delta T_m^* = T_m$ (5'-modified TBA sequence) – T_m (5'-spacer-OPO₂– TBA sequence). [d] $\Delta\Delta G_{37}^\circ = \Delta G$ (5'-modified TBA sequence) – ΔG (TBA control sequence); [e] $\Delta\Delta G_{37}^\circ = \Delta G$ (5'-modified TBA sequence) – ΔG (5'-spacer-OPO₂– TBA sequence). [f] C2 stands for –CH₂–CH₂–;

The imino proton region of the NMR spectra clearly indicates that all conjugates adopt a quadruplex structure with two guanine tetrads (Figure S3 in the Supporting Information). Exchangeable proton signals could be assigned on the basis of the strong similarity between the spectra of the conjugates and the unmodified aptamer. Assignment of most non-exchangeable protons could be carried out following standard bidimensional techniques, and were confirmed with previously reported assignment of native TBA (see Figures 3 and 4 and the Supporting Information for assignment tables).

In the case of the disaccharide conjugates, spectral assignment was complicated due to the presence of additional spin-systems. After sequential assignment, we concluded that these systems correspond to two species, affecting protons in residues G6, T7, and G8 (see Figure 3), being both species in slow equilibrium on the NMR timescale. The chemical shifts of one of the conformations are almost coincident with those of the native aptamer.

This effect is not observed in the monosaccharide–TBA conjugates, in which single species are observed. The different behavior between mono- and disaccharide conjugates is consistent with the non-denaturing gel experiments. Chemical shift differences between equivalent protons in modified- and unmodified TBA are shown in Figure S4 (the Supporting Information). Most protons in COCs exhibit very similar chemical shifts to the natural TBA except those in residue G1 and in the neighborhood of the TGT loop (mainly, protons in residues G6, T7, and G8). Interestingly, the profile of chemical shift differences is very similar in all the conjugates.

Figure 3. Region of the NOESY spectra of the maltose–TBA conjugate (**7**) superimposed onto the native TBA (**1**, pink) spectra. Sequential assignment pathways show the two different species for residues G6, T7 and G8 (labeled in different colors).

NOE data also indicate that all conjugates maintain a similar structure as the native TBA. Exchangeable NOE patterns are consistent with formation of two G-tetrads. The strong intensities of intraresidue NOE cross-peaks between guanine H8 and H1' protons confirmed the *syn* conformation for the glycosidic angle of G1, G5, G10, and G14. Stacking of the lateral loop thymines, T4 and T13, on top of the adjacent guanines, G2 and G11, is corroborated by several strong NOEs. However, some differences in NOE cross-peaks are observed in the TGT loop suggesting that the carbohydrate affects its structure and alters the interaction of residues G8 and T9 with the nearby tetrad (G1:G6:G10:G15; see Figure 4 and Table S2 in the Supporting Information).

Figure 4. Regions of the NOESY experiments of fucose–TBA conjugate (**6**). Contour plots of the carbohydrate–DNA NOEs are shown in red.

Most interestingly, several carbohydrate–DNA NOEs could be detected in all conjugates. The number of these NOEs is particularly high in the case of conjugate **6** (fucose–TBA), most probably due to the presence of a methyl group in this carbohydrate; this resonance is easily identified and does not overlap with other signals of the conjugate (see Figure 4, top).

The solution structure of conjugate **6** was determined on the basis of experimental NOE constraints. Restrained molecular- dynamics calculations were carried out with the AMBER package as explained in the Methods section in the Supporting Information. A total of 142 distance constraints (10 between carbohydrate and DNA) were used in the calculation (Table S2, the Supporting Information). Structures were deposited in the Protein Data Bank (2lyg). As shown in Figure 5, the resulting structures are well-defined. The solution structure of the fucose–TBA conjugate resembles the general fold of the unmodified aptamer. The main differences are in the TGT loop-region in which the fucose moiety displaces the nucleobases of residues G8 and T9 and stacks on top of G1 and G15 (see Figure 5, bottom). In fact, fucose interaction with the guanine tetrad seems to occur by an induced-fit mechanism. In addition to the stacking interaction with the adjacent tetrad, fucose O5 is at a hydrogen bond distance of one amino proton of G8 (see Figure 6). Also, a favorable hydrophobic interaction occurs between fucose and T9 methyl groups (Figure 6). The T7 base tends to insert into the quadruplex groove. The carbohydrate maintains the usual 4C1 chair conformation.

The structure of the conjugate **6** is totally consistent with the observed NOEs and the profiles of chemical shift differences between this conjugate and the native aptamer. Chemical shifts are very sensitive to structural variations. Therefore, the strong similarity between DNA proton resonances in the two monosaccharide–DNA conjugates implies that fucose–TBA and galactose–TBA adopt very similar conformations (see Figure S5 in the Supporting Information). Although in the latter the number of carbohydrate– DNA NOEs is lower, this is not due to a different conformation of the galactose in the conjugate, but to the lack of the fucose methyl-group that facilitates the detection of carbohydrate– DNA NOEs.

Inspection of the structure of fucose–TBA shows that the site occupied by the fucose sugar cannot be easily occupied by a disaccharide without further disruption of the TGT loop (see Figure 5). Most probably, this is the reason of the two species observed in the NMR spectra of the disaccharide conjugates, and confirmed by electrophoretic gels. ¹H chemical shifts and NOEs suggest that in one species the disaccharide interacts with the G-tetrad disrupting the TGT loop, and in the other, the TGT loop adopts a native-like conformation with the disaccharide mainly disordered (Figure 7). Presumably, this second species has a different electrophoretic mobility (see Figure S2 in the Supporting Information). At the same time, this equilibrium must be affecting the stability of the carbohydrate–TBA conjugate.

It is worth mentioning that the disaccharide–TBA conjugates are not more stable than the monosaccharide–TBA conjugates, as observed in the case of sugar-capping DNA duplexes.[11–12] The stabilization conferred to the TBA by the different carbohydrates is more difficult to interpret than in the case of carbohydrates stacking at the terminal base of double helices. In the latter, the increase in thermal stability is a direct measurement of a favorable interaction of the carbohydrate with the terminal base pair. However, in TBA conjugates the carbohydrate G-tetrad interaction competes with native nucleobase π -stacking interactions. This event is difficult to

circumvent because G-tetrads are rarely exposed to the solvent. In fact, the capping interactions in the terminal G-tetrads affect dramatically the folding topology of the quadruplex.

Interfering with capping interactions by conjugating carbohydrates makes it possible to modulate G-quadruplex folding, since the particular topology adopted by a G-rich oligonucleotide depends strongly on capping interactions between terminal G-tetrads and nucleotides in the loops. In many cases, terminal residues are also involved in these interactions, as observed in human telomeric sequences. As a proof of concept, we have explored the effect of substituting the 5'-terminal thymine of the oligonucleotide 5'-TAGGGTTAGGGT-3' (TEL) with a carbohydrate. TEL folds as a G-quadruplex containing two repeats of the human telomeric sequence, and its structure has been studied by NMR spectroscopy and X-ray crystallography. In the crystallographic structure TEL forms a dimeric parallel propeller-like quadruplex.[24] However, in solution, TEL exists in an equilibrium between dimeric parallel and antiparallel structures, being the latter predominant in Na⁺ buffer.[25]

As it can be observed in Figure 8, the NMR spectra of TEL and β -D-glucose-C2-OPO₂-AGGGTTAGGGT **14** are dramatically different. As previously reported, the TEL spectra exhibit many broad imino signals, indicating the presence of multiple conformations. A similar complexity is observed in the control spacer-OPO₂-AGGGTTAGGGT conjugate **15** (see Figure S9 in the Supporting Information).

Figure 5. A) Stereoview of the superposition of 10 refined structures of the fucose-TBA, conjugate **6**. The average structure is shown in bold bonds. B) Top view of the fucose-TBA conjugate **6**. C) Top view of the native TBA G-quadruplex **1** (arrows indicate the direction where G8 and T9 move in the fucose-TBA conjugate **6**). The fucose moiety is shown in red, guanine core in blue, _TT_ lateral loops in cyan, and the _TGT_ loop in green.

Figure 6. Detail on the structure of the fucose-TBA conjugate **6**. Contacts of fucose with the bases of G8 and T9 in the TGT loop of the G-quadruplex can be observed (methyl-methyl interactions and a hydrogen bond shown in yellow).

Figure 7. Side view of the two possible conformations of maltose-TBA conjugate **7**: Left: maltose stacked on the G-tetrad with T9 shifted; right: maltose pointing to the bulk aqueous solution with T9 and G8 stacked on the G-tetrad.

Figure 8. Imino region of the NMR spectra of A) **14** and B) TEL and schemes of the two species coexistent in solution; C) H1'-aromatic region of the NOESY spectra of **14** in D₂O (τ_m =300 ms) (Experimental conditions: oligo concentration=1 μ M, potassium phosphate buffer (10 mM), pH 7, T=5 °C).

However, the imino region of the NMR spectra of the carbohydrate-TEL conjugate **14** shows six sharp signals, indicating clearly the presence of a single conformation. The two-dimensional spectrum of **14** shown in Figure 8 indicates that all guanines are in an *anti*-conformation. These data are consistent with the formation of a parallel symmetric quadruplex. A complete structural determination of this and other COCs containing telomeric sequences is in progress in our laboratories and will be reported in due time. With the present data we can already conclude that substitution of the 5'-terminal thymine by glucose alters the equilibrium between different species, promoting the formation of a stable parallel quadruplex (see Figure 8).

Conclusion

Our studies on sugar-DNA conjugates show that favorable carbohydrate-DNA interactions occur in a G-quadruplex structural context as we have observed in the case of TBA. Carbohydrates stack on top of guanine tetrads, and also interact with loop DNA bases through hydrogen bonding or hydrophobic contacts when they are available (like the interaction between fucose and thymine methyl groups in the fucose-TBA conjugate).

Our results have implications in the design of new G-quadruplex ligands. Until now only aromatic compounds binding through π - π stacking on the guanine tetrad or through van der Waals contacts with the grooves of the G-quadruplex structures have been reported. Our results engage the possibility of developing carbohydrate-based ligands that could bind through CH- π noncovalent forces together with other molecular interactions.

Finally, we have also shown that by conjugating carbohydrates at the 5'-end of G-quadruplex structures, we can alter their folding topology. The success of the modulation is based on manipulating the interaction between the terminal G-tetrads and other residues. The intrinsic versatility of carbohydrates introduces the possibility of modulating G-quadruplex systems in nanomaterials and biomedical applications.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Carbohydrate-DNA interactions at G-quadruplexes: folding and stability

changes by attaching sugars at the 5'-end.

Irene Gómez-Pinto, Empar Vengut-Climent, Ricardo Lucas, Anna Aviñó,

Ramón Eritja, Carlos González*, Juan C. Morales*

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Figure S1: CD spectra of carbohydrate-TBA conjugates (**5-9**).

Figure S2: Native 20% polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis of carbohydrate-TBA conjugates (**5-9**), unmodified TBA (**1**) and 5'-(2-hydroxyethyl)phosphate-TBA derivative (**3**).

Figure S3: Imino region of 1D ^1H -NMR spectra of carbohydrate-TBA conjugates and assignment of imino proton resonances.

Figure S4. Chemical shifts differences between carbohydrate-TBA conjugates **5-9** and native TBA sequence **1**.

Figure S5: Top view of the average calculated structure of galactose-TBA conjugate **7**. Color code: The carbohydrate moiety is shown in red, guanine tetrad in blue and the – TGT– loop in green.

Figure S6: Models of maltose-TBA conjugate **7**. A) Side view of the two possible conformations of **7** (left, maltose stacked on the G-tetrad with T9 shifted; right, maltose pointing to the bulk aqueous solution with T9 and G8 stacked on the G-tetrad. B) Top view of **7** on the conformation with maltose stacked on the G-tetrad.

Figure S7: Melting curves for TBA control sequences **1-3**, carbohydrate-TBA conjugates **4-11** and TBA derivatives **12-13**.

Figure S8: First derivative of the melting curves for TBA control sequences **1** and **3**, carbohydrate-TBA conjugates **6**, **9** and **10** and TBA derivative **12**.

Figure S9: Imino region of 1D ^1H -NMR spectra of $\text{HO-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-OPO}_2^-$ - AGGGTTAGGGT conjugate **15**.

Carbohydrate-DNA NOEs				
Galactose-TBA 5	Fucose-TBA 6	Maltose-TBA 7	Lactose-TBA 8	Cellobiose-TBA 9
G1H8-LinkH1': m G1H8-LinkH2': w G1H8-H5: m G1H8-H3: m	G1H8-Me: w G1H8-H5: w G1H1'-Me: w G1H8-LinkH1': m G1H8-LinkH2': w	G1H8-H1: w G1H8-H1(malt2): vw G1H8-H4: m G1H8-H3/5: w	G1H8-H1: w G1H8-H3: w G1H8-H4/5: m	G1H8-H6a: w G1H8-H6b: w G1H8-H1: m
	G8'H8-Me: w G8'H1'-Me: w		G8'H8-H1: vw	
	T9H6-Me: w T9Me-Me:w			
	G15H1'-Me: vw			

Carbohydrate-Carbohydrate NOEs			
	Carb1-Carb2	Carb1-Linker	G1-Linker
GALACTOSE			H8-H1:m H8-H2:w
FUCOSE		Met-H2: w	H8-H1:m H8-H2:w
MALTOSE	H2-H1: m H1-H1: w		

Fucose-TBA 6, significant NOEs in –TGT– loop		
Experimental NOE	Distance in structure of 6	Distance in native TBA
G6 H1-G8 H4': m	3.6	4.1
G6 H1'-T7 H6: m	3.4	4.3
T7 H2'-G8 H8: w	4.7	4.6
G8 H4'-T9 Me: w	4.6	4.9
G8 H1'-T9 Me: w	3.7	3.6
T9 Me-G15 H1: m	4.0	5.0
T9 H1'-G10 H1: w	5.2	5.2
T9 Me-G10 H1: w	4.2	7.1
T9 Me-G15 H1': w	6.1	7.8
T9 H1'-G15 H8: w	4.4	3.8

Table S3: NMR assignments of DNA protons in control sequence (**3**) and carbohydrate-TBA conjugates (**5-9**) at T=5 °C (5mM potassium phosphate, pH=7). See scheme for protons names.

Conjugate		H1'	H2'/H2''	H3'	H4'	H5'/H5''	Met	H6/H8	H1/H3
3 HO-CH ₂ - CH ₂ - OPO ₂ ⁻ - TBA	G1	6.11	3.01	4.92	4.30	4.44	--	7.43	12.15
	G2	6.06	3.07/2.37	5.19	4.44	4.30	--	8.23	12.2
	T3	6.21	2.26/2.61	4.94	4.30	4.25	2.01	7.93	11.32
	T4	6.09	2.07/2.69	4.91	4.24	3.95	1.04	7.2	11.32
	G5	6.08	3.39/2.94	4.89	4.44	4.32/4.28	--	7.47	12.31
	G6	5.98	2.82/2.64	5.14	4.46	4.32/4.25	--	7.72	12.29
	T7	6.53	2.53/2.65	4.88	4.46	4.32/4.25	2.01	7.96	11.32
	G8	5.8	2.00/2.34	4.80	4.00	4.14/4.04	--	7.49	10.71
	T9	5.85	1.99/2.44	4.65	3.81	3.58/3.04	1.83	7.29	10.33
	G10	6.09	3.76/2.95	4.94	4.29	--	--	7.47	11.93
	G11	6.04	3.01/2.35	5.17	4.42	4.30	--	8.26	12.11
	T12	6.21	2.25/2.61	4.93	4.30	4.25	2.01	7.93	11.32
	T13	6.14	2.11/2.76	4.93	4.32	3.95	0.99	7.27	11.32
	G14	6.11	3.53/3.00	4.95	4.45	4.30/4.21	--	7.5	12.12
	G15	6.19	2.72/2.46	4.82	4.27	4.20	--	8.11	12.4
5 β-D- galactose- CH ₂ -CH ₂ - OPO ₂ ⁻ - TBA	G1	6.06	3.48/2.91	--	4.30	--	--	7.36	12.07
	G2	6.06	3.07/2.34	5.18	4.43	4.29	--	8.28	12.11
	T3	6.20	2.27/2.61	4.93	4.28	4.23	1.99	7.92	11.33
	T4	6.06	2.04/2.70	4.90	4.29	3.93	1.02	7.14	11.39
	G5	6.05	3.36/2.93	4.87	4.42	4.31/4.23	--	7.45	12.20
	G6	5.89	2.75/2.63	5.12	4.42	4.25	--	7.61	12.12
	T7	6.55	2.54/2.66	4.87	4.48	4.34/4.24	2.00	8.00	11.27
	G8	5.85	2.10/2.36	4.79	4.01	4.15/4.09	--	7.62	--
	T9	5.83	1.98/2.44	4.63	3.89	3.57/2.97	1.89	7.28	10.30
	G10	6.06	3.73/2.97	--	--	--	--	7.45	11.93
	G11	6.02	2.96/2.33	5.18	4.40	4.28/4.23	--	8.23	12.04
	T12	6.20	2.23/2.61	4.93	4.28	4.23	1.99	7.92	11.33
	T13	6.12	2.08/2.75	4.91	4.30	3.93	0.97	7.25	11.33
	G14	6.10	3.52/2.99	4.93	4.42	4.29	--	7.46	12.17
	G15	6.18	2.70/2.44	4.79	4.29	4.18	--	8.08	12.46
	G1	6.05	3.48/2.90	--	4.29	--	--	7.37	12.07
	G2	6.06	3.07/2.34	5.15	4.43	4.28	--	8.29	12.11

6 β -L-fucose-CH ₂ -CH ₂ -OPO ₂ ⁻ -TBA	T3	6.20	2.27/2.61	4.93	4.28	4.23	1.99	7.92	11.33
	T4	6.06	2.03/2.70	4.90	4.29	3.93	1.01	7.14	11.39
	G5	6.05	3.36/2.93	4.88	4.41	4.30/4.23	--	7.44	12.20
	G6	5.89	2.74/2.62	5.11	4.41	4.29	--	7.61	12.11
	T7	6.54	2.53/2.66	4.86	4.47	4.33/4.25	1.99	8.00	11.31
	G8	5.84	2.09/2.35	4.79	4.01	4.14/4.08	--	7.61	--
	T9	5.83	1.97/2.44	4.64	3.90	3.56/2.98	1.89	7.29	10.32
	G10	6.07	3.71/2.97	--	--	--	--	7.45	11.94
	G11	6.02	2.97/2.33	5.15	4.40	4.32/4.26	--	8.22	12.05
	T12	6.19	2.24/2.60	4.93	4.28	4.23	2.00	7.92	11.33
	T13	6.12	2.09/2.75	4.91	4.29	3.93	0.97	7.25	11.33
	G14	6.10	3.52/2.99	4.93	4.44	4.28	--	7.48	12.17
	G15	6.17	2.69/2.44	4.80	4.25	4.18	--	8.08	12.46
7 β -D-maltose-CH ₂ -CH ₂ -OPO ₂ ⁻ -TBA	G1	6.05	3.49/2.90	--	4.28	--	--	7.36	12.06
	G2	6.06	3.07/2.35	5.16	4.43	4.28	--	8.27	12.10
	T3	6.20	2.24/2.60	4.93	4.29	4.23	2.00	7.93	11.33
	T4	6.06	2.04/2.70	4.90	4.29	3.92	1.02	7.14	11.39
	G5	6.04	3.36/2.92	4.87	4.43	4.31	--	7.45	12.20
	G6	5.89	2.74/2.63	5.12	4.41	4.29	--	7.62	12.11
	T7	6.54	2.53/2.66	4.87	4.48	4.34/4.25	2.00	8.00	11.20
	G8	5.83	2.09/2.36	4.80	4.01	4.13/4.09	--	7.62	--
	T9	5.83	1.98/2.44	4.64	3.89	3.56/2.99	1.89	7.29	10.31
	G10	6.09	3.73/2.98	4.94	--	--	--	7.45	11.94
	G11	6.03	2.97/2.33	5.16	4.40	4.29	--	8.22	12.04
	T12	6.19	2.23/2.60	4.93	4.31	--	2.00	7.91	11.33
	T13	6.12	2.09/2.74	4.92	4.30	3.93	0.97	7.25	11.33
	G14	6.09	3.52/3.00	4.93	4.43	4.38/4.28	--	7.47	12.18
	G15	6.18	2.70/2.44	4.80	4.25	4.19	--	8.08	12.47
8 β -D-lactose-CH ₂ -CH ₂ -OPO ₂ ⁻ -TBA	G1	6.06	3.46/2.90	--	4.29	--	--	7.36	12.06
	G2	6.07	3.07/2.35	5.16	4.43	4.29	--	8.27	12.10
	T3	6.19	2.28/2.61	4.93	4.28	4.23	1.99	7.92	11.34
	T4	6.06	2.04/2.70	4.91	4.29	3.93	1.02	7.14	11.39
	G5	6.06	3.36/2.92	4.87	4.41	4.31/4.23	--	7.45	12.2
	G6	5.89	2.74/2.62	5.12	4.42	4.29	--	7.61	12.12
	T7	6.55	2.53/2.66	4.86	4.48	4.34/4.25	1.99	8.00	11.22
	G8	5.84	2.10/2.36	4.79	4.01	4.15/4.09	--	7.61	--
	T9	5.82	1.98/2.44	4.64	3.89	3.57/2.97	1.89	7.28	10.30
	G10	6.09	3.73/2.96	--	--	--	--	7.45	11.93
	G11	6.02	2.97/2.33	5.17	4.40	4.29/4.24	--	8.22	12.04
	T12	6.19	2.24/2.60	4.93	4.28	4.23	1.99	7.92	11.34
	T13	6.12	2.08/2.75	4.91	4.30	3.93	0.97	7.25	11.34
	G14	6.10	3.52/2.99	4.93	4.43	4.29	--	7.48	12.17
	G15	6.18	2.69/2.44	4.79	4.29	4.19	--	8.08	12.46
9 β -D-cellobiose-CH ₂ -CH ₂ -OPO ₂ ⁻	G1	6.05	3.48/2.90	--	4.29	--	--	7.37	12.06
	G2	6.06	3.07/2.35	5.16	4.43	4.28	--	8.27	12.10
	T3	6.20	2.28/2.61	4.92	4.28	4.22	2.00	7.91	11.33
	T4	6.06	2.04/2.70	4.90	4.29	3.93	1.03	7.14	11.39
	G5	6.06	3.36/2.92	4.87	4.42	4.32/4.23	--	7.44	12.20
	G6	5.89	2.74/2.63	5.12	4.41	4.32	--	7.61	12.12
	T7	6.55	2.53/2.66	4.87	4.48	4.34/4.25	2.00	8.00	11.20
	G8	5.85	2.10/2.36	4.80	4.01	4.15/4.09	--	7.61	--
	T9	5.83	1.98/2.44	4.64	3.89	3.56/2.97	1.90	7.28	10.30
	G10	6.09	3.73/2.96	--	--	--	--	7.46	11.92
	G11	6.02	2.96/2.33	5.15	4.40	4.32/4.27	--	8.22	12.04
	T12	6.20	2.24/2.60	4.92	4.28	4.23	2.00	7.91	11.33
	T13	6.12	2.09/2.75	4.90	4.29	3.93	0.97	7.25	11.33
	G14	6.10	3.52/2.99	4.93	4.45	4.38/4.30	--	7.48	12.17

TBA	G15	6.18	2.70/2.44	4.81	4.25	4.19	--	8.08	12.46
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Table S3b: NMR assignment of DNA protons of the second species

Conjugate	Native	H1'	H2'/H2''	H3'	H4'	H5'/H5''	Met	H6/H8
7	G6	5.96	2.80/2.62	5.12	4.46	--	--	7.71
	T7	6.51	2.52/2.63	4.87	4.45	--	1.99	7.94
	G8	5.79	1.99/2.33	--	--	--	--	7.48
8	G6	5.97	2.81/2.62	--	--	--	--	7.71
	T7	6.51	2.52/2.63	--	--	--	2.00	7.95
	G8	5.79	1.99/2.33	--	--	--	--	7.49
9	G6	5.97	2.81/2.62	--	--	--	--	7.71
	T7	6.52	2.52/2.63	--	--	--	2.00	7.94
	G8	5.79	1.99/2.34	--	--	--	--	7.49

Table S3c: NMR assignment of carbohydrate protons of conjugates **5** to **9**

Conjugate	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6a/ H6b	H6a/ H6b	Me
5	4.38	3.50	3.59	3.84	3.61	--		
6	4.35	3.43	3.55	3.64	3.68			1.18
7	4.46/5.30	3.28/3.51	3.68/3.66	3.52/3.38	3.68/3.69	3.85/--	3.82/3.76	
8	4.50/4.39	3.31/3.52	3.59/3.66	3.53/3.70	3.53/3.66	3.93/3.75	3.90/3.75	
9	4.47/4.44	3.29/3.26	3.53/3.47	3.49/3.58	3.49/3.45	3.89/3.74	3.87/3.69	

Supplementary Methods

Synthesis. General information.

All chemicals were obtained from chemical suppliers and used without further purification, unless otherwise noted. All reactions were monitored by TLC on precoated Silica-Gel 60 plates F254, and detected by heating with Mostain (500 ml of 10% H_2SO_4 , 25g of $(\text{NH}_4)_6\text{Mo}_7\text{O}_{24} \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 1g $\text{Ce}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$). Products were purified by flash chromatography with silica gel60 (200-400 mesh).

NMR spectra were recorded on either a Bruker AVANCE 300 or ARX 400 or Bruker Advance DRX 500 MHz [300 or 400 MHz (^1H), 75 or 100 (^{13}C), at room temperature for solutions in CDCl_3 , D_2O or CD_3OD]. Chemical shifts are referred to the solvent signal and are expressed in ppm. 2D NMR experiments (COSY, TOCSY, ROESY, and HMQC) were carried out when necessary to assign the corresponding signals of the new compounds. High resolution FAB (+) mass spectral analyses was obtained on a Micromass AutoSpec-Q spectrometer.

Preparation and characterization of maltose derivatives 17-20.

2-Benzyloxyethyl 2,3,6-tri-*O*-acetyl-4-*O*-(2,3,4,6-tetra-*O*-acetyl- α -D-glucopyranosyl)- β -D-glucopyranoside (17**)**

To a solution of the heptaacetyl maltose trichloroacetimidate **16**^[1] (4.5 g, 5.76 mmol) in anhydrous CH₂Cl₂ (50 mL) and 2-benzyloxyethanol (1.6 mL, 11.5 mmol), BF₃·OEt₂ (73 μ l, 0.57 mmol) was then added. After stirring at room temperature for 2 h under argon atmosphere, NEt₃ (0.2 ml) was then added. Solvents were then removed and the crude was purified by silica gel column chromatography using as eluent (Hex-AcOEt, 2:1-2:3) to give **17** (3.6 g, 81%) as a syrup. $[\alpha]_D^{22}$ +40.4 (c 1 in CHCl₃); δ_H (300 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.028-7.00 (m, 5H, Ph), 5.11 (d, 1H, J = 3.96 Hz, H_{1B}), 5.07 (t, 1H, J = 10.0Hz, H_{3B}), 4.96 (t, 1H, J = 9.0 Hz, H_{3A}), 4.75 (t, 1H, J = 9.6 Hz, H_{4B}), 4.58-4.52 (m, 2H, H_{2A}, H_{2B}), 4.35 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz, H_{1A}), 4.23-4.15 (m, 2 H, CH₂, H_{6A}), 3.99-3.90 (m, 2H, H_{6B}, H_{6'A}), 3.76-3.63 (m, 4H, OCH₂, H_{5B}, H_{6'B}), 3.49-3.34 (m, 4H, H_{5A}, H_{4A}, OCH₂), 1.90-1.66 (6s, 21H, OCOCH₃). δ_C (75 MHz, CDCl₃): 170.5, 170.4, 170.3, 170.1, 169.8, 169.6, 169.3 (C=O), 138.1 (C_qarom), 128.3, 127.6, 127.5 (C_{arom}), 100.3 (C_{1A}), 95.5 (C_{1B}), 75.3, 73.1, 72.7, 72.1, 72.0, 69.9, 69.2, 69.0, 68.4, 67.7, 62.8, 61.4, 20.9, 20.8, 20.7, 20.6, 20.5. HRMS (ES⁺) Calcd. for C₃₅H₄₆O₁₉Na (M+Na): 793.2531, found; 793.2549.

2-Benzyloxyethyl 2,3,6-tri-*O*-methyl-4-*O*-(2,3,4,6-tetra-*O*-methyl- α -D-glucopyranosyl)- β -D-glucopyranoside (18**)**

Compound **17** (3.0 g, 3.89 mmol) was dissolved in dry MeOH (100 mL) and Na₂CO₃ (162 mg, 1.17 mmol) was then added. The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h and IR-120 was then added to neutralize. Solvent was then removed and the crude was used for next step without any further purification. To a solution of the crude (2.0 g, 4.2 mmol) in anhydrous DMF (200 mL) at 0°C, NaH (1.4 g, 58.8 mmol) was added. The reaction

mixture was stirred for 10 min and MeI (5.5 mL, 88.2 mmol). After 24 h 2-propanol was then added dropwise and NH₄Cl sat (50 mL). Organic phase was extracted with ethyl acetate (2x200 mL) and washed with sodium bisulfate solution (100 mL) and brine (100 mL). Solvents were then removed and the crude was purified by silica gel column chromatography using as eluent (Hex-AcOEt, 1:1-1:6) to give **18** (1.9 g, 88%) as a syrup. $[\alpha]_D^{20} +38.9$ (c 1 in CHCl₃); δ_H (300 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.08-7.01 (m, 5H, Ph), 5.39 (d, 1H, $J = 3.90$ Hz, H_{1B}), 4.308 (s, 2H, CH₂Ph), 4.06 (d, 1H, $J = 7.8$ Hz, H_{1A}), 3.77 (m, 1H, H_{6A}), 3.57 (t, 1H, $J = 9.0$ Hz, H_{3B}), 3.51-3.24 (m, 23H, H_{6'A}, 2xCH₂, H_{5A} H_{5B}, H_{6B}, 5xCH₃O), 3.19-3.14 (m, 6H, H_{3A}, H_{4B}, H_{6'B}, CH₃O), 3.06 (s, 3H, CH₃O), 3.00 (t, 1H, $J = 9.0$ Hz, H_{3B}), 2.93 (dd, 1H, $J = 3.6, 10.0$ Hz, H_{2B}), 2.4(t, 1H, $J = 8.7$ Hz, H_{2A}). δ^{13}_C (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 138.2 (C_qarom), 128.3, 127.6, 127.5 (C_{arom}), 103.4 (C_{1A}), 95.9 (C_{1B}), 86.3, 83.7, 83.3, 81.7, 79.1, 73.6, 70.1, 71.0, 70.6, 69.2, 68.8, 60.7, 60.4, 60.1, 59.4, 59.3, 59.2, 59.1. HRMS (ES⁺) Calcd. for C₂₁H₄₀O₁₂Na (M+Na): 507.2417, found; 507.2433.

2-Hydroxyethyl 2,3,6-tri-*O*-methyl-4-*O*-(2,3,4,6-tetra-*O*-methyl- α -D-glucopyranosyl)- β -D-glucopyranoside (19**)**

A solution of compound **18** (500 mg, 0.87 mmol) in ethyl acetate-MeOH (1:1, 5mL) and Pd(OH)₂ in catalytic amount was stirred under an atmosphere of hydrogen for 24 h. The mixture was filtered off over celite and solvents were removed. The crude was purified by silica gel column chromatography using as eluent (Hex-AcOEt, 1:6→0:1) to give **19** (386 mg, 92%) as a syrup. $[\alpha]_D^{20} +74.0$ (c 1 in CHCl₃); δ^1_H (500 MHz, CDCl₃): 5.39 (s, 1H, 4.06 (d, 1H, $J = 7.5$ Hz, H_{1A}), 3.90 (m, 1H, H_{6A}), 3.81 (m, 1H, H_{3B}), 3.74-3.37 (m, 33H, H_{6'A}, 2xCH₂, H_{5A} H_{5B}, H_{6B}, 6xCH₃O, H_{3A}, H_{4B}, H_{6'B}), 3.30 (s, 3H, CH₃O), 3.2 (t, 1H, $J = 9.0$ Hz, H_{3B}), 3.18-3.14 (m, 1H, H_{2B}), 3.06 (t, 1H, $J = 8.0$ Hz, H_{2A}). δ^{13}_C (125 MHz, CDCl₃): 103.9 (C_{1A}), 96.3 (C_{1B}), 86.3, 83.9, 83.3, 81.7, 79.2, 73.5,

73.4, 72.0, 71.4, 70.8, 70.7, 62.4, 60.7, 60.5, 60.3, 59.7, 59.5, 59.2, 59.0. HRMS (ES⁺) Calcd. for C₂₁H₄₀O₁₂Na (M+Na): 507.2417, found; 507.2433.

2-[(2,3,4,6-Tetra-*O*-methyl- α -D-glucopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)-2,3,6-tri-*O*-methyl- β -D-glucopyranosyloxy)]ethyl (2-cyanoethyl) (*N,N*-diisopropyl) phosphoramidite (20**)**

DIEA (260 μ L, 1.48 mmol) and 2-cyanoethyl-*N,N'*-diisopropylamino-chlorophosphoramidite (125 μ L, 0.55 mmol) were added to a solution of compound **19** (180 mg, 0.37 mmol) in anhydrous CH₂Cl₂ (4 mL) at room temperature under an argon atmosphere. After 1.0 h no starting material was observed. Solvent was then removed and the crude was purified by silica gel column chromatography by using Hex/EtOAc (1:2 with 5% of NEt₃) to give compound **20** (200 mg, 79%) as a syrup. δ^1_{H} (300 MHz, CDCl₃): 5.41 (d, 1H, J = 3.90 Hz, H_{1B}), 4.04 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz, H_{1A}), 3.79-3.74 (m, 1H, H_{6A}), 3.65-3.45 (m, 6H, H_{3B}, H_{6'A}, 2xCH₂), 3.44-3.27 (m, 22H, OCH₂, 2xCH_{isopropyl}, H_{5A}, H_{5B}, H_{6B}, 5xCH_{3O}), 3.21-3.10 (m, 6H, H_{3A}, H_{4B}, H_{6'B}, CH_{3O}), 3.06 (s, 3H, CH_{3O}), 3.02 (t, 1H, J = 9.0 Hz, H_{3B}), 2.96 (dd, 1H, J = 3.6, 10.0 Hz, H_{2B}), 2.87-2.80 (m, 1H, H_{2A}), 2.22-2.39 (m, 2H, CH₂CN), 0.98 (d, 12H, J =6.5 Hz, 4CH_{3isopropyl}). δ^{13}_{C} (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 117.9 (CN), 103.5 (C_{1A}), 95.9 (C_{1B}), 86.3, 83.7, 83.3, 81.7, 79.1, 73.6, 71.0, 70.6, 69.3, 62.5, 60.8, 60.5, 60.2, 59.4, 59.3, 59.2, 59.1, 58.4, 43.0, 24.7, 24.6, 24.5, 20.3. HRMS (ES⁺) Calcd. for C₂₈H₄₆O₁₂Na (M+Na): 597.2887, found; 597.2882.

Proton and carbon NMR spectra of compounds 17-20.

Compound 17

Compound 18

Compound 19

Synthesis of carbohydrate–oligonucleotide conjugates

Carbohydrate-oligonucleotide conjugates **4-11** were synthesized on an Applied Biosystems 3400 synthesizer by using standard β -cyanoethylphosphoramidite chemistry. G-quadruplex oligonucleotide sequences **1-3**, **12**, **13**, **14** and **15** were prepared by *Biomers* following the same methodology. Oligonucleotide conjugates were synthesized either on low-volume 200 nmols (LV200) or 1.0 μ mol scale and using the DMT-off procedure. Oligonucleotide supports were treated with 33% aqueous ammonia for 16 h at 55°C, then the ammonia solutions were evaporated to dryness and the conjugates were purified by reversed-phase HPLC in a Waters Alliance separation module with a PDA detector. HPLC conditions were as follows: Nucleosil 120 C18, 250x8 mm, 10 μ m column; flow rate: 3 mL/min.

For conjugates **4-9**: A 28 min linear gradient 0-30%B (mobile phase A: 5% CH₃CN/ 95% 100 mM triethylammonium acetate (TEAA; pH 6.5); mobile phase B: 100% CH₃CN).

For conjugates **10-11**: A 28 min linear gradient 0-40%B (mobile phase A: 5% CH₃CN/ 95% 100 mM triethylammonium acetate (TEAA; pH 6.5); mobile phase B: 100% CH₃CN).

Thermal denaturation UV measurements

TBA control oligonucleotides **1-3**, carbohydrate-TBA conjugates **4-11** and TBA derivatives **12-13** were hybridized by heating the sample at 90°C for 3 min and letting cool down to room temperature during 3h. Melting curves for the DNA conjugates were measured in a Perkin–Elmer Lambda 750 UV/Vis spectrophotometer at 295 nm while the temperature was raised from 10 to 80 °C at a rate of 1.0 °C/min. T_m values were calculated from the first derivative of the melting curve (using Origin software).^[2]

HPLC chromatograms of carbohydrate oligonucleotide conjugates 4-11 and 14.

Conjugate β -D-glc-C2-TBA seq (4)

Conjugate β -D-gal-C2-TBA seq (5)

Conjugate β -L-Fuc-C2-TBA seq (6)

(7)

Conjugate β -D-maltose-C2-TBA seq

Conjugate β -D-lactose-C2-TBA seq (8)

seq (9)

Conjugate β -D-cellobiose-C2-TBA

Conjugate β -D-glc(Me)-C2-TBA seq (10)
seq (11)

Conjugate β -D-maltose(Me)-C2-TBA

Conjugate β -D-glc(Me)-C2- OPO_2^- -AGGGTTAGGGT (14)

Maldi-TOF mass spectra of carbohydrate oligonucleotide conjugates 4-11 and 14.

MALDI-TOF spectra were performed using a Perseptive Voyager DETMRP mass spectrometer, equipped with nitrogen laser at 337 nm using a 3ns pulse. The matrix used contained 2,4,6-trihydroxyacetophenone (THAP, 10 mg/ml in ACN/ water 1:1) and ammonium citrate (50 mg/ ml in water).

Carbohydrate oligonucleotide conjugates	[M-H] calc.	[M-H] exp.
β -D-glc-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (4)	5003.1	5003.4
β -D-gal-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (5)	5003.1	5003.0
β -L-Fuc-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (6)	4987.1	4987.7
β -D-maltose-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (7)	5165.1	5164.8
β -D-lactose-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (8)	5165.1	5164.4
β -D-cellobiose-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (9)	5165.1	5166.6
β -D-glc(Me)-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (10)	5263.5	5263.1
β -D-maltose(Me)-C2-GGTTGGTGTGGTTGG (11)	5059.3	5059.0
β -D-glc-C2-AGGGTTAGGGT (14)	3740.0	3739.0

NMR spectroscopy and structure calculations.

Samples of the conjugates were purified by HPLC, ion-exchanged with Dowex 50W resin and then suspended in 500 μ L of either D₂O or H₂O/D₂O 9:1 in potassium phosphate buffer, pH 7. Different KCl concentrations were used for NMR samples, ranging from 5 to 100 mM. NMR spectra were acquired in Bruker Avance spectrometers operating at 600 or 800 MHz, and processed with Topspin software. DQF-COSY, TOCSY and NOESY (mixing times of 150 and 300ms) experiments were recorded in D₂O at temperatures ranging from 5 °C to 25 °C. NOESY spectra in H₂O were acquired with 100 ms mixing time at 5 °C to reduce the exchange with water. The spectral analysis program Sparky^[3] was used for semiautomatic assignment of the NOESY cross-peaks and quantitative evaluation of the NOE intensities.

142 distance constraints with their corresponding error bounds were incorporated into the AMBER^[4] potential energy by defining a flat-well potential term. Additional restraints to preserved G-tetrad planarity were included. Restrained molecular dynamics calculations were carried out following protocols described in our previous study.^[5]

Initial model structures of carbohydrate-TBA conjugates were built from unmodified TBA structure (PDB: 148D) by connecting the carbohydrate and glycerol and phosphate linker with the program Sybyl. The initial structures were refined including explicit solvent, periodic boundary conditions and the Particle-Mesh-Ewald method to evaluate long-range electrostatic interactions. Force field parameters for the carbohydrate moieties were taken from GLYCAM,^[6] and the TIP3P model was used to describe water molecules.^[7] Analysis of the representative structures as well as the MD trajectories was carried out with the program MOLMOL^[8] and the analysis tools of AMBER.

Ten final structures of conjugate 6 obtained from an explicit solvent refinement are displayed in Figure 5A in the main text. The calculations converge to a well-defined structure, with an RMSD for all heavy atoms of 0.4 Å. The final AMBER energies and NOE terms are reasonably low in all the structures, which do not exhibit significant constraint violations.

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