Evolution of Monodisperse Magnetite Hollow Spheres through Solvothermal Process for Medical Applications

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We prepared monodisperse Fe3O4 nanospheres with hollow interior structures and high saturation magnetization of 81.0 emu g-1 through a process using FeCl3•6H2O and ammonium acetate as the reactants in an ethylene glycol solution. After 2 h, only brown precipitation was observed with undefined shape. After 4 h, nano spherical particles started to appear from the aggregation of that brown precipitation. For a heating time of 10 h or longer, the obtained samples were composed of uniform nanospheres. The microsphere was then followed by a solid core evacuation, and a hollowing effect is observed for those with a longer reaction time of 12 h. After 24 h, the hollow spheres were well developed. We studied systematically the time-dependent shape evolution by SEM and TEM observations and also by XRD, FT-IR spectroscopy measurements to understand the particle formation mechanism.