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# **The novel ECM protein SNED1 mediates cell adhesion via the RGD-binding integrins $\alpha 5\beta 1$ and $\alpha v\beta 3$**

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22 **ABSTRACT**

23 The extracellular matrix (ECM) is a complex meshwork comprising over 100 proteins. It serves  
24 as an adhesive substrate for cells and, hence, plays critical roles in health and disease. We have  
25 recently identified a novel ECM protein, SNED1, and have found that it is required for neural crest  
26 cell migration and craniofacial morphogenesis during development and in breast cancer, where it  
27 is necessary for the metastatic dissemination of tumor cells. Interestingly, both processes involve  
28 the dynamic remodeling of cell-ECM adhesions via cell surface receptors. Sequence analysis  
29 revealed that SNED1 contains two amino acid motifs, RGD and LDV, known to bind integrins,  
30 the largest class of ECM receptors. We thus sought to investigate the role of SNED1 in cell  
31 adhesion. Here, we report that SNED1 mediates breast cancer and neural crest cell adhesion via  
32 its RGD motif. We further demonstrate that cell adhesion to SNED1 is mediated by the RGD  
33 integrins  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  and  $\alpha v\beta 3$ . These findings are a first step toward identifying the signaling pathways  
34 activated downstream of the SNED1-integrin interactions guiding craniofacial morphogenesis and  
35 breast cancer metastasis.

36

37 **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

38 We report that the novel extracellular matrix protein SNED1 promotes the adhesion of breast  
39 cancer cells and neural crest cells via interaction with  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  and  $\alpha v\beta 3$  integrins, the first SNED1  
40 receptors identified to date.

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## 42 INTRODUCTION

43

44 The extracellular matrix (ECM), a fundamental component of multicellular organisms, is a  
45 complex 3-dimensional (3D) meshwork consisting of over a hundred proteins (Hynes and Naba,  
46 2012; Naba, 2024). The primary function of the ECM is to serve as a substrate for cell adhesion  
47 (Hynes, 2009). The adhesion of cells to their surrounding ECM is mediated by cell-surface  
48 receptors and is critical for cell survival, as detachment from the ECM results in apoptotic cell  
49 death, known as anoikis (Frisch and Francis, 1994). In addition, cell-ECM interactions trigger  
50 molecular events that regulate a multitude of cellular phenotypes including migration (Dzamba  
51 and DeSimone, 2018; Pally and Naba, 2024), proliferation (Hynes, 2009), and differentiation  
52 (Walma and Yamada, 2020). As a result, alterations of cell-ECM adhesions and downstream  
53 signaling pathways lead to developmental defects (Rozario and DeSimone, 2010) and pathologies  
54 like cancer (Cox, 2021; Pickup et al., 2014) and fibrosis (Herrera et al., 2018). Yet, only a small  
55 subset of the hundreds of proteins comprising the matrisome is the focus of active investigations,  
56 and the mechanisms by which they interact with cells and guide cell phenotype are known for an  
57 even smaller subset.

58

59 One such understudied ECM protein is Sushi, Nidogen, and EGF like Domains 1 (SNED1). The  
60 murine gene *Sned1* was cloned two decades ago (Leimeister et al., 2004), however, it took ten  
61 years to identify its first function as a promoter of breast cancer metastasis (Naba et al., 2014).  
62 Beyond its role in breast cancer, we recently reported that *Sned1* is an essential gene, as knocking  
63 it out resulted in early neonatal lethality and severe craniofacial malformations (Barqué et al.,  
64 2021). We further showed that knocking out *Sned1* specifically from neural crest cells, the cell  
65 population that contributes to forming most craniofacial features (Mankarious and Goudy, 2010;  
66 Martik and Bronner, 2021; Trainor, 2005), was sufficient to recapitulate the craniofacial phenotype  
67 observed upon global *Sned1* deletion, demonstrating a new role for SNED1 in craniofacial  
68 morphogenesis (Barqué et al., 2021). However, as of today, the mechanisms through which  
69 SNED1 interacts with cells to mediate its phenotypes remain unknown. Of note, metastatic breast  
70 cancer cells and neural crest cells share common features (Gallik et al., 2017), including their  
71 ability to remodel their adhesions to acquire increased migratory potential (Doyle et al., 2022;  
72 Gallik et al., 2017; Mayor and Theveneau, 2013; Tucker et al., 1988). This process is, in part,

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73 mediated by integrins, which are the main class of ECM receptors (Bökel and Brown, 2002;  
74 Campbell and Humphries, 2011; Hood and Cheresh, 2002; Hynes, 2002; Kanchanawong and  
75 Calderwood, 2023). For example, *in vivo* and *in vitro* experiments have demonstrated that  $\beta$ 1  
76 integrins at the surface of neural crest cells interact with the ECM and ECM proteins like  
77 fibronectin to promote cell adhesion and subsequent migration (Alfandari et al., 2003; Duband et  
78 al., 1991; Leonard and Taneyhill, 2020; Pietri et al., 2004; Testaz et al., 1999; Yang et al., 1993).  
79  $\beta$ 1-containing integrin heterodimers expressed by breast cancer cells have been shown to interact  
80 with the vascular ECM to promote extravasation during metastasis (Chen et al., 2016) and be  
81 essential to every step of the metastatic cascade (Hamidi and Ivaska, 2018). Interestingly, SNED1  
82 contains two putative integrin-binding motifs, an arginine-glycine-aspartic acid (RGD) triplet and  
83 a leucine-aspartic acid-valine (LDV) triplet, known in other proteins to mediate cell-ECM  
84 adhesion. We thus sought to determine whether SNED1 played a role in cell adhesion.

85

86 Here we report that SNED1 mediates the adhesion of breast cancer cells and neural crest cells, two  
87 cell types of relevance to the *in-vivo* functions of SNED1. Using a combination of genetic and  
88 pharmacological approaches, we further show that cell adhesion to SNED1 is mediated by its RGD  
89 motif and the engagement of  $\alpha$ 5 $\beta$ 1 and  $\alpha$ v $\beta$ 3 integrins. Our study is thus the first to report the  
90 identification of SNED1 receptors and constitutes an important step toward the identification of  
91 the biochemical signaling events leading to SNED1-dependent breast cancer metastasis and  
92 craniofacial development.

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## 94 **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

95

### 96 **SNED1 mediates breast cancer and neural crest cell adhesion**

97 We first sought to determine whether SNED1 could mediate cell adhesion. To do so, we seeded  
98 highly metastatic MDA-MB-231 ‘LM2’ breast cancer cells (further termed LM2) or O9-1 neural  
99 crest cells on surfaces coated with increasing concentrations of purified human SNED1 (Vallet et  
100 al., 2021) (Fig S1A) or murine Sned1, respectively, and allowed cells to adhere for 30 min. Cell  
101 adhesion was assayed using a crystal-violet-based colorimetric assay and we found that SNED1  
102 mediated the adhesion of LM2 breast cancer cells and O9-1 neural crest cells in a concentration-  
103 dependent manner with maximum adhesion observed at 10 µg/mL concentration (Fig 1A and B,  
104 respectively). At this concentration, SNED1 exerted the same adhesive properties as fibronectin  
105 toward these two cell populations (represented by 100% adhesion based on the standard curve).  
106 We further showed that the O9-1 cells, which are of murine origin, adhered in the same proportion  
107 to both murine Sned1 and human SNED1 (Fig S1B), perhaps not surprisingly, as the two orthologs  
108 share an 84% sequence identity (Barqué et al., 2021).

109 Sned1 also mediated the adhesion of immortalized mouse embryonic fibroblasts derived from  
110 *Sned1* knockout mice (*Sned1*<sup>KO</sup> iMEFs) to the same extent as the other two cell lines (Fig S1C).  
111 Altogether these experiments demonstrate that SNED1 mediates cell adhesion and exerts adhesive  
112 properties toward a panel of cell types.

113

### 114 **The N-terminal region of SNED1 is sufficient to mediate cell adhesion**

115 SNED1 is a modular protein composed of different domains, including a NIDO domain, a  
116 follistatin domain, and a sushi domain (also known as complement control protein or CCP  
117 domain), in addition to multiple repeats of EGF-like (EGF), calcium-binding EGF-like (EGF-Ca),  
118 and fibronectin type 3 (FN3) domains, all involved in protein-protein interactions (Fig 2A). To  
119 assess which region(s) of SNED1 mediate cell adhesion, we generated and purified three truncated  
120 forms of SNED1 (Fig 2A): the SNED1<sup>1-751</sup> form lacks the C-terminal region that comprises three  
121 FN3 domains, shown to mediate cell adhesion in other ECM proteins, and the most C-terminal  
122 EGF-like domains; the SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> fragment additionally lacks the sushi domain and EGF-like  
123 domains after the follistatin domain; the SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> construct encompasses the very N-terminal  
124 region, including a single NIDO domain, which is only present in four other proteins in the human

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125 and mouse proteomes (nidogen-1 and nidogen-2, alpha-tectorin, and mucin-4) and its function  
126 remains unknown (Barqué et al., 2021). These synthetic constructs were designed to include  
127 adequate domain boundaries compatible with proper folding for the truncated proteins to be  
128 secreted (Fig 2B).

129

130 Using these purified truncated proteins as substrates, we found that LM2 cells had a decreased  
131 ability to adhere to SNED1<sup>1-751</sup> and SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> as compared to full-length SNED1 (1.4- and 1.75-  
132 fold decrease, respectively; Fig 2C). Similarly, we observed that O9-1 cells had a decreased ability  
133 to adhere to SNED1<sup>1-751</sup> and SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> compared to full-length SNED1 (1.58- and 1.7-fold  
134 decrease, respectively; Fig 2D). Notably, although SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> further lacks the sushi domain and  
135 four EGF-like domains, along with the domains absent in SNED1<sup>1-751</sup>, it mediated cell adhesion  
136 to the same extent as SNED1<sup>1-751</sup> for both cell lines (Fig 2C and D). Interestingly, LM2 and O9-1  
137 cells could adhere to the shortest N-terminal SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> fragment in a similar proportion as to  
138 full-length SNED1 (Fig 2C and D, respectively). Since, the SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> fragment is 6 times smaller  
139 than full length SNED1, we thought to perform the same experiment but using similar molar  
140 concentration (66.3  $\mu$ M) rather than amount (10 $\mu$ g/mL), and obtained a similar result, namely that  
141 LM2 cell adhesion on SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> is comparable to full length SNED1 (Fig S2). Altogether, these  
142 results indicate that the adhesive property of SNED1 is primarily mediated by its N-terminal  
143 region. These results also suggests that the three FN3 domains and the EGF-like domains lacking  
144 in the SNED1<sup>1-751</sup> and SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> constructs are required for full length SNED1 to adopt a  
145 conformation where the N-terminal adhesive site is fully accessible to cells, since their absence  
146 resulted in decreased cell adhesion.

147

#### 148 **SNED1 mediates cell adhesion via its RGD motif**

149 Analysis of the SNED1 sequence has revealed the presence of two putative integrin binding motifs:  
150 RGD and LDV. These motifs were discovered in other ECM proteins, such as fibronectin and  
151 thrombospondin 1, and interact with integrin heterodimers at the cell surface to mediate cell  
152 adhesion (Lawler et al., 1988; Ruoslahti and Pierschbacher, 1987).

153 To determine whether the RGD and LDV motifs of SNED1 are required for cell adhesion, we  
154 mutated these sites alone or in combination (p40D>E in the RGD motif; p311D>A in the LDV  
155 motif; Fig 3A). Similar mutations in other ECM proteins have been shown to disrupt their

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156 interaction with integrin heterodimers (Cherny et al., 1993; Pytela et al., 1985). We next expressed  
157 these constructs in 293T cells and purified the corresponding secreted proteins from the  
158 conditioned culture medium using affinity chromatography (Fig S3). Purified proteins were then  
159 used to perform cell adhesion assays. We observed that LM2 cells showed a statistically significant  
160 decrease in their ability to adhere to SNED1<sup>RGE</sup> and SNED1<sup>RGE/LAV</sup> as compared to SNED1<sup>WT</sup> (3-  
161 and 2.5-fold decrease, respectively; Fig 3B). Similarly, O9-1 cells showed a significant decrease  
162 in their ability to adhere to SNED1<sup>RGE</sup> and SNED1<sup>RGE/LAV</sup> as compared to SNED1<sup>WT</sup> (4- and 5.5-  
163 fold decrease, respectively; Fig 3C). However, mutation of the LDV motif to LAV did not affect  
164 cell adhesion (Fig 3B, C). These results demonstrate that the RGD but not the LDV motif in  
165 SNED1 is required for cell adhesion.

166

### 167 **Functional inhibition of RGD integrins significantly reduces breast cancer and neural crest** 168 **cell adhesion to SNED1**

169 To complement this set of observations and determine whether integrins mediate adhesion to  
170 SNED1, we performed experiments aimed at targeting the ability of integrins to interact with  
171 SNED1. First, we performed adhesion assays in the presence of cyclic RGDfV (cRGDfV) peptide,  
172 a peptide known to bind with high affinity to integrins that engage with the RGD motif of ECM  
173 proteins (Aumailley et al., 1991). We observed reduced adhesion of both LM2 (Fig 4A) and O9-1  
174 cells (Fig 4B) in a concentration-dependent manner in presence of cRGDfV as compared to  
175 vehicle-treated cells. Since we previously showed that the N-terminal region of SNED1 was  
176 sufficient to mediate cell adhesion and the RGD motif is located within this fragment, we evaluated  
177 the ability of cells to adhere to SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> in presence of 10 $\mu$ M of cRGDfV peptide. We found  
178 that this integrin inhibitor fully abrogated LM2 and O9-1 cell adhesion (Fig S4A, B). This result  
179 suggests that the RGD motif at the N-terminal end is essential for the adhesive property of the  
180 SNED1<sup>1-260</sup>.

181

182 The cRGDfV peptide inhibits a panel of RGD-binding integrin heterodimers such as  $\alpha$ v $\beta$ 3,  $\alpha$ v $\beta$ 6,  
183  $\alpha$ 5 $\beta$ 1, and  $\alpha$ v $\beta$ 5 (Kapp et al., 2017). Using *in silico* molecular modeling, we previously predicted  
184 that SNED1 could potentially interact with 11 integrin subunits,  $\alpha$ 1,  $\alpha$ 4,  $\alpha$ 7,  $\alpha$ 10,  $\alpha$ 11,  $\beta$ 1,  $\beta$ 2,  
185  $\beta$ 3,  $\beta$ 4,  $\beta$ 5, and  $\beta$ 7 (Vallet et al., 2021) forming six functional heterodimers:  $\alpha$ 1 $\beta$ 1,  $\alpha$ 4 $\beta$ 1,  $\alpha$ 7 $\beta$ 1,  
186  $\alpha$ 10 $\beta$ 1,  $\alpha$ 11 $\beta$ 1, and  $\alpha$ 4 $\beta$ 7 (Hynes, 2002) including the RGD-binding integrin  $\alpha$ 5 $\beta$ 1 (Fig 4C). We

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187 thus sought to test whether cell adhesion to SNED1 was dependent on  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  integrin. We first  
188 confirmed that LM2 and O9-1 cells expressed  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  integrin (Fig 4D). We then performed cell  
189 adhesion assays in presence of functional blocking antibodies targeting  $\beta 1$  and  $\alpha 5$  integrins and  
190 demonstrated that the adhesion of LM2 cells (Fig 4E) and O9-1 cells (Fig 4F) to SNED1 was  
191 significantly reduced in presence of antibodies targeting  $\beta 1$  integrin (52% and 41% decrease,  
192 respectively, as compared to isotype controls) or  $\alpha 5$  integrin (30% and 9% decrease, respectively,  
193 as compared to isotype controls).

194 While cRGDfV inhibits  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  integrin,  $\alpha v\beta 3$  is more sensitive to inhibition by this peptide  
195 (Gurrath et al., 1992; Pfaff et al., 1994). Since LM2 cells also express  $\alpha v\beta 3$  (Fig 4D), we sought  
196 to test whether  $\alpha v\beta 3$ , could act as a receptor for SNED1, although it was not predicted by our  
197 modeling approach. Interestingly, we observed that the adhesion of LM2 cell was significantly  
198 decreased in presence of an antibody targeting  $\alpha v\beta 3$  integrin (35.5% decrease as compared to  
199 isotype control; Fig. 4E). This result is in line with our observation of decreased cell adhesion to  
200 SNED1<sup>RGE</sup>. Altogether, these experiments identified  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  and  $\alpha v\beta 3$  integrin as the first SNED1  
201 receptors.

202  
203 It is worth noting that inhibition of  $\alpha 5$ ,  $\beta 1$ , or  $\alpha v\beta 3$  integrins did not fully abrogate cell adhesion  
204 to SNED1, suggesting that there are likely additional integrin (such as the RGD-integrin  $\alpha v\beta 1$  or  
205 the non-RGD integrin  $\alpha 1\beta 1$ ) and non-integrin SNED1 receptors at the surface of these cells.  
206 Indeed, we have previously shown using *in-silico* prediction, that SNED1 could interact with 55  
207 transmembrane proteins, in addition to integrins, including the basal cell adhesion molecule  
208 (BCAM) or dystroglycan 1 (DAG1), two known ECM receptors (Vallet et al., 2021). The  
209 identification of these receptors at the surface of breast cancer cells and neural crest cells will be  
210 the focus of future studies.

211  
212 While our results demonstrate that the RGD motif mediates breast cancer and neural crest cell  
213 adhesion, they also raise questions on the role of the LDV motif in SNED1. The LDV motif is  
214 primarily recognized by  $\alpha 4\beta 1$  and  $\alpha 4\beta 7$  integrins that are mainly expressed by leukocytes. Integrin  
215  $\alpha 4$  has been previously demonstrated to play a vital role in neural crest cell migration (Kil et al.,  
216 1998) and cancer cell adhesion to the vascular endothelium (Taichman et al., 1991). Here, we show



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217 that  $\alpha 4$  is expressed by LM2 and O9-1 cells (Fig S5A); however, functional blocking of integrin  
218  $\alpha 4$  did not affect the adhesion of LM2 cells to SNED1 (Fig S5B), in line with our observation that  
219 these cells could adhere similarly to SNED1<sup>LAV</sup> and SNED1<sup>WT</sup>. This is also in line with the  
220 observation that the two truncated forms of SNED1, SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> and SNED1<sup>1-751</sup>, which contain  
221 the LDV motif, are not sufficient to mediate cell adhesion. This opens the possibility that SNED1,  
222 via its LDV motif, could engage other cell populations in other pathophysiological processes that  
223 have yet to be discovered.

224

225 In addition to mediating cell adhesion, integrin heterodimers are involved in the early steps of  
226 ECM assembly; for example,  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  integrin is critical for the initiation of fibronectin  
227 fibrillogenesis (Mao and Schwarzbauer, 2005). We have previously shown that SNED1 forms  
228 fibers in the ECM (Vallet et al., 2021), yet we do not know the mechanisms required for this  
229 process. It will thus be interesting to determine if  $\alpha 5\beta 1$  integrin also mediates SNED1 fiber  
230 assembly.

231

232 Finally, given the critical role integrin-ECM interactions play in driving pathological processes,  
233 devising therapeutic strategies to prevent or disrupt these interactions is an active area of  
234 investigation (Hamidi et al., 2016; Pang et al., 2023; Raab-Westphal et al., 2017). To date, seven  
235 small molecule inhibitors and biologics have been successfully marketed, including monoclonal  
236 antibodies specifically blocking  $\alpha 4\beta 7$  and  $\alpha 4\beta 1$  to treat inflammatory disorders such as ulcerative  
237 colitis, Crohn's disease, and multiple sclerosis (Pang et al., 2023; Slack et al., 2022). Our study  
238 has thus the potential to pave the way to devise novel therapeutic strategies aimed at targeting  
239 SNED1-integrin interaction to prevent breast cancer metastasis.

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## 240 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

241

### 242 **Plasmid constructs**

243 The cDNA encoding full-length human SNED1 cloned into pCMV-XL5 was obtained from  
244 Origene (clone SC315884). 6X-His-tagged SNED1 previously described (Vallet et al., 2021) was  
245 subcloned into the bicistronic retroviral vector pMSCV-IRES-Hygromycin between the BglII and  
246 HpaI sites. FLAG-tagged SNED1 was previously described (Vallet et al., 2021).

247 Site-directed mutagenesis to generate SNED1<sup>RGE</sup> (c.C120A; p.D40E) and SNED1<sup>LAV</sup> (c.A932C;  
248 p.D311A) was performed using the QuikChange kit (Agilent #200519) following the  
249 manufacturer's instructions using the cDNA encoding SNED1 from Origene as a template. To  
250 obtain the double mutant SNED1<sup>RGE/LAV</sup> (c.C120A; p.D40E / c.A932C; p.D311A), we introduced  
251 the c.C120A mutation in the c.A932C mutant. These constructs were then subcloned into the  
252 bicistronic retroviral vector pMSCV-IRES-Hygromycin between the BglII and HpaI sites, and a  
253 6X-Hix-tag was introduced by PCR in 3' (C-terminus of the protein).

254 Truncated forms of human SNED1 were subcloned by PCR to generate the following fragments:  
255 SNED1<sup>1-530</sup>, encompassing the N-terminal region of SNED1 until the follistatin domain, and  
256 SNED1<sup>1-751</sup>, encompassing the N-terminal region of SNED1 until the sushi domain (Fig 2A).  
257 These constructs were then subcloned into the bicistronic retroviral vector pMSCV-IRES-  
258 Hygromycin between the BglII and HpaI sites, and a FLAG tag (DYKDDDDK) was added at the  
259 C-terminus via PCR as previously described (Vallet et al., 2021). FLAG-tagged SNED1<sup>1-260</sup>,  
260 encompassing the very N-terminal region of SNED1 was previously described (Vallet et al., 2021).  
261 The sequences of the primers used to introduce point mutations or generate truncated fragments of  
262 SNED1 are listed in Supplementary Table 1. All constructs were verified by sequencing.

263

### 264 **Cell culture**

#### 265 *Cell maintenance*

266 Highly metastatic breast cancer cells, MDA-MB-231 'LM2' (termed LM2 in the manuscript), were  
267 kindly gifted by Dr. Joan Massagué (Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY).  
268 LM2 cells, human embryonic kidney 293T cells (termed 293T in the manuscript) stably  
269 overexpressing different constructs of SNED1, and immortalized mouse embryonic fibroblasts  
270 isolated from *Sned1*<sup>KO</sup> mice (*Sned1*<sup>KO</sup> iMEFs) (Vallet et al., 2021) were cultured in Dulbecco's

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271 Modified Eagle's medium (DMEM; Corning, #10-017-CV) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine  
272 serum (FBS; Sigma, #F0926) and 2 mM glutamine (Corning, #25-005-CI); this formulation is  
273 termed "complete medium" in this manuscript. The O9-1 mouse cranial neural crest cell line  
274 (Millipore Sigma, #SCC049) was cultured per the manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, cells were  
275 cultured on dishes coated with Matrigel® (Corning, #356234) prepared at 0.18 mg/mL in 1X  
276 Dulbecco's Phosphate Buffered Saline (D-PBS) containing calcium and magnesium (Cytiva,  
277 #SH30264.FS) in presence of complete ES cell medium containing 15% FBS and leukemia  
278 inhibitory factor (Millipore Sigma, #ES-101-B) and supplemented with 25 ng/mL fibroblast  
279 growth factor-2 (FGF-2, R&D systems, #233-FB). All cell lines were maintained at 37°C in a 5%  
280 CO<sub>2</sub> humidified incubator.

281

282 *Retrovirus production*

283 293T cells were plated at ~ 30% confluency in a 6-well plate. Cells were transfected the following  
284 day using a Lipofectamine 3000 (Invitrogen, #L3000-008) mixture containing 1 µg of a retroviral  
285 vector with the construct of interest and 0.5 µg each of a packaging vector (pCL-Gag/Pol) and a  
286 vector encoding the VSVG coat protein prepared in Opti-MEM™ (Gibco, #31985070). After 24h,  
287 the transfection mixture was replaced with fresh complete medium, and cells were cultured for an  
288 additional 24h, after which the conditioned medium containing viral particles was collected,  
289 passed through 0.45 µ filter, and then either immediately used for cell transduction or stored at  
290 -80°C for later use.

291

292 *Generation of 293T cells stably expressing SNED1 constructs.*

293 293T cells were seeded at ~30% confluency. The following day, cells were transduced with  
294 undiluted viral particles-containing conditioned medium. 24h after transduction, the medium was  
295 replaced with fresh complete medium, and cells were allowed to grow for another 24h before  
296 selection with hygromycin (100 µg/mL). Once stable cell lines were established, we assessed the  
297 production and secretion of recombinant proteins using immunoblotting of total cell extract (TCE)  
298 and conditioned medium, respectively, using either an anti-SNED1, anti-His or anti-FLAG  
299 antibody.

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## 302 **Protein purification**

### 303 *Condition medium collection*

304 293T cells stably expressing constructs of interest were seeded in a 15 cm dish in complete medium  
305 and allowed to grow until reaching 100% confluency. The culture medium was aspirated, the  
306 monolayer was rinsed with 1X D-PBS containing calcium and magnesium, and the medium was  
307 replaced with serum-free DMEM medium supplemented with 2 mM glutamine for 48h. The  
308 serum-free conditioned medium (CM) containing secreted SNED1 was harvested, and cells were  
309 allowed to recover for 48h in complete medium before repeating the next cycle. Cells were  
310 discarded after five cycles. An EDTA-free protease inhibitor cocktail (0.067X final concentration;  
311 Thermo Scientific, #A32955) was added to the CM, and the CM was centrifuged at 4000 rpm for  
312 10 min to remove any cell or cellular debris. Pre-cleared supernatants were collected and stored at  
313 -80°C until further processing.

314

### 315 *Metal affinity purification of His-tagged SNED1 proteins*

316 6X His-tagged SNED1 proteins (wild-type or integrin-binding mutants) were purified via  
317 immobilized metal affinity chromatography (IMAC) using an AKTA Pure system for fast protein  
318 liquid chromatography (FPLC) at the UIC Biophysics Core Facility. In brief, conditioned medium  
319 (CM) containing the secreted protein of interest was thawed at 4°C, concentrated using a 100-kDa  
320 protein concentrator with a polyethersulfone membrane (Thermo Scientific, #88537), buffer-  
321 exchanged against a binding buffer containing 20 mM Tris, 500 mM NaCl, 20 mM imidazole (pH  
322 7.5), and filtered using a 0.2 µm filter. In parallel, a HisTrap HP column (column volume: 1 mL)  
323 was equilibrated with the binding buffer. The filtered CM was applied to the equilibrated HisTrap  
324 column to allow protein binding. The column was then washed with 20 column volumes of binding  
325 buffer and bound proteins were eluted with a buffer containing 20 mM Tris-HCl, 500 mM NaCl,  
326 5 mM β-mercaptoethanol (pH 7.5), and a stepwise gradient of increasing imidazole concentration  
327 (12.5mM, 50mM, 125mM, 250mM, 375mM, and 500mM). The elution fractions were  
328 concentrated, and a buffer exchange was performed with HEPES Buffered Saline (HBS; 10 mM  
329 HEPES, 150 mM NaCl, pH 7.5).

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### 333 *Purification of FLAG-tagged SNED1 proteins*

334 Since we could not achieve sufficient purity of His-tagged truncated forms of SNED1, we cloned  
335 FLAG-tagged versions of these proteins for purification (Fig 2B) In brief, conditioned medium  
336 containing FLAG-tagged full-length or truncated forms of SNED1 was thawed at 4°C overnight  
337 and concentrated using protein concentrators with a 10kDa weight cut-off for the SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> and  
338 SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> fragments (Thermo Scientific, #88535), a 30kDa cut-off for the SNED1<sup>1-751</sup> fragment  
339 (Thermo Scientific, #88536), and a 100kDa cut-off for full-length SNED1 (Thermo Scientific,  
340 #88537). An anti-FLAG resin (Sigma, #A220), containing monoclonal M2 anti-FLAG antibodies  
341 coupled to agarose beads was washed with 20 column volumes of HBS twice. Concentrated CM  
342 was applied to the resin and incubated overnight under constant rotation at 4°C to allow protein  
343 binding. The following day, the unbound fraction was collected, and the resin was washed with 20  
344 column volumes of HBS thrice. Bound FLAG-tagged proteins were eluted by competing with 200  
345 µg/mL of FLAG peptide in HBS in a stepwise manner, resulting in 4 elution fractions. Protein  
346 fractions were then pooled, and buffer-exchanged with HBS using protein concentrators of  
347 appropriate molecular weight cut-off (see above) to remove the excess of unbound FLAG peptide.

348

### 349 *Protein quantification and quality assessment*

350 Purified proteins were quantified by measuring the absorbance at  $\lambda=280$  nm using a NanoDrop  
351 spectrophotometer. To assess their quality and purity, proteins were resolved by electrophoresis  
352 on polyacrylamide gels. Gels were stained overnight using Coomassie-based AquaStain (Bulldog,  
353 #AS001000) and imaged with a ChemiDoc MP™ imaging system (Bio-Rad).

354

### 355 **Adhesion assay**

#### 356 *Substrate coating*

357 Adhesion assays were performed as described previously (Humphries, 1998). In brief, wells of a  
358 96-well plate were coated with 50 µL of different concentrations, ranging from 0.1 µg/mL to 10  
359 µg/mL, of purified human SNED1 proteins (full-length, fragments, or integrin-binding mutants)  
360 or murine Sned1 (R&D systems, 9335-SN) for 180 min at 37°C. Fibronectin (5 µg/mL; Millipore,  
361 #FC010) was used as a positive control. The adsorbed protein was immobilized with 0.5% (v/v)  
362 glutaraldehyde for 15 min at room temperature (RT). To prevent cell adhesion to plastic, wells

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363 were blocked using 200  $\mu$ L of 10 mg/mL heat-denatured bovine albumin serum (BSA; Sigma,  
364 #A9576). Uncoated wells blocked with BSA (10 mg/mL) alone were used as a negative control.

365

#### 366 *Cell seeding and crystal violet assay*

367 Single-cell suspension of LM2 or O9-1 cells containing  $5 \times 10^5$  cells/mL were prepared in  
368 complete medium. 25,000 cells were added to each well and allowed to adhere for 30 min at 37°C.  
369 Loosely attached or non-adherent cells were removed by gently washing the wells with 100  $\mu$ L of  
370 D-PBS<sup>++</sup> thrice and fixed using 100  $\mu$ L of 5% (v/v) glutaraldehyde for 30 minutes at RT. Cells  
371 were stained with 100  $\mu$ L of 0.1% (w/v) crystal violet in 200 mM 2-(N-morpholino)ethanesulfonic  
372 acid (MES), pH 6.0 for 60 min at RT. After washing the excess of unbound crystal violet, the dye  
373 was solubilized in 10% (v/v) acetic acid. Absorbance values were measured at  $\lambda = 570$  nm using  
374 a Bio-Tek Synergy HT microplate reader. Cell adhesion was determined by interpolating the  
375 absorbance values from a standard curve that was generated by seeding cells at several dilutions  
376 (10%-100%) from the single cell suspension on poly-L-lysine (0.01% w/v; Sigma, P4707) coated  
377 wells and fixed directly by adding 5% (v/v) glutaraldehyde.

378 Integrin-blocking experiments were performed by seeding cells on a SNED1 substrate (10  $\mu$ g/mL)  
379 in presence of a cyclic RGDfV peptide (cRGDfV; Sigma, #SCP0111) at concentrations ranging  
380 between 1.25  $\mu$ M and 10  $\mu$ M or in presence of 10  $\mu$ g/mL of anti- $\beta$ 1, anti- $\alpha$ 5, anti- $\alpha$ 4, or anti- $\alpha$ v $\beta$ 3  
381 integrin-blocking antibodies (see Table S2 for detailed description of all antibodies used in this  
382 study).

383

#### 384 **Immunoblotting**

385 LM2 and O9-1 cells were cultured for three days in complete medium and lysed in 3x Laemmli  
386 buffer (0.1875 M Tris-HCl, 6% SDS, 30% glycerol) containing 100 mM dithiothreitol. Cell lysates  
387 were passed through a 26<sup>1/2</sup>-gauge needle to ensure complete cell lysis, and samples were heated  
388 at 95°C for 10 min. Lysates were resolved by gel electrophoresis on polyacrylamide gels at  
389 constant current (20 mA for stacking, 25 mA for resolving). Proteins were transferred onto  
390 nitrocellulose membranes at constant voltage (100 V) for 180 min at 4°C. Membranes were  
391 incubated in 5% (w/v) non-fat milk prepared in 1X PBS + 0.1% Tween-20 (PBST) for 60 min at  
392 room temperature to prevent non-specific antibody binding and then incubated in the presence of  
393 primary anti- $\beta$ 1 integrin, anti- $\alpha$ 5 integrin, anti- $\alpha$ V integrin, anti- $\beta$ 3 integrin or anti- $\alpha$ 4 integrin

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394 antibodies (see Table S2 for details) in 5% (w/v) non-fat milk in PBST overnight at 4°C.  
395 Membranes were washed and incubated with horseradish peroxidase (HRP)-conjugated secondary  
396 antibodies for 60 min at RT. Immunoreactive bands were detected using chemiluminescence  
397 (Thermo Scientific, #E32109) and imaged with a ChemiDoc MP™ imaging system (Bio-Rad).

398

### 399 **Data analysis and statistics**

400 All experiments were performed with at least three technical replicates (n) and, unless noted  
401 otherwise, repeated independently three times (N; biological replicates). Data is represented as a  
402 mean±standard deviation from three biological replicates. Unpaired Student's two-tailed *t*-test  
403 with Welch's correction or Welch and Brown-Forsythe one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's T3  
404 correction for multiple comparisons was performed to measure statistical significance. Plots were  
405 generated using PRISM (GraphPad).

406

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412

413

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415 The Naba laboratory holds a sponsored research agreement with Boehringer-Ingelheim for work  
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418

419

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427

428

429 **DATA AVAILABILITY**

430 All relevant data can be found within the article and its supplementary information. Research  
431 materials are available upon request to Dr. Naba.



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564 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

565

566 **Figure 1. SNED1 promotes breast cancer and neural crest cell adhesion**

567 (A) Adhesion of MDA-MB-231 ‘LM2’ breast cancer cells to purified human SNED1 is  
568 concentration-dependent.

569 (B) Adhesion of O9-1 mouse neural crest cells to purified murine Sned1 is concentration  
570 dependent. Data is represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from three biological experiments.

571

572 **Figure 2. The N-terminal region of SNED1 mediates cell adhesion**

573 (A) Schematic showing FLAG-tagged full-length SNED1 and the different truncated forms of  
574 SNED1 used in this study: SNED1<sup>1-751</sup> encompasses the N-terminal region until the sushi domain;  
575 SNED1<sup>1-530</sup> encompasses the N-terminal region until the follistatin domain; SNED1<sup>1-260</sup>  
576 encompasses the N-terminal region until the NIDO domain.

577 (B) Coomassie-stained gel showing the purity of purified full-length and truncated forms of  
578 SNED1.

579 (C-D) Adhesion of MDA-MB-231 ‘LM2’ breast cancer cells (C) and O9-1 neural crest cells (D)  
580 to full-length and truncated forms of SNED1. Data is represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from at least two  
581 biological experiments. Welch and Brown-Forsythe one-way ANOVA with Dunnett’s T3  
582 correction for multiple comparisons was performed to determine statistical significance. ns: non-  
583 significant, \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

584

585 **Figure 3. The RGD motif in SNED1 is required to mediate cell adhesion**

586 (A) Schematic of SNED1 showing the two putative integrin-binding motifs in SNED1 (<sup>38</sup>RGD and  
587 <sup>310</sup>LDV) and the point mutations introduced to disrupt their integrin-binding activity  
588 (<sup>38</sup>RGD>RGE, <sup>310</sup>LDV>LAV).

589 (B, C) Adhesion of MDA-MB-231 ‘LM2’ breast cancer cells (B) and O9-1 mouse neural crest  
590 cells (C) to wild type or integrin-binding mutants (RGE, LAV or RGE/LAV) of SNED1. Data is  
591 represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from three biological experiments. Welch and Brown-Forsythe one-  
592 way ANOVA with Dunnett’s T3 correction for multiple comparisons was performed to determine  
593 statistical significance. ns: non-significant, \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

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595 **Figure 4. Functional blocking of integrins decreases cell adhesion to SNED1**

596 (A-B) Adhesion of MDA-MB-231 ‘LM2’ breast cancer cell (A) and O9-1 neural crest cells (B) to  
597 SNED1 is inhibited in presence of increasing concentrations of cRGDfV peptide. Data is  
598 represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from three biological experiments. Welch and Brown-Forsythe one-  
599 way ANOVA with Dunnett’s T3 correction for multiple comparisons was performed to determine  
600 statistical significance. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

601 (C) Schematic showing the seven integrin heterodimers previously predicted to interact with  
602 SNED1. Adapted from (Vallet et al., 2021).

603 (D) Immunoblots on total cell extract from MDA-MB-231 ‘LM2’ and O9-1 cells shows  $\beta 1$   
604 integrin,  $\alpha 5$  integrin,  $\alpha v$  integrin and  $\beta 3$  integrins expression.

605 (E) Adhesion of MDA-MB-231 ‘LM2’ breast cancer cells to SNED1 is decreased in presence of  
606 anti- $\beta 1$ , anti- $\alpha 5$  and anti- $\alpha V\beta 3$  integrin-blocking antibodies.

607 (F) Adhesion of O9-1 mouse neural crest cells to SNED1 is decreased in presence of anti- $\beta 1$  and  
608 anti- $\alpha 5$  integrin blocking antibodies. Data is represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from three biological  
609 experiments. Unpaired Student’s two-tailed t-test with Welch’s correction was performed to  
610 determine statistical significance. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

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612 **SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURE LEGENDS**

613

614 **Figure S1. Cell adhesion on human SNED1 and murine Sned1**

615 (A) Coomassie-blue-stained polyacrylamide gel showing the quality and purity of affinity-purified  
616 full-length SNED1-His.

617 (B) Murine O9-1 neural crest cells adhere to the same extent to human SNED1 and murine Sned1.

618 Data is represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from three biological experiments. Unpaired Student's two-  
619 tailed t-test with Welch's correction was performed to test statistical significance. ns: non-  
620 significant.

621 (C) Graph showing the adhesion of immortalized embryonic fibroblast cells isolated from *Sned1*  
622 knockout mice (*Sned1*<sup>KO</sup> iMEF) on increasing concentrations of Sned1.

623

624 **Figure S2. LM2 cell adhesion on equimolar concentration of full length SNED1 and**

625 **SNED1<sup>1-260</sup>**

626 Graph showing LM2 cell adhesion on 66.3  $\mu$ M of full length SNED1 and SNED1<sup>1-260</sup>.

627

628 **Figure S3. Purification of integrin-binding mutants of SNED1**

629 Coomassie-blue-stained polyacrylamide gels showing the quality and purity of affinity-purified  
630 His-tagged SNED1<sup>RGE</sup> (A), SNED1<sup>LAV</sup> (B), and SNED1<sup>RGE/LAV</sup> (C). The different bands  
631 correspond to different levels of glycosylation of the proteins, as previously shown (Vallet et al.,  
632 2021).

633

634 **Figure S4. The RGD motif in SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> is sufficient to mediate cell adhesion**

635 Adhesion of MDA-MB-231' LM2' breast cancer cells (A) and O9-1 neural crest cells (B) to the  
636 N-terminal fragment of SNED1 (SNED1<sup>1-260</sup>) is significantly decreased in presence of the integrin-  
637 binding cRGDfV peptide. Data is represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from three biological experiments.  
638 Unpaired Student's two-tailed t-test with Welch's correction was performed to determine  
639 statistical significance. \*p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01.

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642 **Figure S5. Functional blocking of integrin  $\alpha 4$  does not affect breast cancer cell adhesion on**  
643 **SNED1**

644 (A) Immunoblot on total cell extract from MDA-MB-231' LM2' and O9-1 cells showing  $\alpha 4$   
645 integrin expression.

646 (B) Adhesion of MDA-MB-231' LM2' breast cancer cells to SNED1 is not altered in presence of  
647 anti- $\alpha 4$  integrin-blocking antibody. Data is represented as mean  $\pm$  SD from three biological  
648 experiments. Unpaired Student's two-tailed t-test with Welch's correction was performed to test  
649 statistical significance. ns: non-significant.

650

651 **Figure S6. Immunoblot transparency**

652 Uncropped immunoblots for  $\beta 1$  integrin,  $\alpha 5$  integrin,  $\alpha v$  integrin,  $\beta 3$  integrin, and  $\alpha 4$  integrin.



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653 **Supplementary Table 1: List of primers**

654

Primer	Sequence	Purpose
BglII-KOZAK-ATG-SNED1Hs_F	5' TCGAAGATCTGCCACCATGCGGCACGGCGTCGC 3'	Subcloning SNED1 into retroviral pMSCV-IRES-Hygro vector
HpaI-Stop-His-SNED1Hs_R	5'GATGTTAACTTAGTGGTGATGGTGATGATGAGATTTCTCCAGTGTCTGACTCT TACT 3'	Shuttling of SNED1-His WT, RGE, LAV, or GE/LAV) into retroviral pMSCV-IRES-Hygro vector
HpaI-Stop-FLAG-NFS_R	5' CCGTAACTTACTTGTCGTCATCGTCTTTGTAGTCGCACTGGGGAGGCTCAC 3'	Subcloning SNED1 <sup>1-571</sup> into retroviral pMSCV-IRES-Hygro vector with the addition of a C-terminal FLAG tag
HpaI-Stop-FLAG-NF_R	5' CCGTAACTTACTTGTCGTCATCGTCTTTGTAGTCGACGCAGAGGTAGCTCCC 3'	Subcloning SNED1 <sup>1-530</sup> into retroviral pMSCV-IRES-Hygro vector with the addition of a C-terminal FLAG tag
SNED1_c120a_F	5' CCGAGCGCGGCGAAGCCGTCACC 3'	Introduction of the c120>a (pG40E) point mutation to generate SNED1 <sup>RGE</sup>
SNED1_c120a_R	5' GGTGACGGCTTCGCCGCGCTCGG 3'	
SNED1_a932c_F	5' GGAGGTGCCACCTGGCCGTGAACGAATGTGC 3'	Introduction of the a932>c (pD311A) point mutation to generate SNED1 <sup>LAV</sup>
SNED1_a932c_R	5' GCACATTCGTTACGGCCAGGTGGCACCTCC 3'	

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656 **Supplementary Table 2: List of antibodies used for functional blocking and immunoblotting**

657

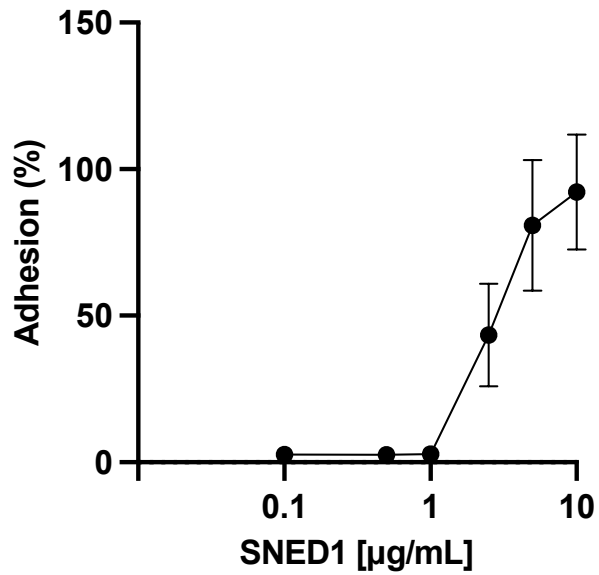
Antibody	Host species	Reactivity	Application	Concentration used ( $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	Catalog #
Anti- $\beta$ 1 Integrin	Rat	Human	Functional blocking	10	Sigma, MABT821
Anti- $\alpha$ 5 Integrin	Rat	Human	Functional blocking	10	Sigma, MABT820
Anti- $\alpha$ 4 Integrin	Mouse	Human	Functional blocking	10	Sigma, MAB1383
Anti- $\beta$ 1 Integrin	Hamster	Mouse	Functional blocking	10	BD Biosciences, BDB555002
Anti- $\alpha$ 5 Integrin	Rat	Mouse	Functional blocking	10	Biologend, 103817
Anti- $\alpha$ v $\beta$ 3 Integrin	Mouse	Human	Functional blocking	10	Sigma, MAB1976Z
Rat IgG	Rat	Isotype control	Functional blocking	10	Invitrogen, PI31903
Mouse IgG	Mouse	Isotype control	Functional blocking	10	Invitrogen, PI31933
Hamster IgM	Hamster	Isotype control	Functional blocking	10	Biologend, 401014
Anti-SNED1	Rabbit	Human	Immunoblotting	1	Naba lab
Anti-His	Mouse	-	Immunoblotting	1	Sigma, SAB2702218
Anti-FLAG	Rabbit	-	Immunoblotting	1	Sigma, F7425
Anti- $\beta$ 1 Integrin sera	Rabbit	Human, Mouse	Immunoblotting	1:1000 dilution	In-house
Anti- $\alpha$ 5 Integrin	Rabbit	Human, Mouse	Immunoblotting	0.217	Abcam, AB150361
Anti- $\alpha$ 4 Integrin	Rabbit	Human, Mouse	Immunoblotting	0.5	Invitrogen, MA5-27947
Anti- $\alpha$ v Integrin	Rabbit	Human, Mouse	Immunoblotting	1	Invitrogen, MA5-32195
Anti- $\beta$ 3 Integrin	Rabbit	Human, Mouse	Immunoblotting	1	Invitrogen, MA5-32077

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## Figure 1. SNED1 promotes breast cancer and neural crest cell adhesion

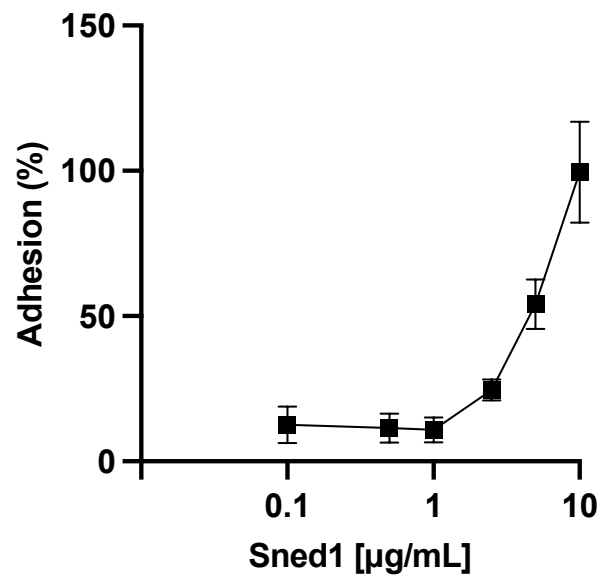
A)

MDA-MB-231 'LM2'

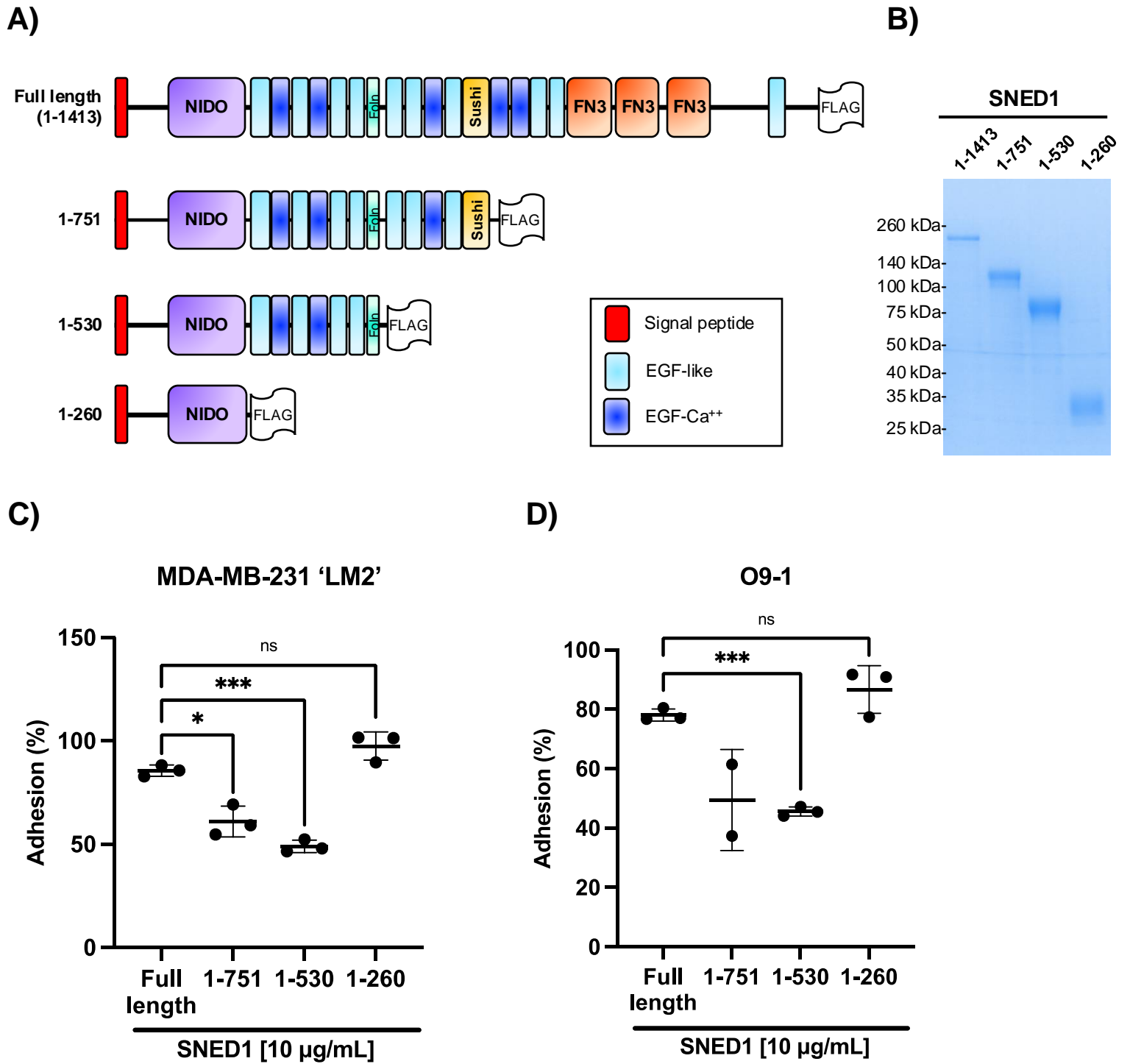


B)

O9-1

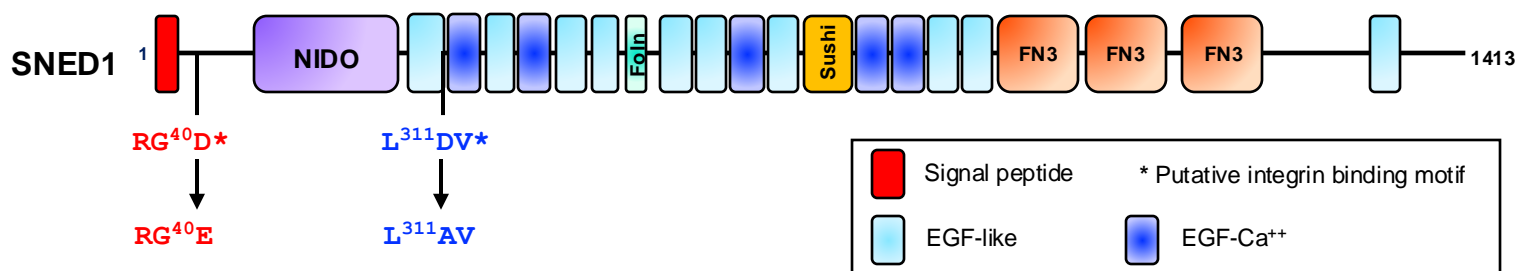


## Figure 2. The N-terminal region of SNED1 mediates cell adhesion

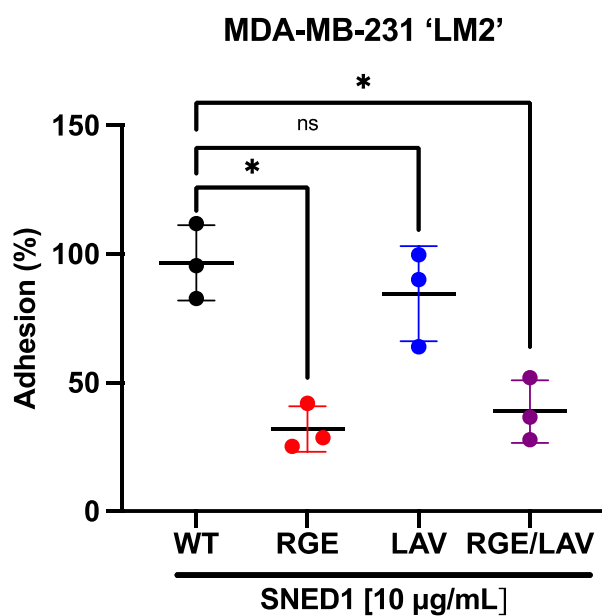


## Figure 3. The RGD motif in SNED1 is required for cell adhesion

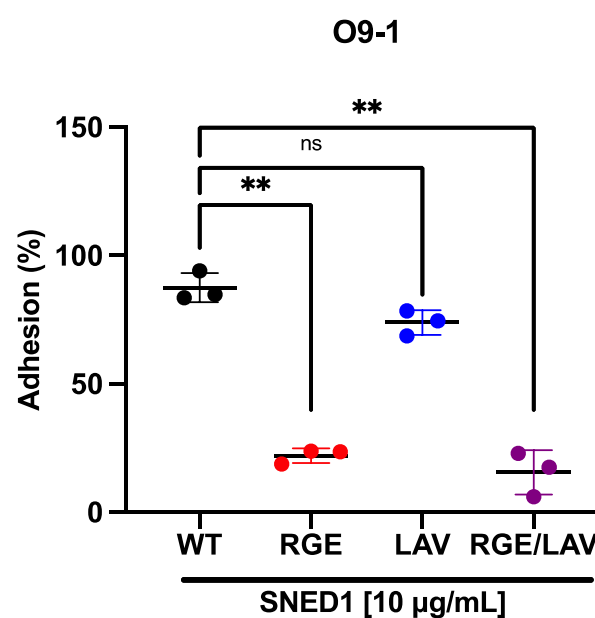
A)



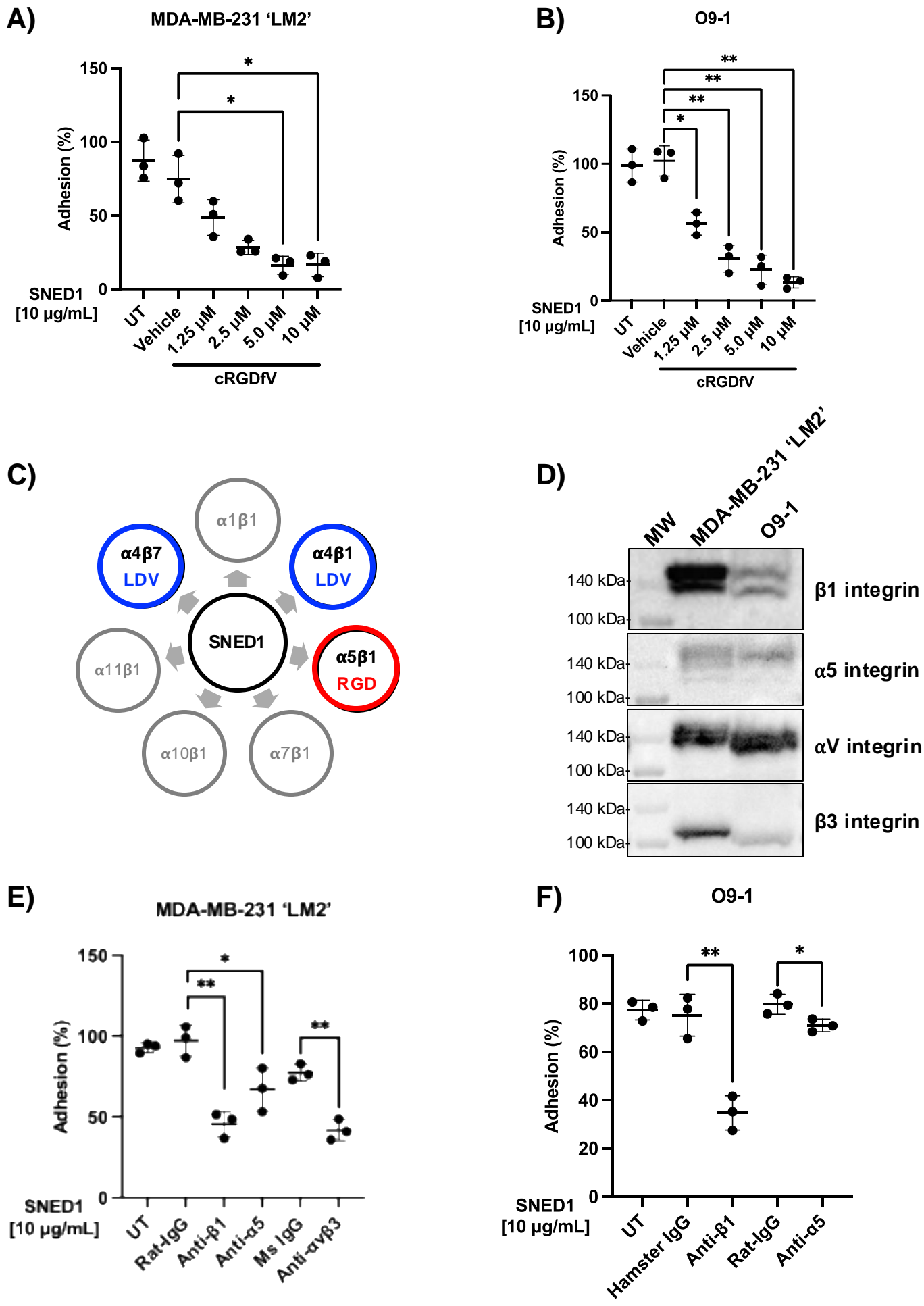
B)



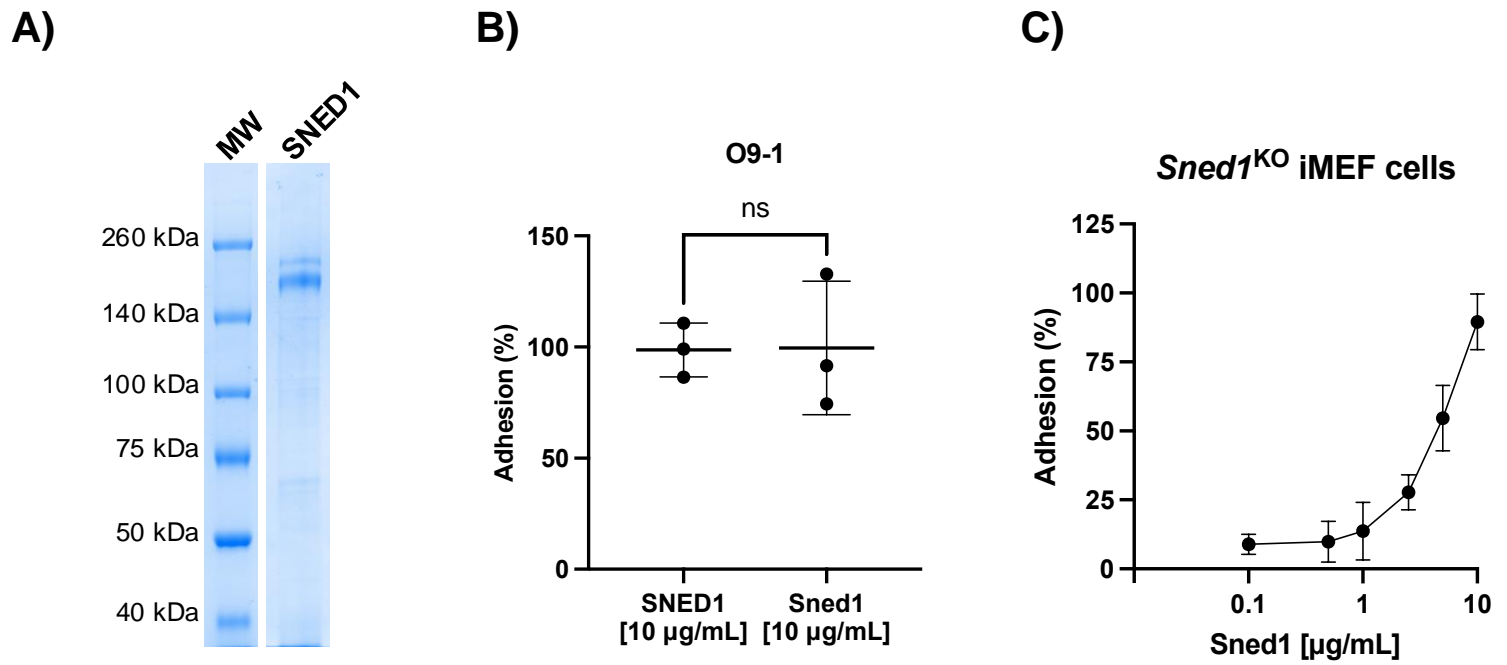
C)



## Figure 4: Functional blocking of integrins decreases cell adhesion to SNED1

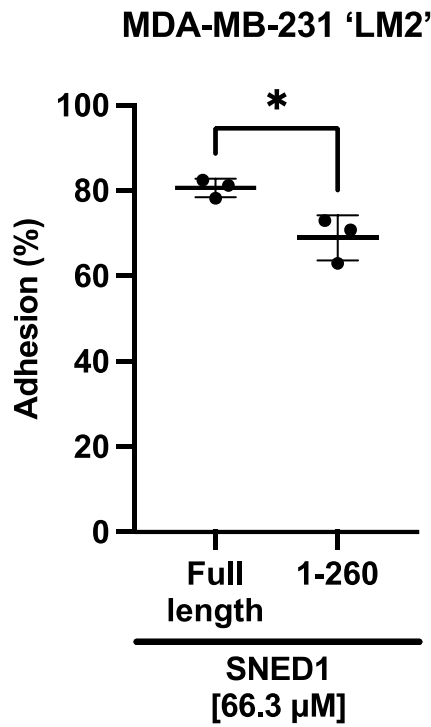


## Figure S1. Cell adhesion on human SNED1 and murine Sned1



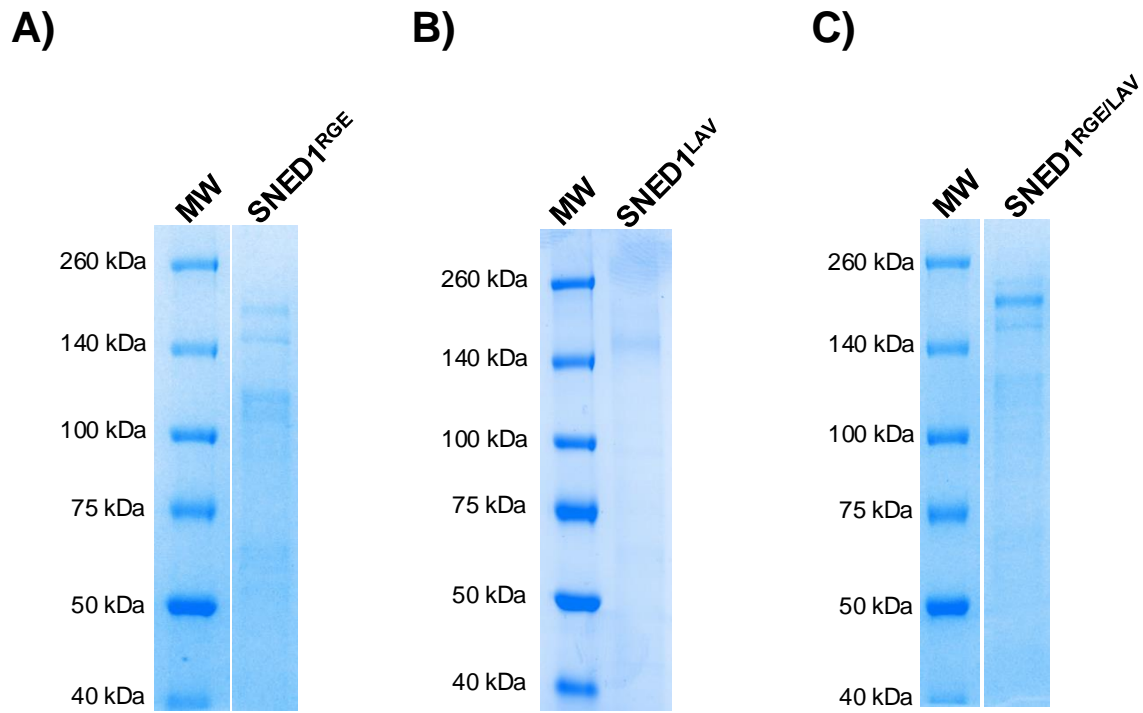
## Figure S2. LM2 cell adhesion on equal molar concentration of full length SNED1 and SNED1<sup>1-260</sup>

A)

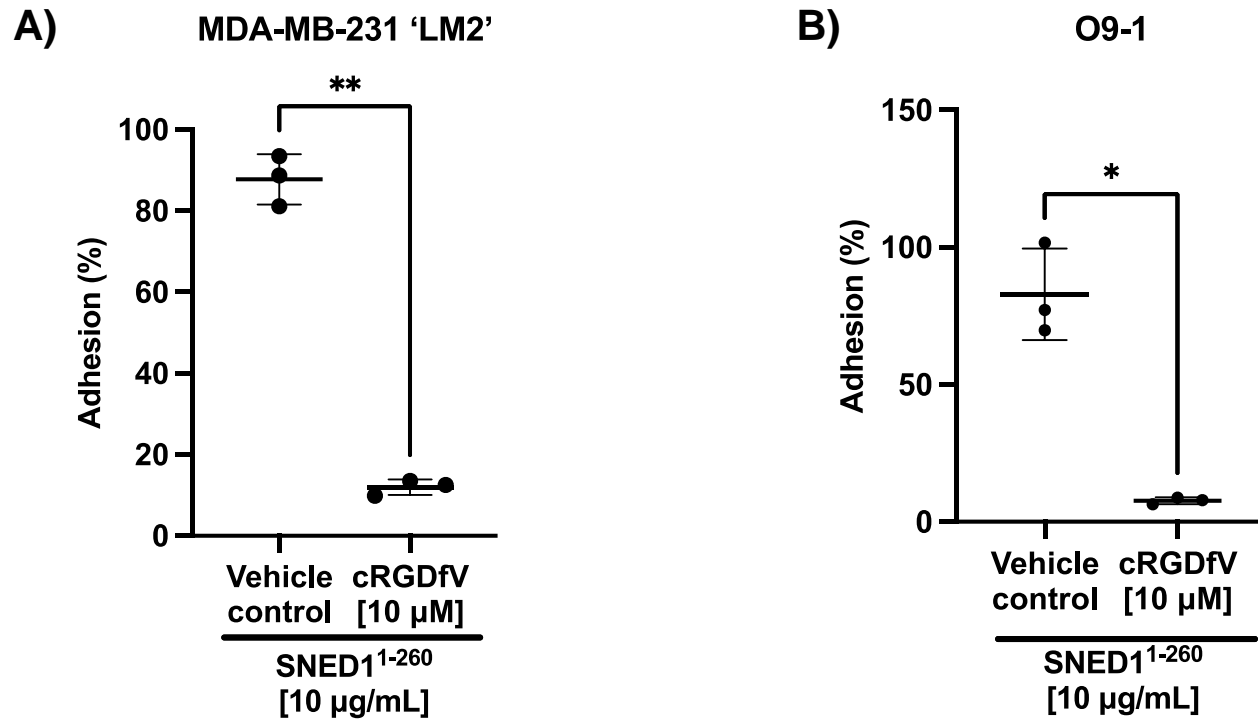




## Figure S3. Purification of integrin binding mutants of SNED1

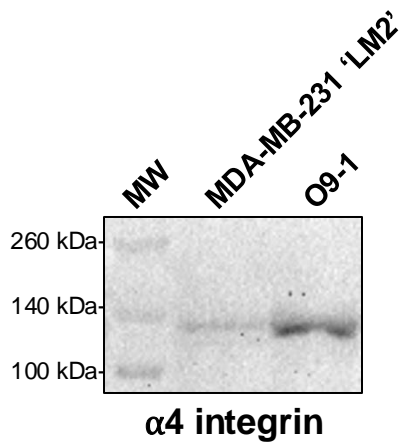


## Figure S4. The RGD motif in SNED1<sup>1-260</sup> is required for cell adhesion

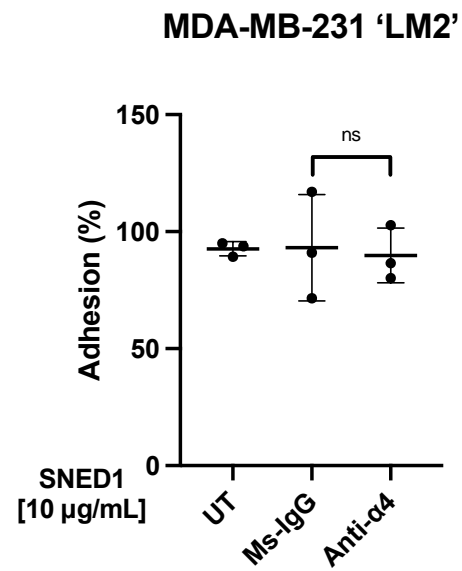


## Figure S5. Functional blocking of $\alpha 4$ integrin does **not** affect breast cancer cell adhesion to SNED1

A)



B)



## Figure S6. Immunoblot transparency

