

Supplementary information

Biological metasurfaces based on tailored LBA growth medium formulations for photonic applications

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Section 1 - Colony Forming Units method:

Bacterial growth was evaluated in three different Luria Bertani Agar formulations, LBA, LB₂A, and LB₄A, in order to analyze the effect of nutrient composition on cell replication. We consider the bacterial cells in the exponential growth phase, i.e, a condition in which all cells have a similar shape and where their number double in a constant time interval. During this phase, we have found that both the cell concentration and growth rate are different for the three formulations, despite the similar initial cells concentration (see **Figure 2b,c** in Results and Discussion section of the main text). In this way, it is possible to compare the growth capacity of each formulation by evaluating the generation number n thought the following relation:

$$N = N_0 2^n \quad [1]$$

Here N is the cells concentration after a certain growth time, N_0 is the initial cells concentration and n represents the generation number used to obtain a final population N . Expressed in terms of n (see **Equation 2**), the generation time “g”, also known as the “doubling time”, can be assessed as $g = Time/n$. It describes the period required to give rise to two daughter cells from one. Other important parameters can be used to describe the growth dynamics for each formulation: (i) the growth rate ($K = 1/g = n/Time$), indicating the generations number produced in a hour and (ii) the instantaneous rate constant $k = \log(2)/g$, expressing the rate at which the population is growing at any instant (K and k are expressed in units of reciprocal hours (h⁻¹), see **Table 1**).

$$n = \frac{\log(N) - \log(N_0)}{\log(2)} \quad [2]$$

The doubling times and instantaneous growth rates were found to be significantly different for the three formulations. The doubling time for *E. coli* bacteria has been determined to be about 15 minutes in LBA, 17 minutes in LB₂A and 34 minutes in LB₄A. The higher instantaneous growth rate (k) observed in LBA indicates a faster cells replication compared to LB₂A and LB₄A, for which growth

