

*Endoplasmic Reticulum: What is the point of glycolipid anchors?
Why is it necessary for a protein to be bound to a GPI anchor in a cell?*

As you might expect, this is related to something we don't cover in MCB 150. Cells are constantly in a state of communication with other cells via signals -- this process is generally called "cell signaling." GPI anchored proteins play an important role in cell signaling, and are organized in such a fashion because of their association with "microdomains" of the plasma membrane called lipid rafts. A transmembrane protein cannot move around as freely as a lipid-linked protein, nor do they tend to participate in formation of those lipid rafts (not surprising, since they're proteins and not lipids!).

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