SYNTHESIS AND CHARACTERIZATION OF CARBOXYMETHYL CHITOSAN-
FE₃O₄ NANOPARTICLES

NURUL HIDAYAH AHMAD SAFEE, MD. PAUZI ABDULLAH & MOHAMMED
ROZALI OTHMAN

School of Chemistry Science and Food Technology, Faculty of Science and Technology,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan.
Tel.: 03-89215447; Fax: 03-89215410; E-mail address: mpauzi@ukm.my

ABSTRACT
In this study, carboxymethyl chitosan bound Fe₃O₄ magnetic nanoparticles was synthesized
by the binding of carboxymethyl chitosan (CC) onto the surface of Fe₃O₄ magnetic
nanoparticles, which was developed by using coprecipitating method. The CC-Fe₃O₄
nanoparticles was characterized by transmission electron microscopy (TEM), X-ray
diffraction patterns (XRD), vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM) and Fourier Transform
Infra Red (FTIR), respectively. The CC-Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles was developed as a magnetic
nanoadsorbent for the removal of some heavy metal ions especially in drinking water. TEM
studies confirmed that the Fe₃O₄ and CC-Fe₃O₄ particles have a range particle size of 9.73-
12.30 nm and 9.70-12.50 nm, respectively. The magnetic properties of the Fe₃O₄ particles
were verified using VSM showed their saturation magnetization, remanent magnetization and
coercivity were 61.0 emu/g, 2.70 emu/g and 38.20 G, respectively. FTIR studies showed that
appearance of peaks of 1629 cm⁻¹ and 1397 cm⁻¹ were characteristic of COOM (M = metal
ions) bands, indicating in the formation of the iron carboxylate.

Keywords: Carboxymethyl chitosan, magnetic, nanoparticles, removal and heavy metal.

INTRODUCTION
Chitosan, poly(1→4)-2-amino-2-deoxy-D-glucan, is a polyaminosaccharide with
many significant biological (biodegradable, biocompatible, bioactive) and chemical properties
(polycationic, hydrogel, reactive groups such as OH and NH₂). So, chitosan and its
derivatives have been widely used in many biomedical fields (Ding et. al. 2006).

Carboxymethylated chitosan has been paid more and more attention because of its
good water solubility, and it is more convenient to be applied in medicine because it fits the
neutral environment of the human body (Zhang et. al. 2004, Chen & Park 2003 & Ramesh et. al. 2004). Nano-sized carriers could not be separated easily from the contaminated waste streams by filtration or centrifugation. Magnetic nano-carriers can be easily manipulated by an external magnetic field and hence should be suitable as the support of adsorbents (Chang & Chen 2006).

In this study, carboxymethyl chitosan bound Fe$_3$O$_4$ magnetic nanoparticles was synthesized by the binding of carboxymethyl chitosan (CMC) onto the surface of Fe$_3$O$_4$ magnetic nanoparticles. These Fe$_3$O$_4$ and carboxymethyl chitosan-Fe$_3$O$_4$ nanoparticles were characterized by TEM, XRD, VSM, FTIR and $^1$H-NMR, respectively.

**EXPERIMENTAL**

**Chemicals**
Chitosan was used as raw material. FeCl$_3$ and FeSO$_4$.7H$_2$O were purchased by BDH Chemicals Ltd. Carbodiimide were supplied by Aldrich. Monochloroacetic acids and all chemicals were analytic grade reagents.

**Preparation of Fe$_3$O$_4$ Nanoparticles**
Superparamagnetic nanosized magnetite was prepared by controlled chemical co-precipitation of Fe$^{2+}$ and Fe$^{3+}$ (1:2 ratio) from ammoniacal medium at 80° C under argon atmosphere. In a typical experiment, 1 mmol of ferrous sulphate and 2 mmol of FeCl$_3$ were dissolved in 10 ml of de-ionized and de-oxygenated water. The resulting solution was vigorously stirred and heated to 80° C under a nitrogen atmosphere. Subsequently about 5 ml of 32% ammonia solution was injected into the flask and stirring was continued for another 20 minutes to allow the growth of the nanoparticles. The solution was then cooled to room temperature and the resulting particles were subjected to magnetic decantation followed by repeated washing with distilled water. The pH of the suspension was brought to neutral by the addition of dilute HCl, and the particles were re-washed with distilled water (Mohapatra et.al. 2007).

**Preparation of Carboxymethyl Chitosan**
Carboxymethyl chitosan was prepared by the Sun et.al. 2008 method. Chitosan (10g), sodium hydroxide (10g), isopropanol (50 ml) and water (50 ml) were added into a flask to swell and alkalize at a given temperature for 1 h. The monochloroacetic acid (15 g) was dissolved in isopropanol (20 ml), added into the reaction mixture drop-wise for 30 min and reacted for 4 h at the same temperature, then stopped by adding 70% ethyl alcohol (200 ml). The solid was filtered and rinsed in 70-90% ethyl alcohol, and vacuum dried at room temperature. The product was Na salt CC (Na-CC). Na-CC (1 g) was suspended in 80% ethyl alcohol aqueous
solution (100 ml), hydrochloric acid (10 ml, 37%) was added and stirred for 30 min. The solid was filtered and rinsed in 70-90% ethyl alcohol to neutral, vacuum dried. The products were the H-form CC (H-CC).

**Preparation of Fe₃O₄ Bound Carboxymethyl Chitosan**

The binding of carboxymethyl chitosan was conducted following Chang and Chen 2005 method. First, 100 mg of Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles was added to 2 ml of buffer A (0.003 M phosphate, pH 6, 0.1 M NaCl). Then, the reaction mixture was sonicated for 10 min after adding 0.5 ml of carbodiimide solution (0.025 g ml⁻¹ in buffer A). Finally, 2.5 ml of carboxymethyl chitosan solution (50 mg ml⁻¹ in buffer A) was added and the reaction mixture was sonicated for 60 min. The chitosan-bound Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles were recovered from the reaction mixture by magnetic bar. The magnetic particles settled within 1–2 min and then were washed with water and ethanol.

**Characterization of Samples**

The determination on functional group of chitosan, carboxymethyl chitosan (CC), Fe₃O₄ and CC-Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles were measured on Fourier Transform Infra Red (FTIR). Carboxymethyl chitosan (CC) was tested by NMR 400 MHz to determine position of carboxymethylation took place. The morphology of the magnetic particles was characterized by TEM. TEM analysis was carried out by placing a drop of the ethanol-dispersed magnetic nanoparticle aqueous solution onto a copper grid and allowing the solution to evaporate in air at room temperature. Before sample withdrawal, it was sonicated for 30 min to obtain a better dispersion. XRD measurement was carried out on an X-ray diffractometer (Cu Ka, λ=0.1542 nm). Magnetic properties of Fe₃O₄ and CC-Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles was carried out by using Vibrating Sample Magnetometer.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**FTIR Analysis**

The IR spectra of chitosan, are shown in Fig. 1a shows the basic characteristic of chitosan at : 3429 cm⁻¹ (O-H stretch) and N-H stretch, 2923 cm⁻¹ (C–H stretch), 1642 cm⁻¹ N–H bend), 1148 cm⁻¹ (bridge-O-stretch), and 1078 cm⁻¹ (C-O stretch) ([Brugnerotto et al. 2001 and Shigemasa et al. 1996]). IR spectrum of sodium carboxymethyl chitosan (Na-CC) in Fig.1b shows peak at 1603 cm⁻¹ indicating of appearance of –COONa group. H-form carboxymethyl chitosan (H-CMC) spectrum in Fig. 1c shown appearance of peak at 1725 cm⁻¹ representing
the carboxylate C=O asymmetric stretching. The signal at 1394 cm\(^{-1}\) could be assigned to the symmetric stretching vibration of carboxylate C=O (El-Sherbiny 2009). Fig.1d shows the peak of 575 cm\(^{-1}\), which is typical characteristic of Fe–O group in Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\). Appearance of the peaks at 1629 cm\(^{-1}\) and 1397 cm\(^{-1}\) in Fig.1e shows that binding of carboxymethyl chitosan with Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) was occurred. These two peaks were characteristic of COOM (M= metal ion) band, indicating that the carboxyl groups in CC reacted with the surface hydroxide groups of Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) particles, resulting in the formation of the iron carboxylate (Xu et. al. 2004).

### 3.2 \(^1\)H-NMR Analysis

In the 1H NMR spectrum of carboxymethyl chitosan Fig.2 the signal at 2.00 ppm was attributed to the hydrogen atoms of the methyl from acetamide groups. The signal at 3.15 ppm corresponds to the hydrogen bonded to the carbon atom C2 of the glucosamine ring, while the signals between 3.72 and 3.91 ppm correspond to the hydrogen atoms bonded to carbons C3, C4, C5 and C6 of the glucopyranose. The signal between 4.26-4.55 ppm corresponds to the protons of 3- and 6-substituted carboxymethyl (–O–CH\(_2\)–COOD) of CM-chitosan (Ragnhild et. al. 1997). The hydrogen bonded to carbon C1 gives the signals at 4.8 ppm. Moreover, the resonance signal of the protons from N-CH\(_2\)–COOD groups could be found at 3.29 ppm. This result indicated that the amino groups were partly carboxymethylated along with hydroxyl groups (de Abreu & Campana-Filho 2009).

**TEM Analysis**

It can be seen from TEM micrograph Fig.3 that the resulting magnetic Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) nanoparticles are almost spherical or ellipsoidal. It was clear that the naked Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) Fig.3a nanoparticles had a mean diameter of 9.73-12.30 nm. After coating with carboxymethyl chitosan Fig.3b the particles remained discrete with a mean diameter of about 9.70-12.50 nm. This revealed that the coating process did not significantly result in the agglomeration and the change in size of the particles. This could be attributed to the reaction occurring only on the particle surface (Chang & Chen 2005). But there is little aggregative phenomenon in the Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) nanoparticles coated with carboxymethyl chitosan.

**Magnetic Properties**

Magnetization curve for the Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) and CC-Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) nanoparticles was shown in Fig.4. The saturated magnetization of CC-Fe\(_3\)O\(_4\) (Ms) was 43.69 emu/g when considering the carboxymethyl chitosan content. While magnetite has saturated magnetization (Ms) about 61.00 emu/g. The remanence (Mr) and coercivity (Hc) of magnetite nanoparticles were 2.70 emu/g and 38.20G, respectively, which was typical for characteristic of superparamagnetic materials.
XRD Pattern
To confirm the presence of crystalline naked Fe₃O₄ and CC-Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles, the structure of the magnetic particles was characterized by XRD and the diffractogram is shown in Fig. 5. There are six diffraction peaks for naked Fe₃O₄ and CC-Fe₃O₄: (2 2 0), (3 1 1), (4 0 0), (4 2 2), (5 1 1) and (4 4 0), which is the standard pattern for crystalline magnetite with spinel structure (Ma et al. 2005). These peaks reveal that the resulting nanoparticles were pure Fe₃O₄ with a spinel structure. Also, the binding process did not result in the phase change of Fe₃O₄.

It is explained that the binding process did not result in the phase change of Fe₃O₄.

CONCLUSION
CC bound Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles with diameter 9.70-12.5 nm was prepared in this study by the binding of carboxymethylated chitosan on Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles via carbodiimide activation. The saturated magnetization of CC-Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles could reach 43.69 emu/g. This magnetic chitosan nanoparticles have a good potential for removal of metal ions such as iron and manganese which are the problem of drinking water in Malaysia.

REFERENCES


1.0 Figure

Fig. 1 FTIR Spectrum of Chitosan (a), (Na-CC) (b), (H-CC) (c), Fe₃O₄ (d) and CC-Fe₃O₄ (e).

Fig. 2 ¹H-NMR Spectrum of carboxymethyl chitosan in D₂O.

(a) (b)

Fig. 3 TEM micrographs of the Fe₃O₄ (a) and CC-Fe₃O₄ (b) nanoparticles.

Fig. 4 Magnetization curve for the Fe₃O₄ and CC-Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles.

Fig. 5 XRD pattern of Fe₃O₄ and CC-Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles.