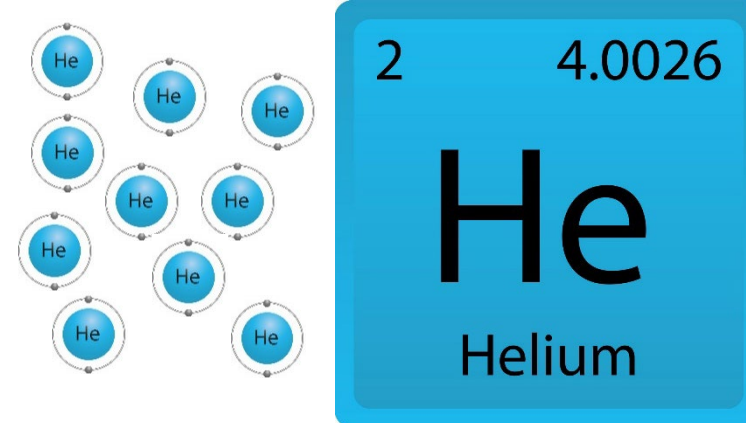


# How to Combat the Helium Shortage: Making the Switch from Helium to Hydrogen or Nitrogen Carrier Gas

Mark Sinnott  
Application Engineer  
December 5<sup>th</sup> 2019



Periodic Table of the Elements

HELIUM																	
<b>He</b>																	
2																	
Helium																	

The image shows a standard periodic table of elements with Helium (He) highlighted in a blue box. The table includes element symbols, names, and atomic numbers.



# Market Situation

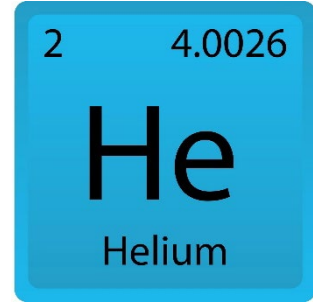
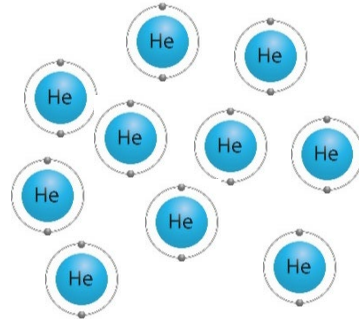
The world of He supply is not reliable, prices are increasing and customers are seeking alternative carrier gases



Researchers have a need to find suitable alternatives to either eliminate or reduce He consumption



# Industries That Use Helium



Boiling point  
-269 °C/4.2 K

## Healthcare

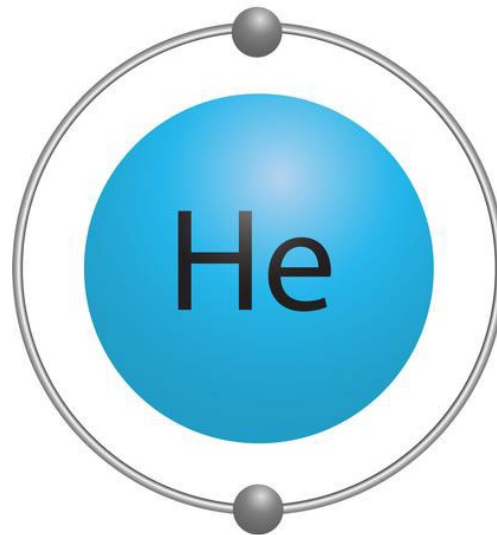
Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)



## Research

Nuclear Magnetic Resonance spectroscopy (NMR)

Gas chromatography



# Webinar Outline

## Use of Gas Saver

## Carrier gas decision tree

- Decision making guide to fit your carrier gas requirements

## Helium conservation

- Smarter helium use with new hardware/software tools
- No need to revalidate existing GC methods

## Migrating existing helium GC methods to H<sub>2</sub> or N<sub>2</sub>

- Best practices to obtain the same results and minimize method revalidation

## Cautions about making the switch to Hydrogen for MSD systems

# Have You Ever Noticed the Gas Saver Section of the Inlet Method Editor?

The screenshot shows the 'GC Edit Parameters' dialog box. At the top, a 'Back Inlet Flow Path' diagram shows the flow from 'Back SS Inlet' (10.3 psi) through 'Column #1' (60 °C) and 'Backflush Gas' (4 psi) through 'Column #2' (60 °C) to the 'MSD'. A temperature profile graph shows 'Oven: °C\*' (red line) and 'Thermal Aux 2: °C' (black line) both starting at 200 °C and rising to 300 °C. The 'Inlet Mode (Split 100 : 1)' section is highlighted with a blue border and contains a dropdown menu set to 'Split', a 'Split Ratio' of '100 : 1', and a 'Split Flow' of '113 mL/min'. The 'Gas Saver' section is also highlighted and shows a checked 'On' checkbox, a flow rate of '20 mL/min', and a duration of 'After: 2 min'. At the bottom are 'Apply', 'OK', 'Cancel', and 'Help' buttons.

# Why Would I Want to Use Gas Saver?

The screenshot displays the 'GC Edit Parameters' interface. At the top, a 'Back Inlet Flow Path' diagram shows the flow from 'Back SS Inlet' (10.3 psi, 280 °C) through 'Column #1' (60 °C, 1.1 mL/min) and 'Backflush Gas' (4 psi) to 'Column #2' (60 °C, 1.3 mL/min) and finally to 'MSD'. A temperature graph on the right shows a baseline at 300 °C and a red line indicating a temperature drop during the run. Below the diagram, the 'Split-Splitless Inlet' section is visible, with a 'Split' mode selected and a 'Split Ratio' of 100:1, resulting in a 'Split Flow' of 113 mL/min. The 'Gas Saver' section is checked 'On' with a flow rate of 20 mL/min and a duration of 2 minutes. A large blue-bordered box highlights the 'Total Flow' section, showing a current flow of 24.13 mL/min and a target flow of 117.13 mL/min.

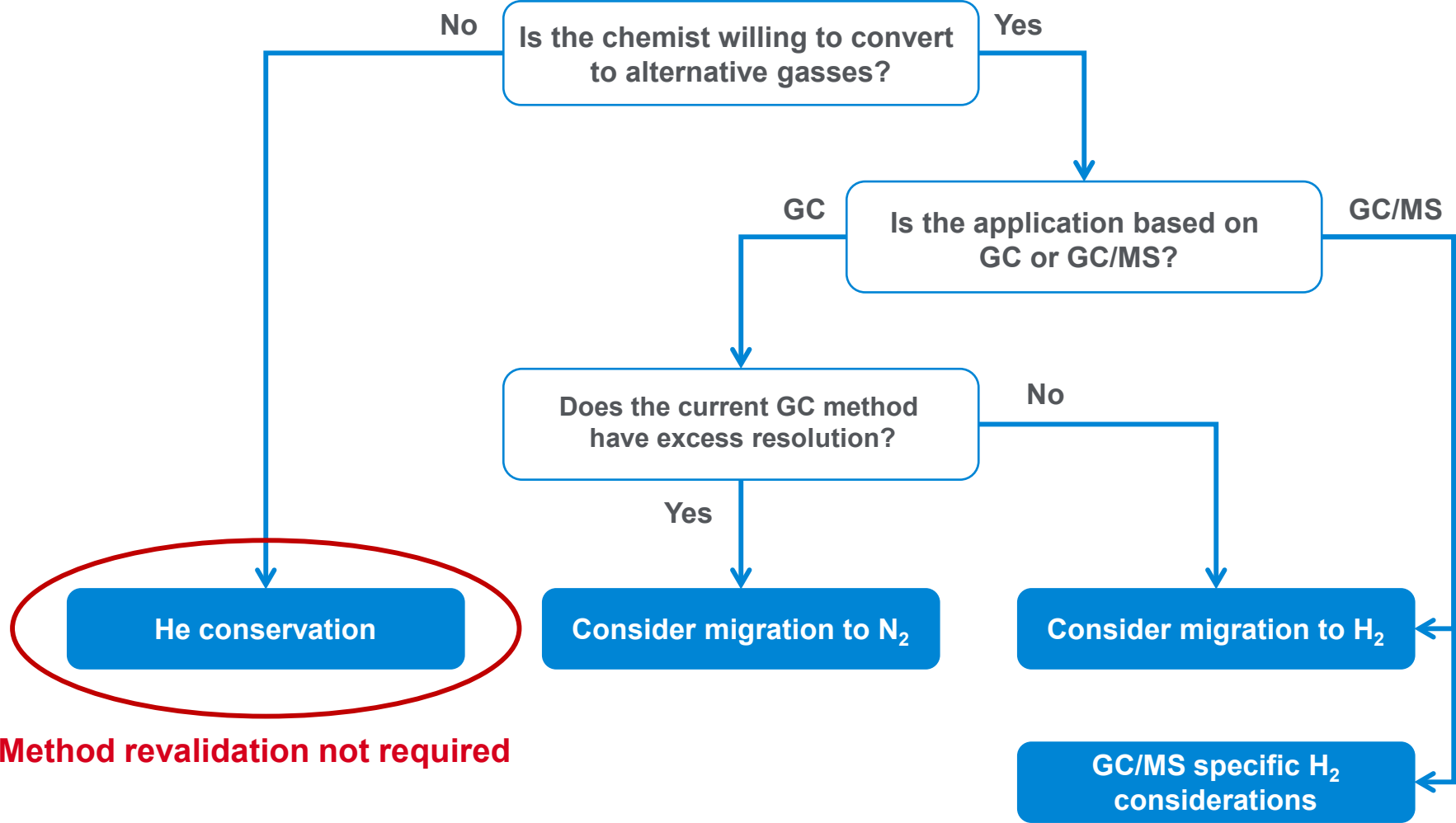
- When enabled, GC automatically runs Gas Saver
  - Beneficial when using split mode
- Gas Saver mode turns **on** after injection
  - Turns **off** during the prep run and injection duration

Lowers carrier gas use to save helium (or other carrier gas) and cut costs

- Suggested parameters
  - Flow – No lower than 15 mL/min  
Recommended: ~20 mL/min
  - Time – ~2 to 5 minutes

# Carrier Gas Decision Tree

Continue using helium, but in a smarter way



Method revalidation not required

# Reducing Helium Use With Conservation

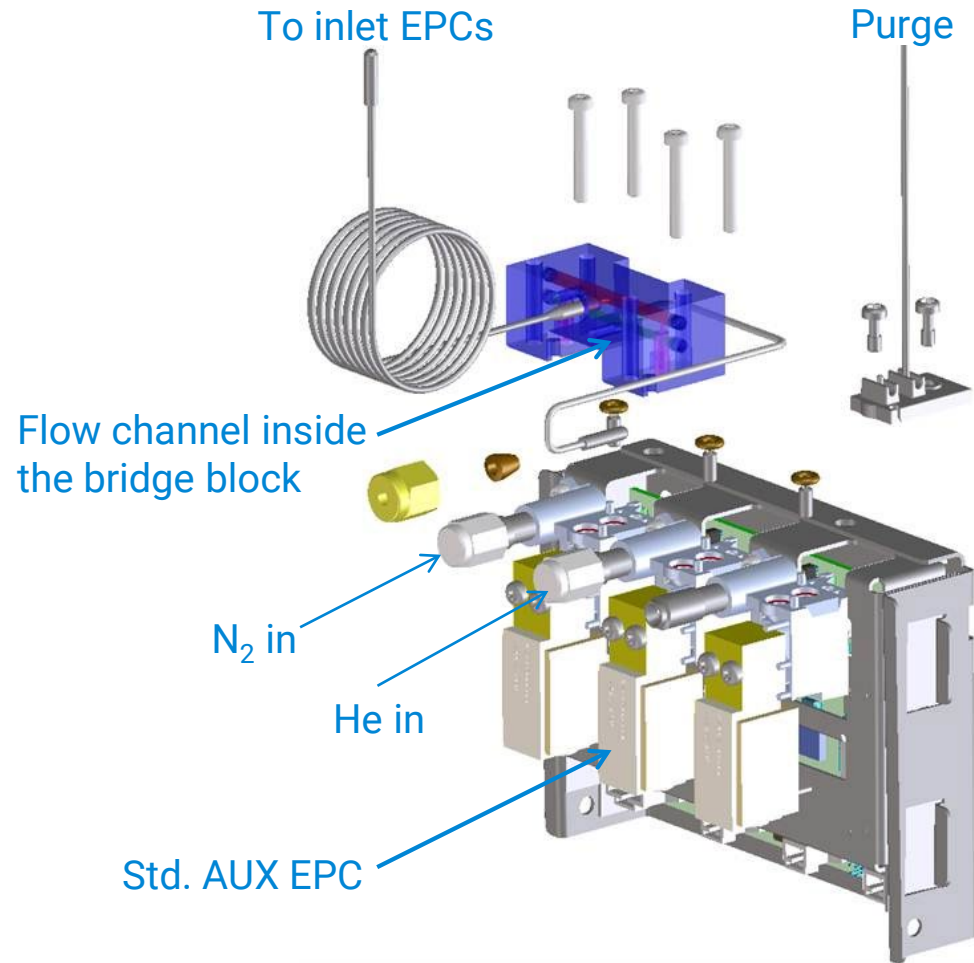
Programmable helium conservation module (available for Agilent 7890B, 8860, 8890 GC systems)

- Automatically switches carrier gas supply to N<sub>2</sub> standby during idle time
- Integrates into the Sleep and Wake function of the GC
- Combined with Helium Gas Saver to **greatly** reduce helium consumption
- Better alternative to just “shutting off the GC”
  - No system contamination with ambient air exposure
  - Faster restart of heated zones



# Helium Conservation Module

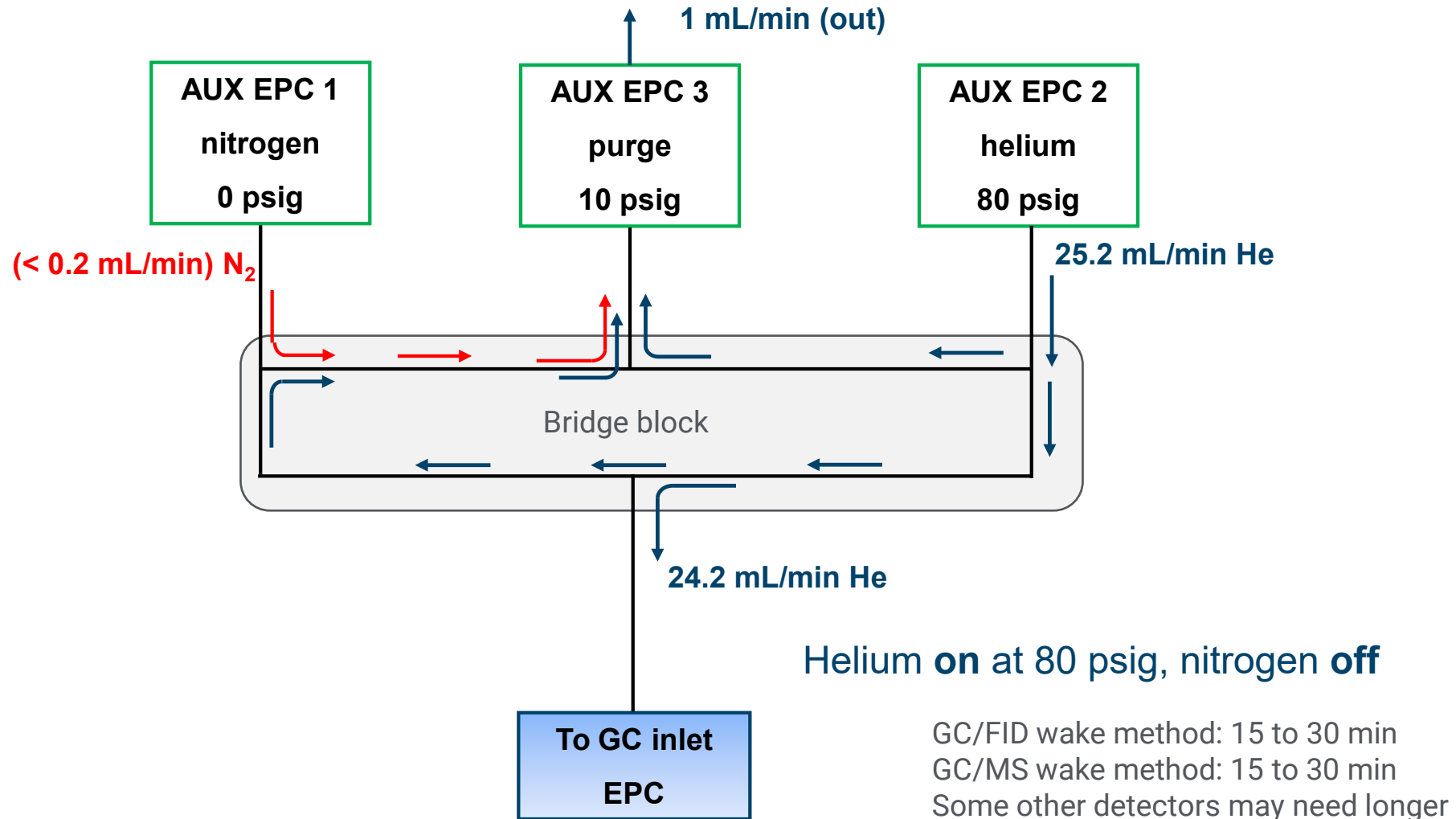
Seamlessly integrated onto GC hardware and software



- Built on 5<sup>th</sup> generation EPC
- Fully controlled by Agilent data systems
- Purge channel prevents cross contamination of gases
- Precise pressure control between tank and GC
- Switch between gases within 15 to 30 min for most detectors

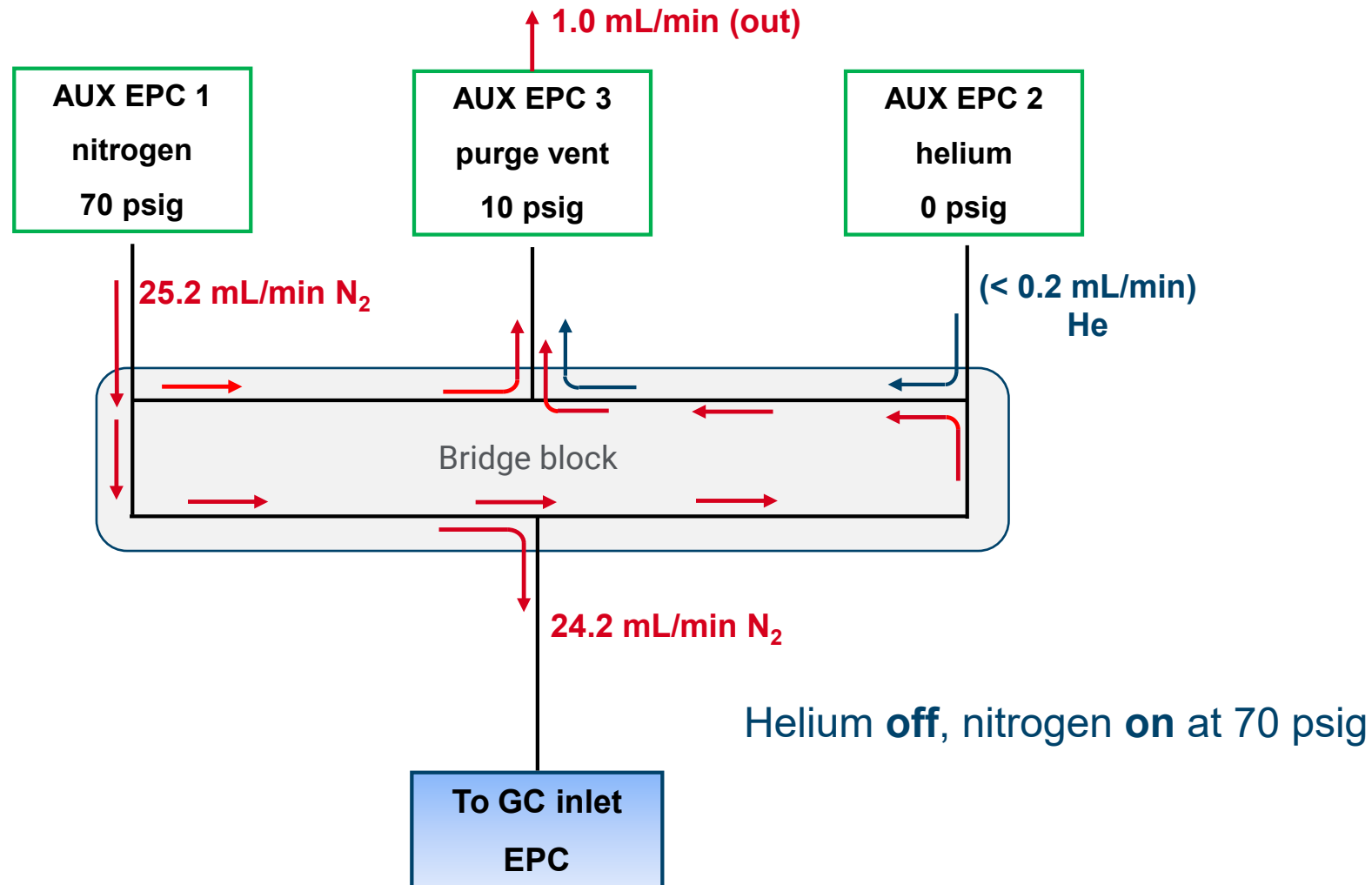
# How Does It Work?

Normal operation mode (helium carrier or wake mode)



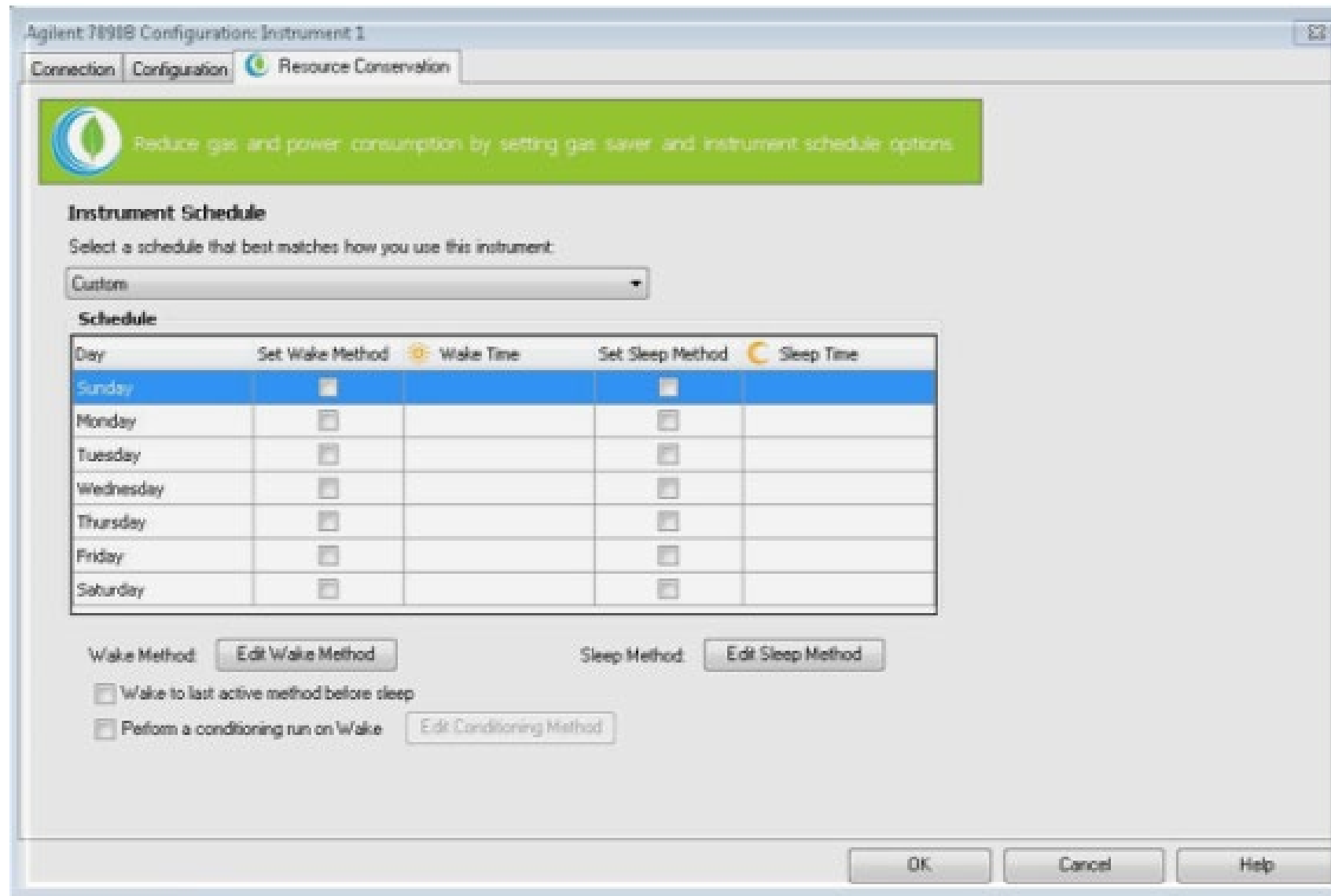
# How Does It Work?

Helium savings mode (nitrogen carrier, or sleep mode)

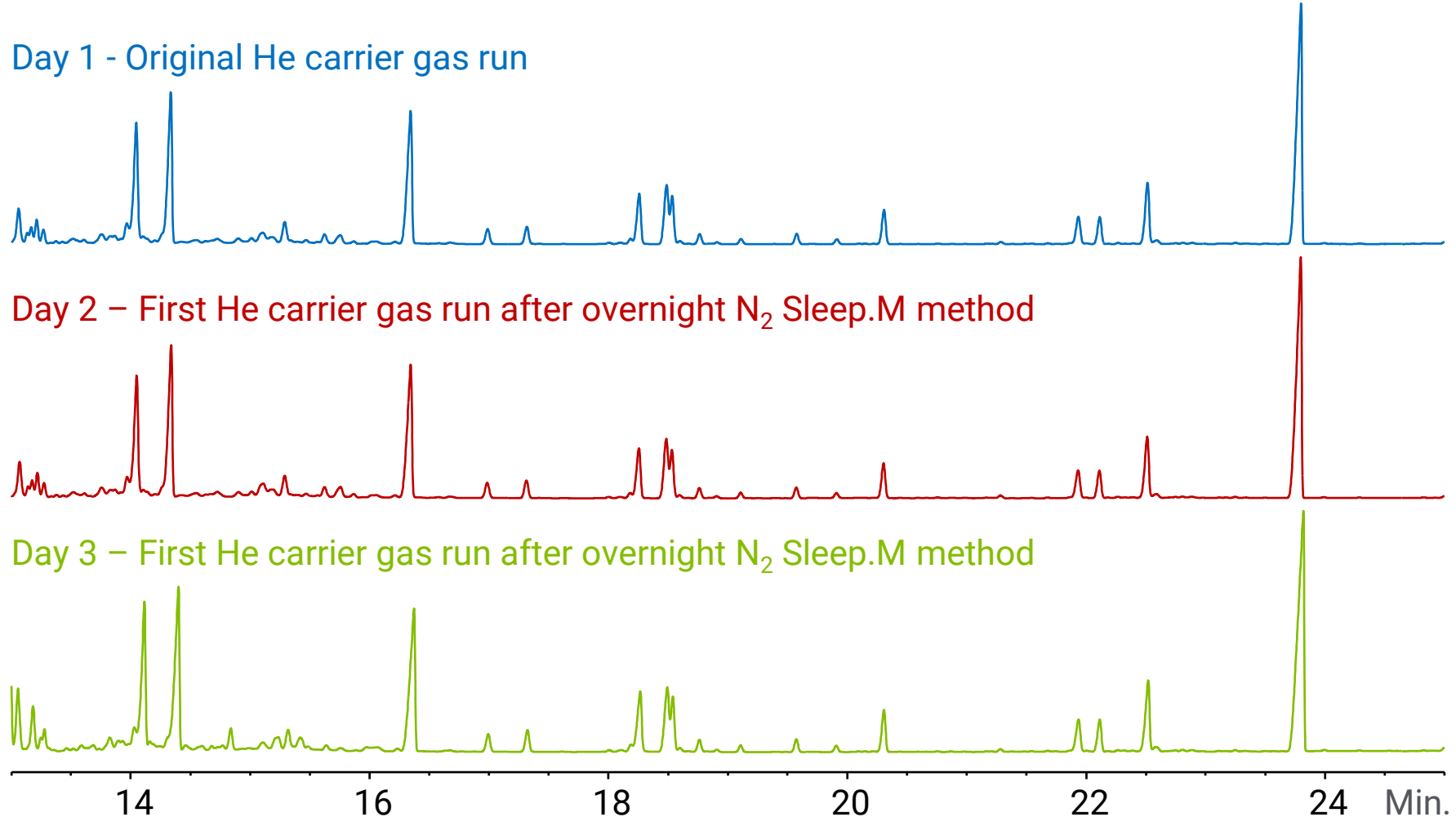


# How It Works: Configuring Sleep/Wake Operation

## Simple, straight forward setup



# Performance: GC/FID Analysis

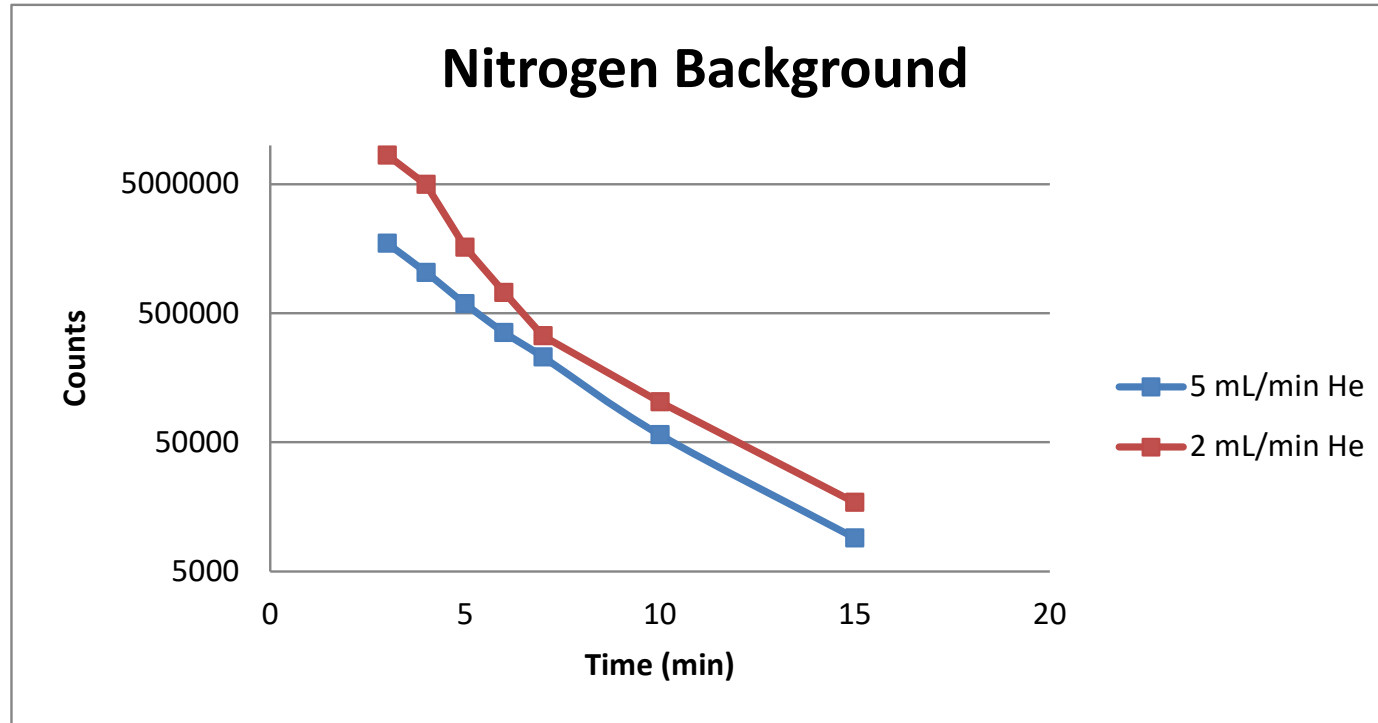


**No change in chromatography** after N<sub>2</sub> carrier Sleep method.



# Performance: MS Tune


Passes Within 15min After Switching From N<sub>2</sub> to He As Carrier. GC/MSD



Time (min)	Counts of Nitrogen Ion			
	5 mL/min He	Relative to Saturation	2 mL/min He	Relative to Saturation
3	1735168	20.69%	8388096	100.00%
4	1033280	12.32%	4959232	59.12%
5	590080	7.03%	1618944	19.30%
6	354112	4.22%	722944	8.62%
7	228480	2.72%	333696	3.98%
10	56984	0.68%	102576	1.22%
15	9052	0.11%	17080	0.20%

# Helium Savings– Single GC Channel

Extend helium supply and lower cost using conservation techniques



**Method:** ASTM D4815 - Ethanol in Gasoline  
**Column:** PDMS 30m x 0.53mm x 2.65um

GC Flow Conditions

He Carrier Flow (mL/min):	8
He Split flow (mL/min):	70
Gas Saver Flow (mL/min):	20
Gas Saver On (min):	3
Run Time(min.):	20
Gas Volume in Cylinder (L):	8000
Runs per Day:	30
He Cylinder Cost (\$):	300
N2 Cylinder Cost (\$):	60

Parameter	No Conservation	Helium Conservation
Daily He Usage (L)	112	21
<b>He Cylinder Life (days)</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>376</b>
Daily N <sub>2</sub> Usage (L)	0	24
N <sub>2</sub> Cylinder Life (days)	0	340
Yearly He Cost (\$)	\$1,537	\$292
Yearly N2 Cost (\$)	\$0	\$64

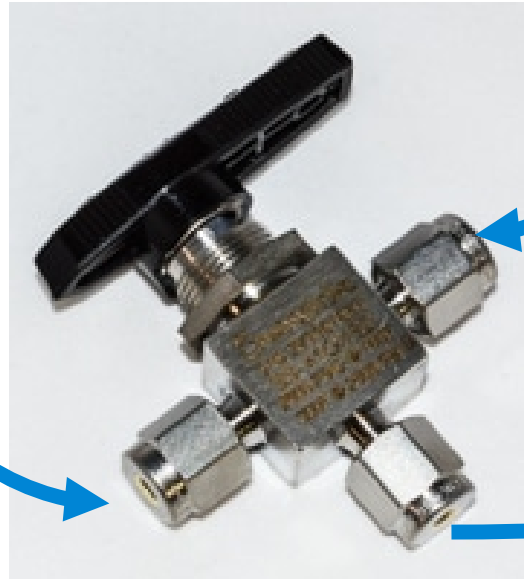
## Example

- ASTM Method D4815
  - Widely used to measure ethanol in gasoline
  - Helium cylinder last two months under normal operation
- Helium conservation
  - Helium cylinder life extended to 12 months
  - 4x yearly gas costs per year

<b>Yearly Total Gas Cost</b>	<b>\$1,537</b>	<b>\$356</b>
------------------------------	----------------	--------------

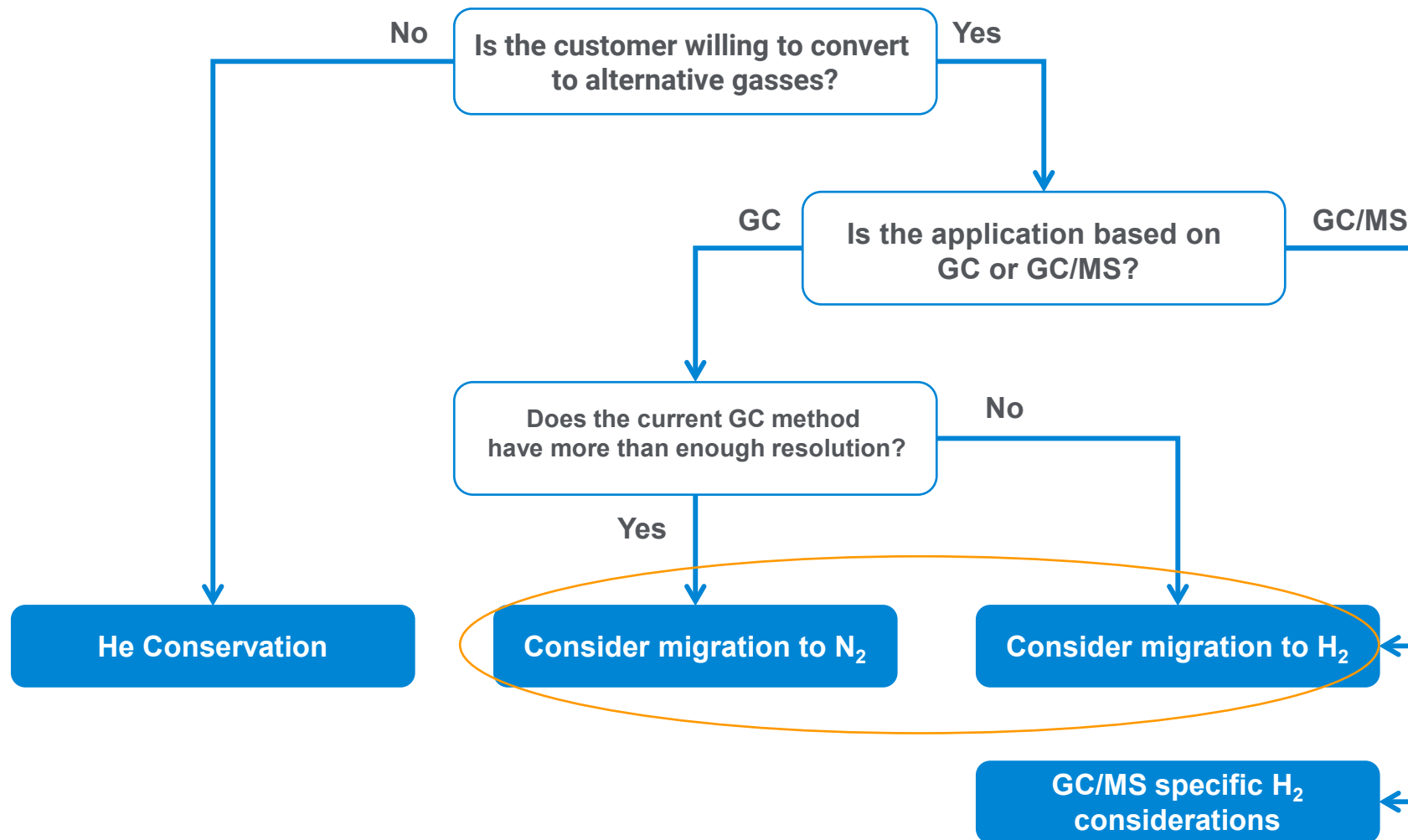
# Alternative for Older Systems (or Non-Agilent Systems)

- Use of a 3-way stream selection valve to manually switch between N<sub>2</sub>/He
  - Plumb N<sub>2</sub> to one input and He to the other and switch valve as needed
  - Not automated/integrated



# Carrier Gas Decision Tree

## Migrating GC methods to nitrogen and hydrogen



# Safety Considerations for Hydrogen Migration

GC and GC/MS: Both offer H<sub>2</sub> enabled features

## Read Hydrogen safety guide!!

- <https://www.agilent.com/cs/library/usermanuals/public/Hydrogen.pdf>

## Safety Shutdown

When gas pressure set points are not met, the valve and heater are shut off to prevent explosion

## Flow Limiting Frit

If valve fails in open position, inlet frit limits the flow

## Oven ON/OFF Sequence

Fan purges the oven before turning on heater to remove any collected H<sub>2</sub>

## Explosion “ready”

GC and MS designed to contain parts in case of explosion

i.e. Spring in GC door

## H<sub>2</sub> sensor available



# Considerations for Hydrogen Gas Sources

## H<sub>2</sub> generator – preferred

- Very clean H<sub>2</sub>, >99.9999% available
- Consistent purity
- Built-in safety features
- Make sure to buy a good generator with a low spec for water and oxygen
- Parker's H-MD are used at Agilent sites

## H<sub>2</sub> cylinder

- Consider Gas Clean filter
- Possible to add safety device



# Considerations for Hydrogen Gas Plumbing

## Tubing

- Use chromatographic quality stainless steel tubing (recommended)
- Do not use old tubing (H<sub>2</sub> is known as scrubbing agent)
- Especially don't use old copper tubing (brittleness is a safety concern)

## Venting

- Connect split vent and septum purge vent to exhaust

## Leak checking

- Recommend G3388B leak detector



# Use N<sub>2</sub> As Carrier Gas

## Many HPI methods suited to nitrogen

- Readily available and less expensive gas
- No safety concerns
- Suitable for simple routine analysis (with sufficient resolution)
- More inert than H<sub>2</sub>, especially with PLOT/micropacked columns
  - Some compounds catalytically reduced in H<sub>2</sub>
- 2-D GC ideally suited to nitrogen
  - Resolution issues solved using two different columns



## Potential issues

- Reduced chromatographic resolution at higher flows
- Not suitable for GC/MSD and certain GC detector applications

# Helium Carrier Gas Alternatives

## Important theoretical considerations relating to peak efficiency

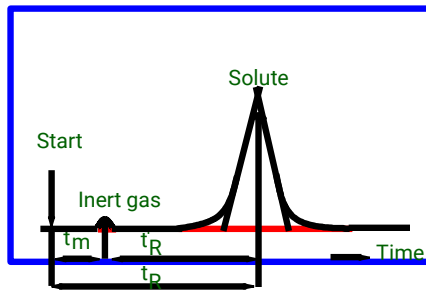
Sharp, narrow peaks in a chromatogram is an indication of a high efficiency GC column.

- Remember that **efficiency** is represented mathematically by the symbol " $N$ " called *Theoretical Plates*, and that the larger  $N$  is, the better the resolving power of the column (i.e., higher resolution).
- Resolution** is described mathematically by the symbol  $R_s$  and its numeric value tells how well two adjacent peaks are separated from each other.

$$R_s = \frac{\sqrt{N}}{4} \left( \frac{k}{k+1} \right) \left( \frac{\alpha-1}{\alpha} \right)$$

A resolution value of 1.5 tells us that two peaks are baseline separated. The greater (higher) the  $R_s$  value, the more separation that has been achieved.

### Calculating efficiency



We would like to know the actual time the component spends in the stationary phase.

$$t_R' = t_R - t_m \quad n = \frac{t_R'}{5.545 \left( \frac{t_R'}{W_h} \right)^2}$$

$t_R'$  = corrected retention time.

$n$  = effective theoretical plates.

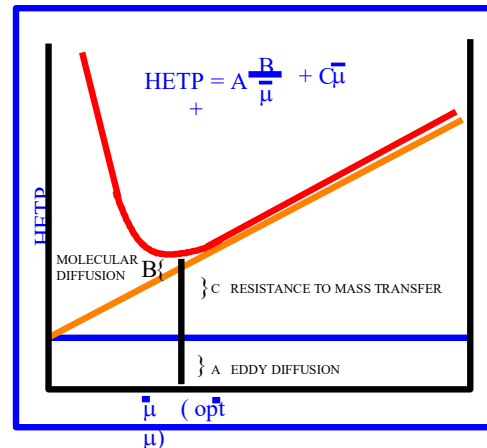
Let's relate " $n$ " to the length of the column.

$$\text{Plates per meter (N)} = \frac{n}{L} \quad \text{or}$$

$$\text{Height equivalent to a theoretical plate (HETP)} = \frac{L}{n}$$

Thus, the more efficient the column, the bigger the " $N$ " the smaller the "HETP".

### Efficiency and carrier gas linear velocity



Efficiency is a function of the carrier gas linear velocity or flow rate.

The minimum of the curve represents the smallest HETP (or largest plates per meter) and thus the best efficiency. "A" term is not present for capillary columns.

- Plot of HETP versus linear velocity is known as the **Van Deemter** plot.
- The linear velocity value at the minimum of the curve is the optimum value for achieving the best efficiency.

# Helium Carrier Gas Alternatives

## Let's make this easy

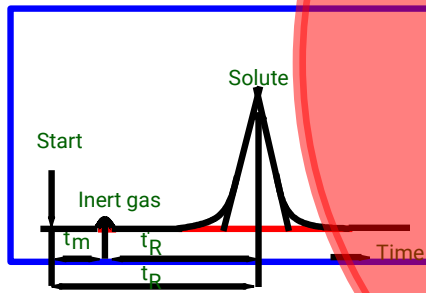
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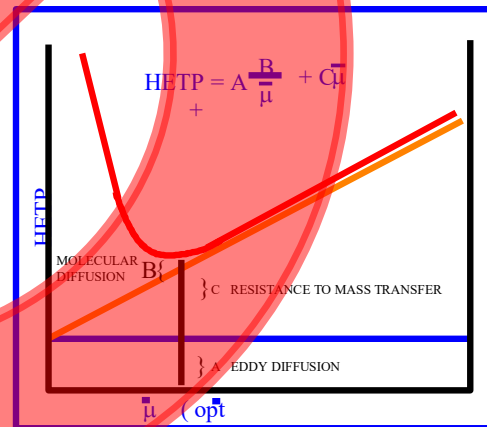
We would like to know the actual time the component spends in the stationary phase.

$$t'_R = t_R - t_m \quad n = \frac{(t'_R)^2}{5.545 \cdot W_{0.5}}$$

$t'_R$  = corrected retention time.

$n$  = effective theoretical plates.

### Efficiency and carrier gas linear velocity



Efficiency is a function of the carrier gas linear velocity or flow rate.

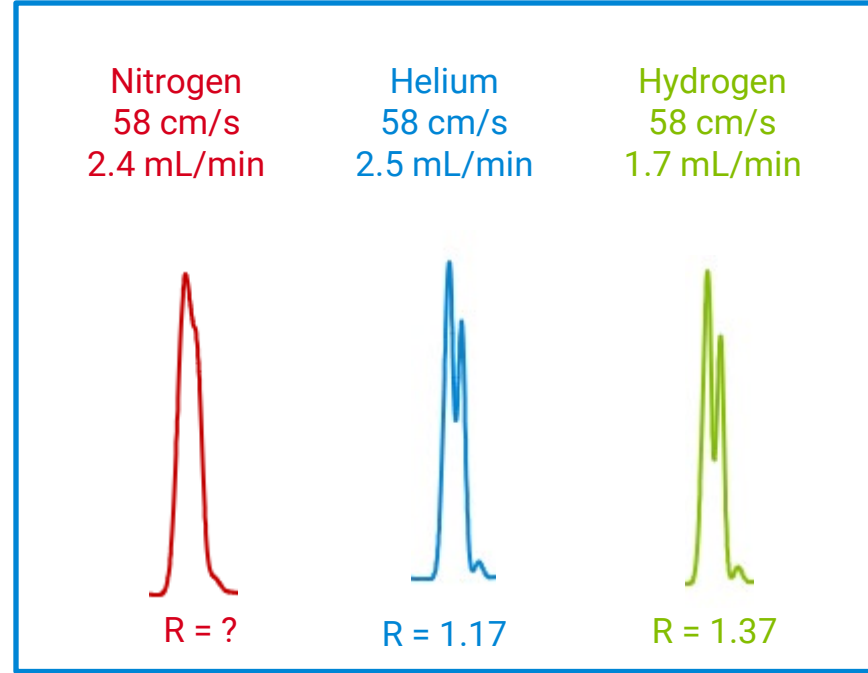
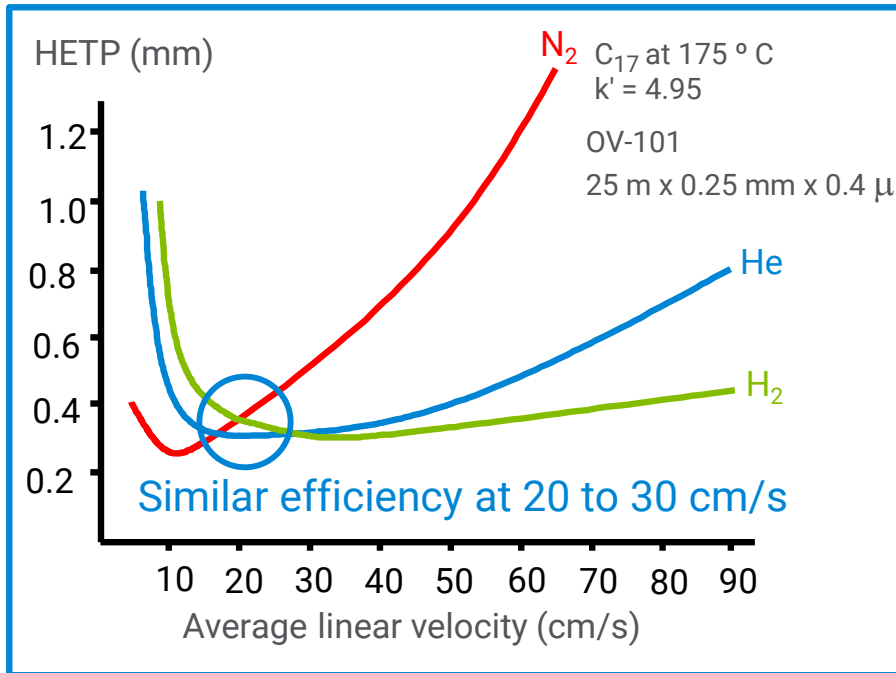
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# Van Deemter

## Why nitrogen gets a bad reputation for capillary GC



- $N_2$  actually provides the best efficiency, but at a slower speed
- Most helium methods have too much resolution
  - Lower  $N_2$  efficiency at higher flows can still provide “good enough” resolution
- Most GC methods now use constant flow
  - $N_2$  efficiency losses with temperature programming are not as severe

# Helium Carrier Gas Alternatives

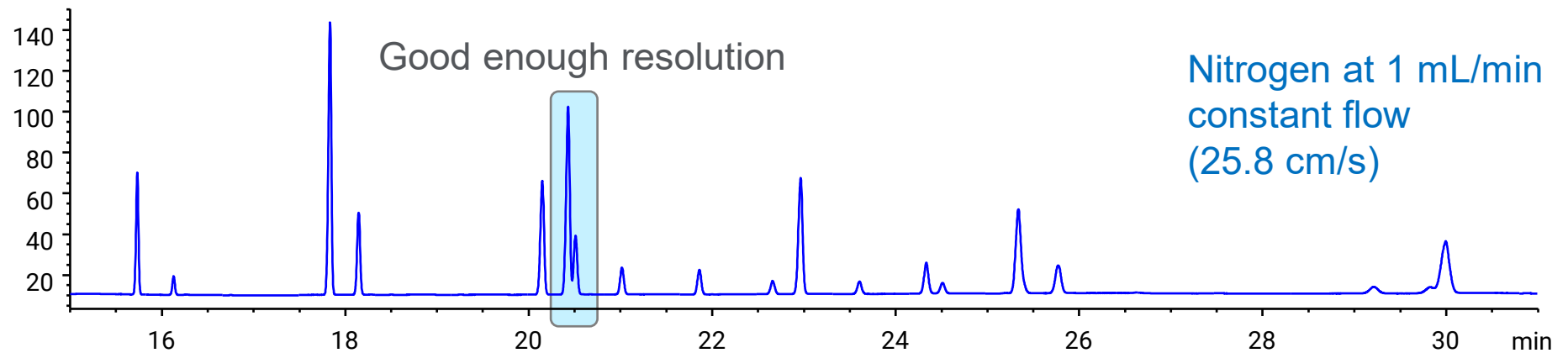
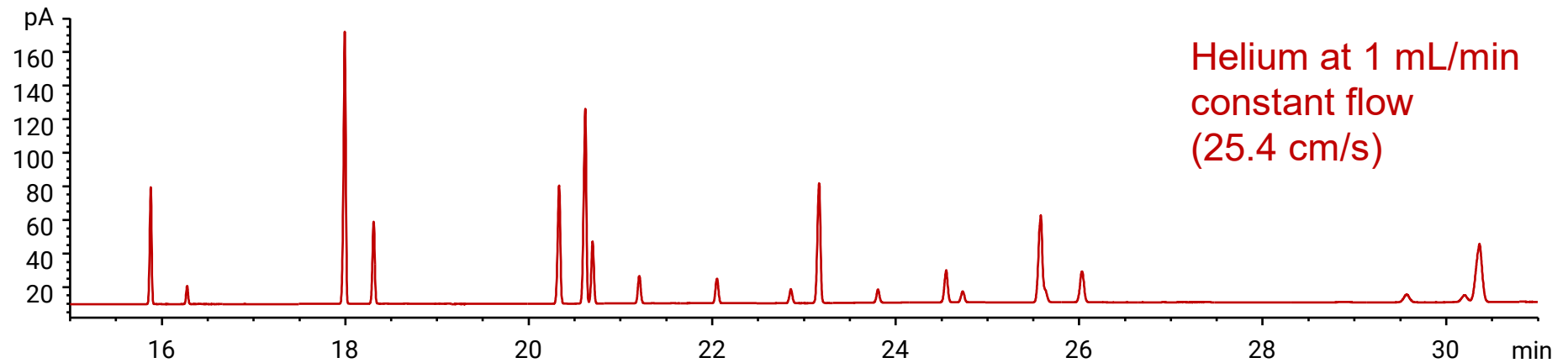
## Let's make this easy

- Goal: Change carrier gas while keeping other method conditions the same
  - Use the same column
  - Use the same oven program
  - Adjust column flow or holdup time to:
    - Maintain same peak elution order
    - Maintain same peak retention times (or as close as possible)
- Easier method revalidation using this approach
  - Minimal changes to timed integration events
  - Minimal changes to peak identification table
- For N<sub>2</sub>, test resolution of key components
  - Adjust GC conditions (temperature, flow) if needed

# Many Helium GC Have Excess Resolution

## EN14103 – GC analysis of FAME content in biodiesel

HP-INNOWax, 30 m x 0.25 mm id x 0.25  $\mu$ m



# Configure Inlet for Carrier Gas in ChemStation

Setup Method

Agilent 7890A Agilent 7890A Sample Prep Program

Graph: Run Time, min (0 to 30). Y-axis: °C (0 to 400), psi (0 to 8), mL/min (0 to 3). Legend: Oven: °C\* (solid red line), Column 1 He: psi (solid black line), Column 1 He: mL/min (dashed green line).

Configuration icons: ALS, Valves, Inlets, Columns, Oven, Detectors, Events, Signals, Configuration, Counters, Readiness.

Miscellaneous | Columns | Modules | ALS

**Front Inlet**  
SS Inlet: He

**Back Inlet**  
COC Inlet: He

**Front Detector**  
FID  
Makeup: N2  
Set Lit Offset with GC Keyboard.

**Back Detector**  
FID  
Makeup: N2  
Set Lit Offset with GC Keyboard.

**Aux EPC 1,2,3**  
Aux EPC 1: N2  
Aux EPC 2: H2  
Aux EPC 3: He

**PCM A**  
PCM A-1: He  
PCM A-2: He  
Channel B Control Mode: Forward Pressure

Buttons: OK, Apply, Cancel, Help

**Select H<sub>2</sub> or N<sub>2</sub>** (Red text annotation with arrow pointing to COC Inlet)

# How Do I Build a New Method for Use with H<sub>2</sub> or N<sub>2</sub> Carrier?



# New Windows 7 Method Translation Calculator

## Another useful tool for carrier gas calculations

Agilent Technologies Method Translator

Last file imported:

Speed gain: 1.0000

Translate

Best Efficiency

Original Method Parameters

Gas: He

Calculated Method Parameters

Gas: N2

Length (m): 30 m

Inner Diameter (µm): 320 µm

Film Thickness (µm): 0.25 µm

Phase Ratio: 320

Inlet Pressure (gauge): 7.0569 psi

Outlet Flow (mL/min): 1.3158 mL/min

Average Velocity (cm/s): 24.342 cm/sec

Outlet Pressure (abs): 14.696 psi

Holdup Time: 2.0541 min

Outlet Velocity (cm/s): 30.468 cm/sec

Original Column Capacity: 2.48

Translated Column Capacity: 2.48

#	Ramp Rate (°C/min)	Final Temp (°C)	Final Time (min)
Init		60	1
1	5.0000	200	1

#	Ramp Rate (°C/min)	Final Temp (°C)	Final Time (min)
Init		60	1
1	5.0000	200	1

Total Run Time: 30.00 min

Total Run Time: 30.00 min

Pressure Units: PSI

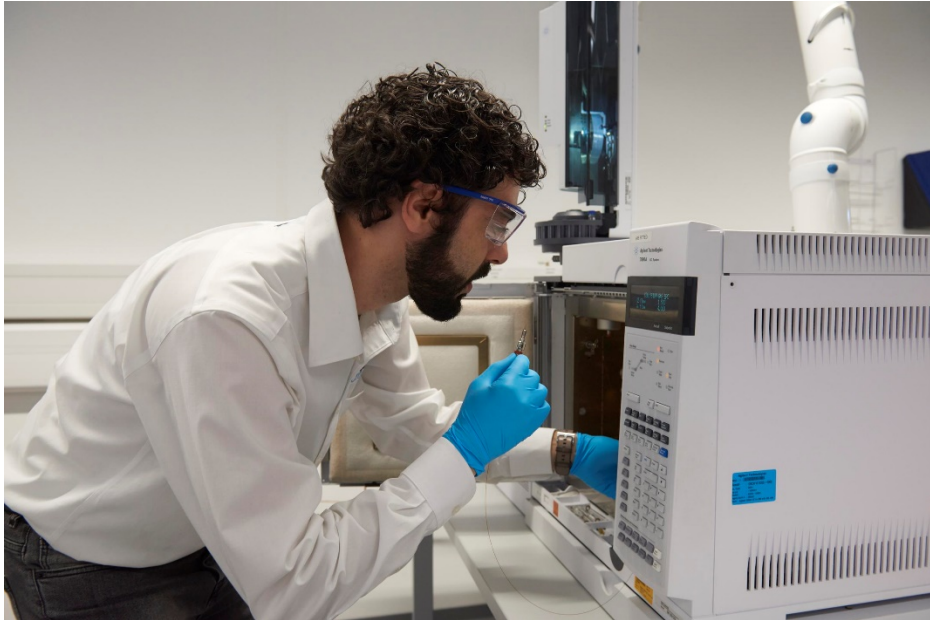
- Flexible tool helps convert existing helium methods to alternative carrier
- Built into the new OpenLab CDS software
- Can also run as Windows 7 program
- Download from the Agilent Helium Update page: [www.agilent.com/chem/heliumupdate](http://www.agilent.com/chem/heliumupdate)



# Same Column, Hydrogen Carrier Gas

Speed gain

New pressure/flow/velocity



New temperature program

Speed gain: 1.4251

Translate

Best Efficiency

Last file imported:

Original Method Parameters		Calculated Method Parameters	
Parameter	Value	Value	Value
Gas	He	H2	
Length (m)	30 m	30 m	
Inner Diameter (µm)	320 µm	320 µm	
Film Thickness (µm)	0.25 µm	0.25 µm	
Phase Ratio	319.25	319.25	
Inlet Pressure (gauge)	12.786 psi	8.1484 psi	
Outlet Flow (mL/min)	2.0887 mL/min	2.6109 mL/min	
Average Velocity (cm/s)	38.713 cm/sec	55.168 cm/sec	
Outlet Pressure (abs)	14.696 psi	14.696 psi	
Holdup Time	1.2916 min	0.90632 min	
Outlet Velocity (cm/s)	57.077	71.346	

#	Ramp Rate (°C/min)	Final Temp (°C)	Final Time (min)
Init		120	1.17
1	25.0000	160	0.00
2	10.0000	260	0.00

Total Run Time: 19.44 min

#	Ramp Rate (°C/min)	Final Temp (°C)	Final Time (min)
Init		120	0.82
1	35.6266	160	0.00
2	14.2506	260	0.00

Total Run Time: 13.64 min

# Method Translation Software

Switch from He to H<sub>2</sub> or N<sub>2</sub> carrier gas

Same column and gas type but faster velocities

Different column dimensions

Combination of all of the above

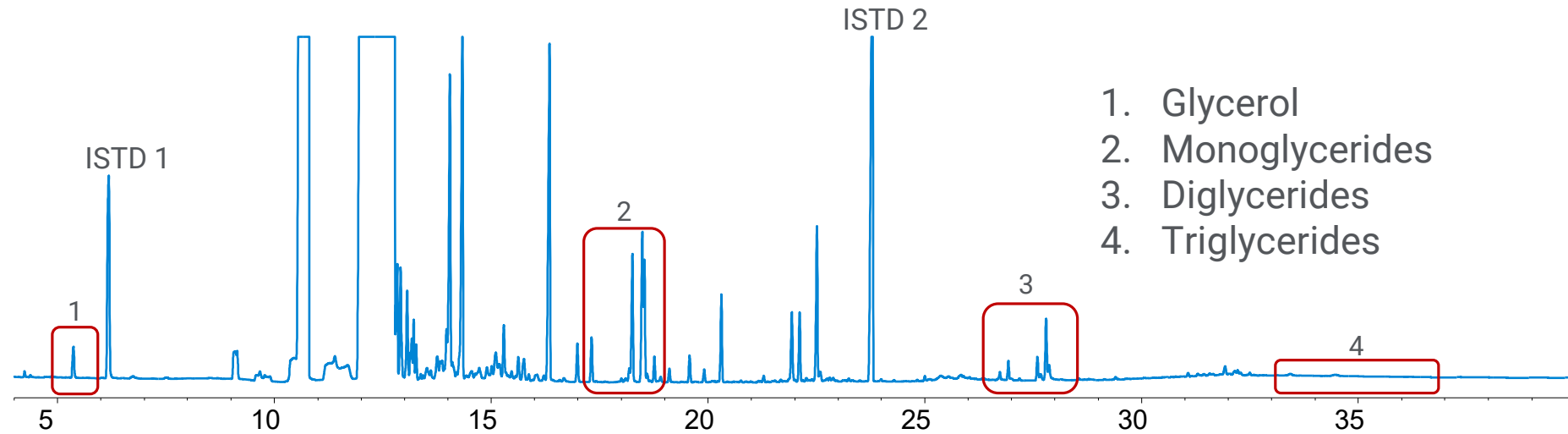
Link to software download:

<https://www.agilent.com/en-us/support/gas-chromatography/gcmethodtranslation?searchTermRedirect=gc%20method%20translation%20software>



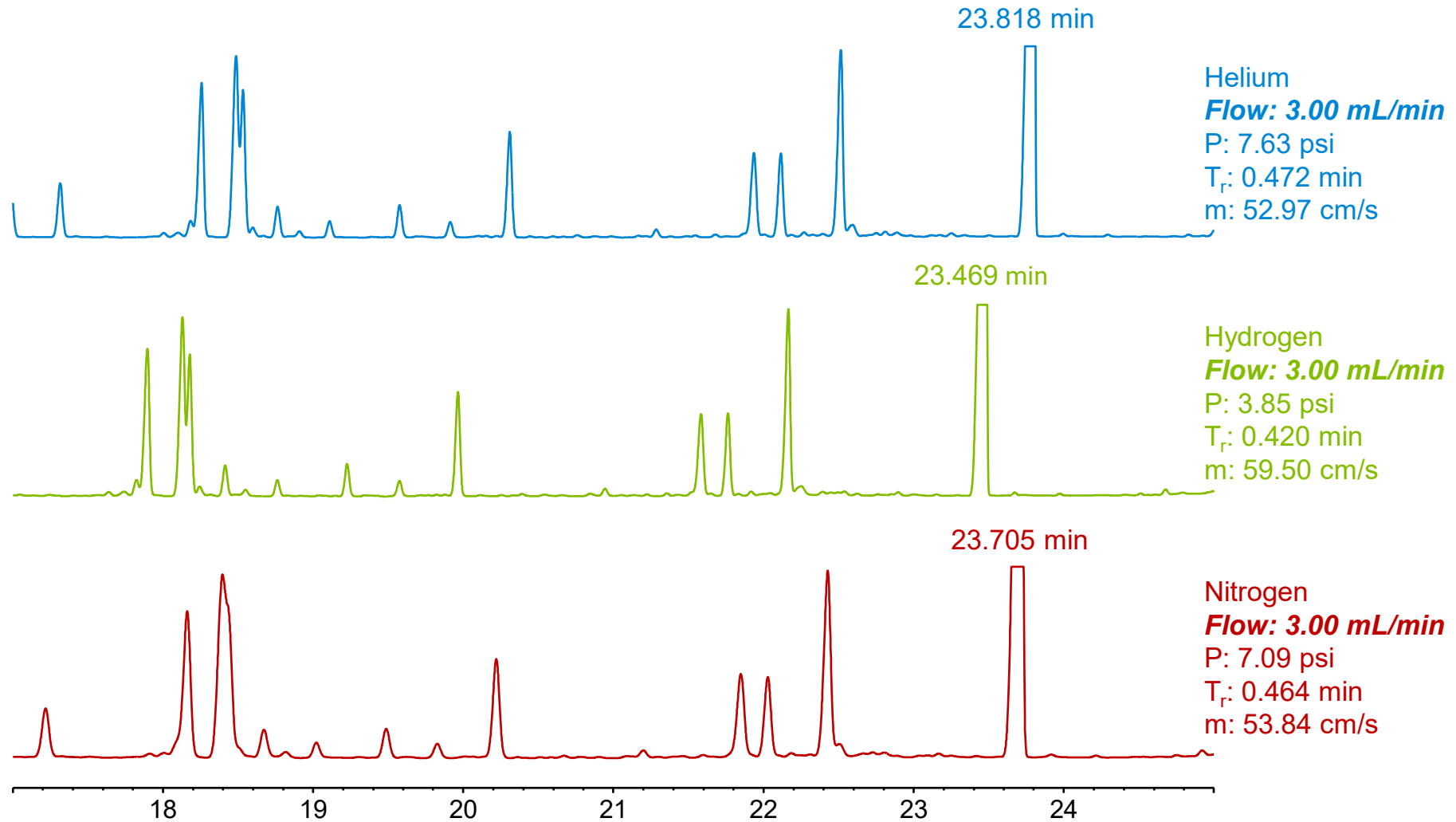
# Helium Carrier Gas Alternative

Test Case: ASTM D6584 for free and total glycerin in biodiesel



COC inlet:	Oven track mode
Precolumn:	Ultimetal 2 m x 0.53 mm id
Column:	Ultimetal DB5HT, 15 m x 0.32 mm id x 0.1 df
Column flow:	Helium at 3.0 mL/min (50 °C)
Column pressure:	7.63 psi constant pressure mode
Initial column temp:	50 °C for 1 min
Oven ramp 1:	15 °C/min to 180 °C
Oven ramp 2:	7 °C/min to 230 °C
Oven ramp 3:	30 °C/min to 380 °C, hold 10 min
Detector:	FID with 25 mL/min N <sub>2</sub> makeup

# Wider Retention Time Variation Using the Same Flow as the Original Helium Method



# Set the Control Mode: Flow or Holdup Time

Try the same flow or holdup time of the original helium method

The screenshot displays the 'Setup Method' window for an Agilent 7890A. At the top, there are tabs for 'Agilent 7890A' and 'Agilent 7890A Sample Prep Program'. Below the tabs is a graph with 'Run Time, min' on the x-axis (0 to 30) and two y-axes: temperature in °C (0 to 400) and flow rate in mL/min (0 to 3). The graph shows three data series: 'Oven: °C\*' (red solid line), 'Column 1 He: psi' (black solid line), and 'Column 1 He: mL/min' (green dashed line). The oven temperature starts at approximately 50°C, rises to 200°C at 12 minutes, and then to 400°C at 21 minutes. The flow rate starts at 3 mL/min, decreases to about 1.5 mL/min at 12 minutes, and then to 1 mL/min at 21 minutes. The pressure remains constant at approximately 7.6 psi. Below the graph is a toolbar with icons for ALS, Valves, Inlets, Columns, Oven, Detectors, Events, Signals, Configuration, Counters, and Readiness. The 'Columns' icon is highlighted. Below the toolbar is a table with two columns: '# Selection' and a description of the method. The first method is selected. To the right of the table is a 'Control Mode' section with a checkbox 'On' checked. Below this is a 'Setpoint' section with a table of parameters: Flow (3 mL/min), Pressure (7.6296 psi), Average Velocity (52.99 cm/sec), and Holdup Time (0.47179 min). The 'Flow' and 'Holdup Time' values are highlighted with red boxes. Below the setpoint table is a dropdown menu set to 'Constant Pressure' and a 'Post Run' field set to '7.6 psi'. At the bottom right of the control section are buttons for 'Change Column...' and 'Calibrate Column...'. At the very bottom of the window are 'OK', 'Apply', 'Cancel', and 'Help' buttons.

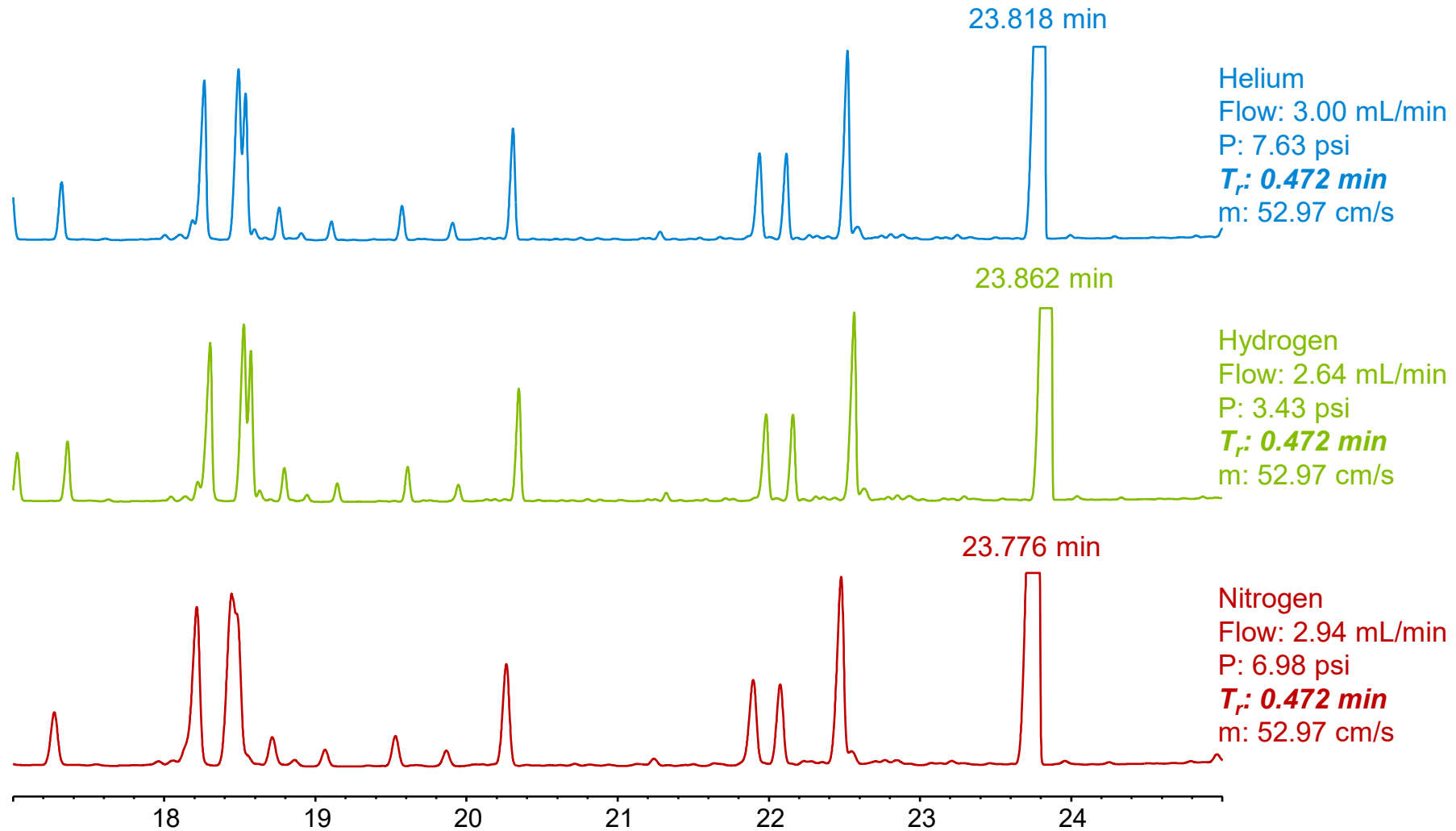
#	Selection
1	Agilent 123-BD11: 425 °C: 15 m x 320 µm x 0.1 µm Main Segment Heated By Oven inSeg Heated By Oven: 2 m x 530 µm x 0 µm In: Back COC Inlet He Out: Front Detector FID
2	Agilent 123-456: 400 °C: 30 m x 320 µm x 0.5 µm In: Front SS Inlet He Out: Back Detector FID

Control Mode	Setpoint
Flow	3 mL/min
Pressure	7.6296 psi
Average Velocity	52.99 cm/sec
Holdup Time	0.47179 min

Post Run: 7.6 psi

Column #1 Configuration  
Change Column... Calibrate Column...

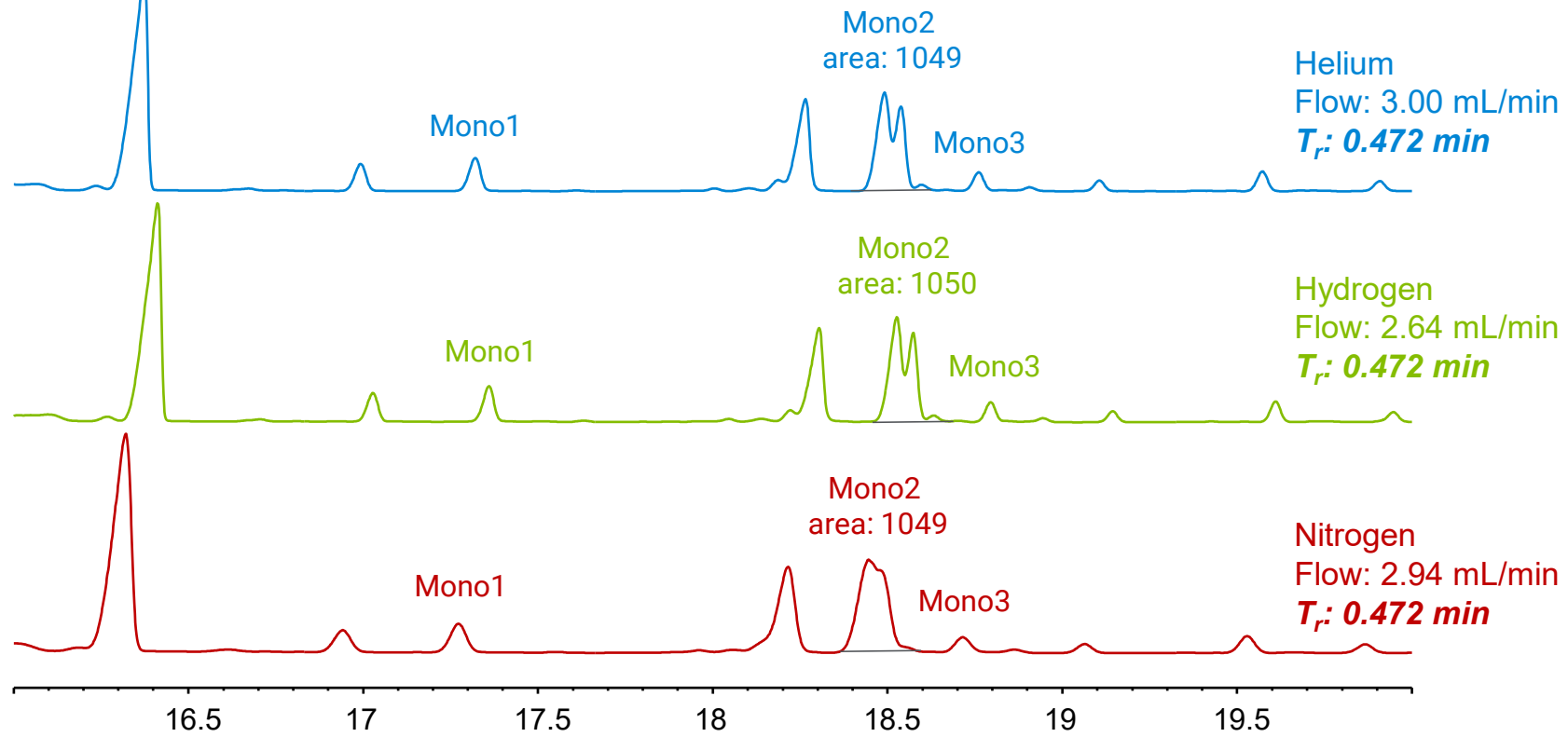
# Same Holdup Time ( $T_r$ ) Gives Consistent Retention Times Compared to Original Helium Method



# Monoglyceride Resolution “Good Enough” Using Nitrogen Carrier

All monoglycerides are summed for final reporting

High resolution of isomers is therefore not required



# ASTM D6584 - Quantitative Results for Alternative Carrier Gas

Carrier gas has no effect on reported results

	Weight Percent		
	Helium	Hydrogen	Nitrogen
<b>Glycerin</b>	<b>0.015</b>	<b>0.014</b>	<b>0.013</b>
<b>Monoglycerides</b>	<b>0.226</b>	<b>0.216</b>	<b>0.223</b>
<b>Total glycerin</b>	<b>0.097</b>	<b>0.095</b>	<b>0.098</b>

# Analysis of Oxygenates and Aromatics in Gasoline Using 2-D Gas Chromatography

## ASTM Method D4815 – Oxygenated additives

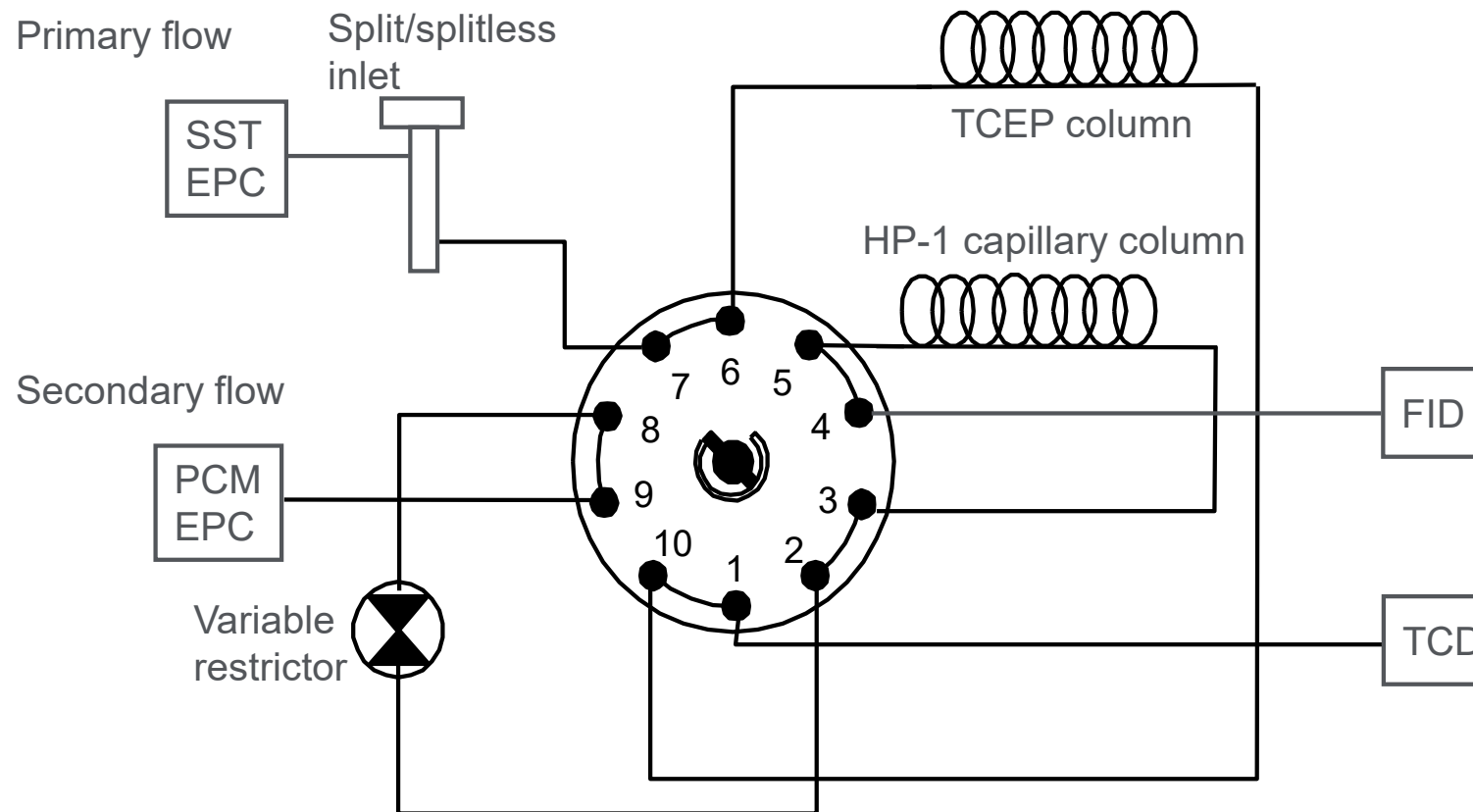
- Ethers and alcohols from 0.1 wt% to 15 wt%
- Usually only one or two additives in a sample

## Preliminary separation removes light hydrocarbons from sample

- Polar TCEP micropacked columns retain ethers and alcohols
- Back flush TCEP\* column to nonpolar capillary column (HP-1) to complete analysis

\* TCEP = 1,2,3-tris(2-cyanoethoxy)propane

# Configuration and Operation for D4815 and D5580



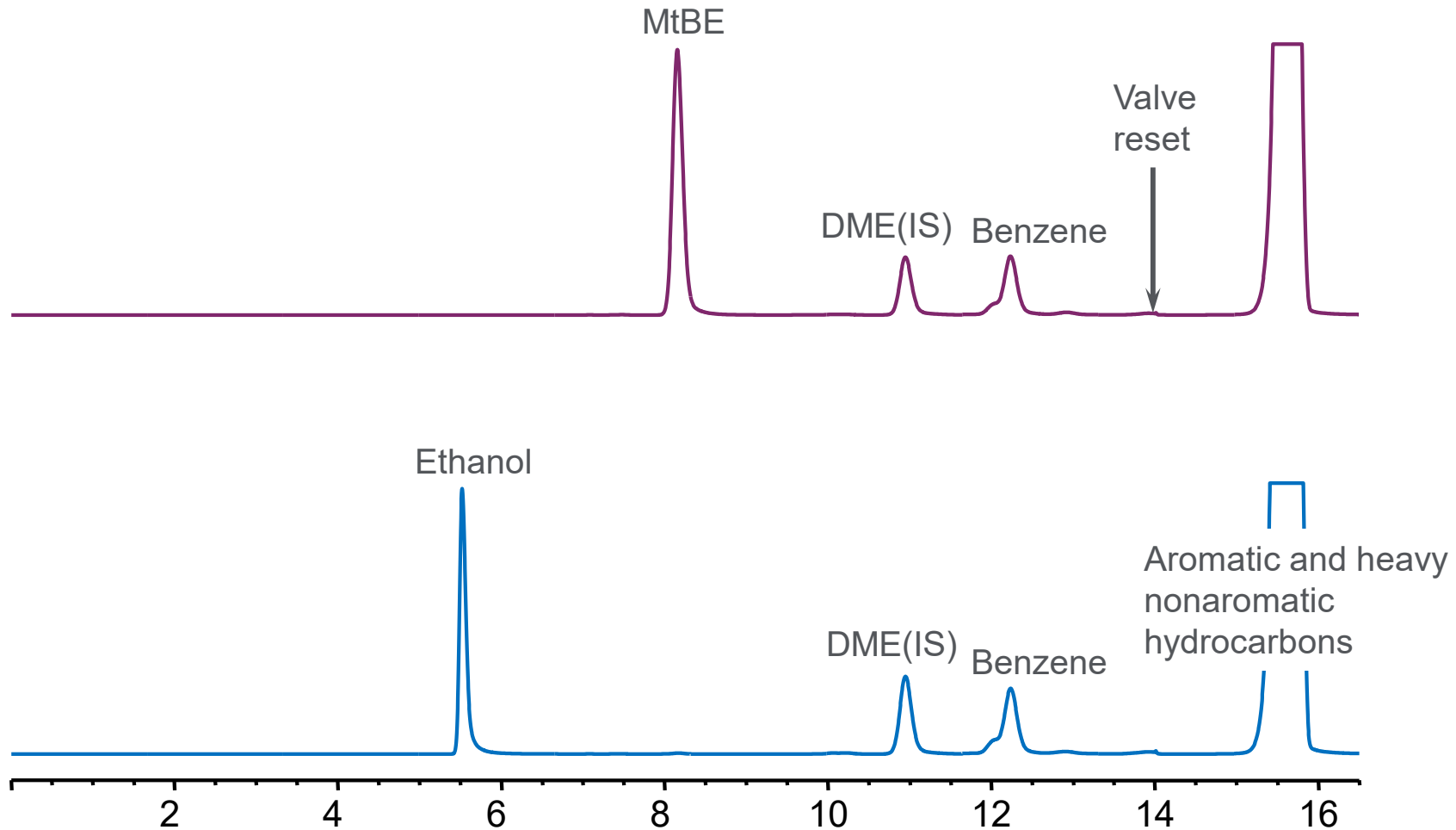


# Instrument Conditions

Use nitrogen carrier gas with original ASTM GC flow conditions

Method D4815	
Carrier gas	Nitrogen
Inlet	Split/splitless
Inlet Temperature	200 °C
Inlet pressure	9 PSI (constant P)
TCEP column flow	5 mL/min
Split ratio	15 : 1
Split flow	70 mL/min
PCM pressure program	13 PSI for 14 min 99 PSI/min to 40 PSI
HP-1 column flow	3 mL/min
FID Temperature	250 °C
Oven Temperature	80 °C Isothermal
Run time	16 minutes

# Analysis of MtBE and Ethanol in Gasoline Using N<sub>2</sub> Carrier Gas



# ASTM Precision Specifications

## D4815 precision measures

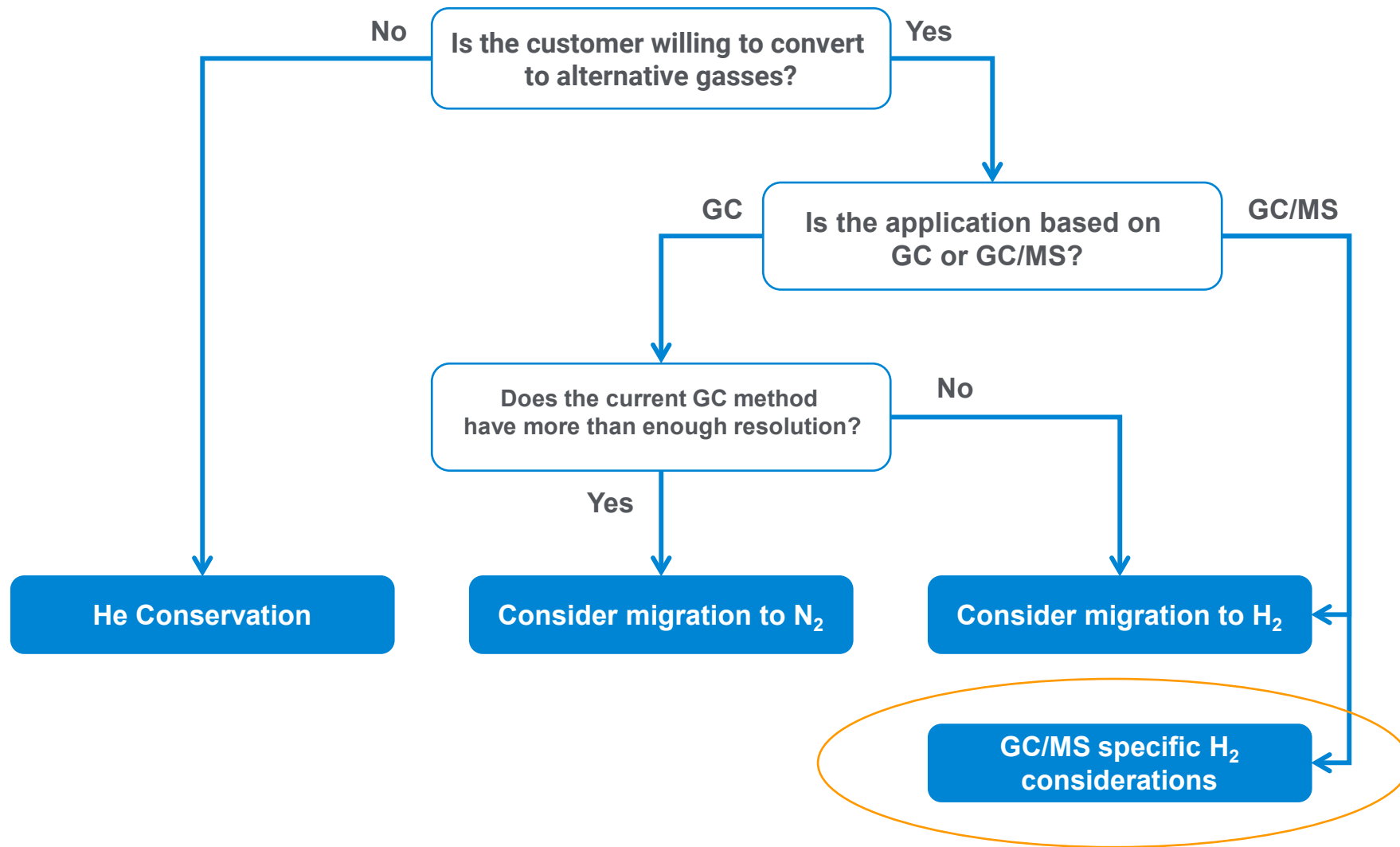
Compound	Mass %	Repeatability		Reproducibility	
		Spec	Observed	Spec	Observed
Ethanol	0.99	0.06	0.01	0.23	0.01
Ethanol	6.63	0.19	0.03	0.68	0.04
MtBE	2.10	0.08	0.01	0.20	0.01
MtBE	11.29	0.19	0.05	0.61	0.08

## Accuracy evaluation

Sample	MtBE mass %	
	known	found
SRM2294 #1	10.97	10.61
SRM2294 #2	10.97	10.60
AccuStd Check	12.00	11.81

# Carrier Gas Decision Tree

## Migrating GC methods to nitrogen and hydrogen



# MSD systems: Do not Switch from He to H<sub>2</sub> unless absolutely necessary

- Hydrogen is a very reactive gas!
- You **WILL** experience a noisy/elevated background that can be persistent (days/weeks)
- Chemical reactions happen in the inlet, column, and sometimes the source that can change your results.
- EVERY analyte in EVERY matrix in EVERY method will need to be validated using hydrogen to make sure there are no chemical reaction problems.
- Looking for untargeted unknowns is problematic due to the possibility of reactivity.
- Library search match quality will be impacted.
- Tuning results will be different than with helium. Some tunes, notably BFB and DFTPP, may not pass
- First, try all helium conservation measures instead of switching to H<sub>2</sub>.

**\*There are no published performance specifications for any current Agilent GCMS system using hydrogen carrier gas.**

# MSD: Converting from He to H<sub>2</sub> Carrier Gas

- Many GC/MS users are considering changing from helium to hydrogen carrier gas due to price/availability problems with helium.
- Read [Chemical and Engineering News - July 16, 2012 \(Page 32-34\)](#)
- It is important to recognize the differences with using hydrogen carrier. Time should be allotted for adapting the method, optimization, and resolving potential problems. Areas that will need attention include:
  - choice of supply of H<sub>2</sub>
  - GC/MSD hardware changes
  - choosing new chromatographic conditions
  - potential reduction in signal-to-noise ratio (2-5x or more) due to higher noise
  - changes in spectra and abundance ratios for some compounds
  - activity and reactivity with some analytes

**\*There are no published performance specifications for any current Agilent GCMS system using hydrogen carrier gas.**

# GC/MS Migration to H<sub>2</sub> Carrier Gas

## Recent C&EN webinar discussion points

- Read Hydrogen safety guide before proceeding!
  - <https://www.agilent.com/cs/library/usermanuals/public/Hydrogen.pdf>
- System setup
  - H<sub>2</sub> safety, H<sub>2</sub> source, gas connection, system clean up
- Method migration
  - Method transfer SW, method migration consideration, revalidation
- GC/MS analytical performance expectation
  - Sensitivity impact, MS spectrum impact, analyte compatibility
- For more details
  - C&EN webinar on October 9, 2012
  - Recorder session: [http://cen.acs.org/media/webinar/agilent\\_100912.html](http://cen.acs.org/media/webinar/agilent_100912.html)

# Summary: Helium Conservation Benefits

- Seamless integration
  - No need to revalidate existing GC methods
  - Fully integrated with Agilent 7890B and CDS (OpenLab, Mustang, MassHunter)
  - Carrier gas ID and setpoints are a part of the method for compliance and transfer
  - Easily implemented using new Agilent Sleep/Wake functions
- Greater reliability
  - Based on proven 5<sup>th</sup> generation AUX EPC
  - Agilent 7890/8890 provides warning if setpoints are not reached
  - For hydrogen users, nitrogen substitution when not running GC
- Greater performance
  - Purge channel prevents cross contamination of gases
  - Delivers more stable gas pressure control from the tank regulator to the inlet EPC module
  - Acts as an intermediate pressure regulator from the tank to inlet EPC to ensure greater analytical precision



# Summary – Migration to H<sub>2</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>

- Don't forget about Gas Saver
- Be especially cautious when migrating to H<sub>2</sub> with an MSD system
- For resolution critical methods, H<sub>2</sub> offer the best alternative
  - Agilent GC and GC/MS systems have many built-in safety features
- For many GC applications, N<sub>2</sub> offers a cheap, easy alternative without any safety worries
  - Many existing helium methods have too much resolution
  - N<sub>2</sub> can be used without changing any of the existing GC conditions
    - Keep the holdup time the same as the original method
  - 2-D methods have high resolution built in, so N<sub>2</sub> is ideally suited as a carrier gas
    - Valve-based or Deans switch (not GC x GC flow modulation)
- For more information on Helium Carrier Gas

[www.agilent.com/chem/heliumupdate](http://www.agilent.com/chem/heliumupdate)

# Contact Agilent Chemistries and Supplies Technical Support



1-800-227-9770 option 3, option 3:

Option 1 for GC and GC/MS columns and supplies

Option 2 for LC and LC/MS columns and supplies

Option 3 for sample preparation products, filtration, and QuEChERS

Option 4 for spectroscopy supplies

Available in the USA 8-5 all time zones



[gc-column-support@agilent.com](mailto:gc-column-support@agilent.com)

← GC columns and supplies

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