

# The Molecular Basis of Surface Activity

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# Molecular Basis – Basic Structure for Sur. Act.

## Stories about surfactants (surface active agents)

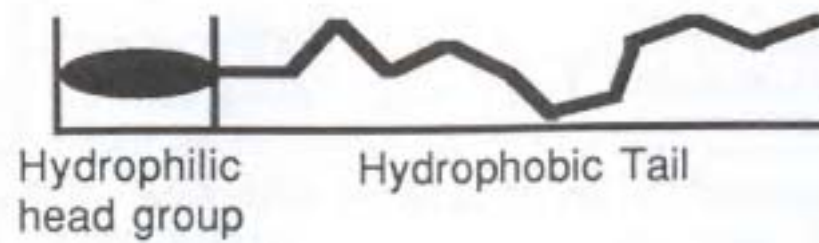


Figure 3.1. The basic molecular structure of surface-active materials.

## Molecular Basis – Basic Structure for Sur. Act.

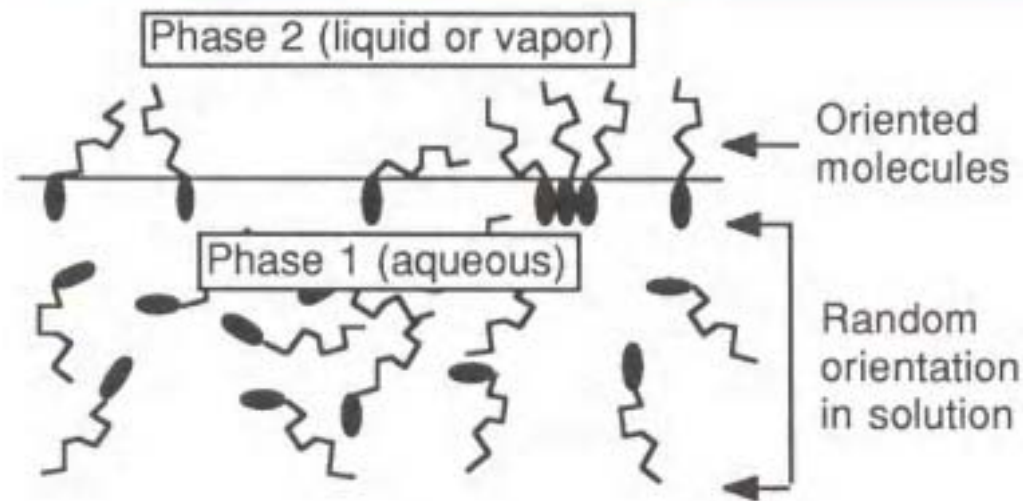
- **BASIC STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SURFACE ACTIVITY**
- **Lyophobic Group - Little attraction to the solvent**  
(Hydrophobic - water repellent)
- **Lyophilic Group - Strong attraction to the solvent**  
(Hydrophilic- fond of water)
- **Amphiphilic (“liking both”) - some affinity for two essentially immiscible phases**
- **Lyophobic group and solvent interaction**
  - unfavorable distortion of solvent structure
  - Increase in energy (due to entropy)
  - preferential adsorption at interface  
or undergo low energy system (eg. Micelle formation)

# Molecular Basis – Preferential Orientation

## Preferential Orientation

### Orientation of Surfactant Molecules

- Orientation away from the bulk solvent phase
- change in physical properties



**Figure 3.2.** Schematic illustration of the preferential orientation of surfactant molecules at interfaces.

# Molecular Basis – Solubility

## Solubility

Hydrophobic group - Hydrophilic group balance

Hydrophobic: Hydrocarbon, fluorocarbon, siloxane chain

Hydrophilic: ionic and polar group

Hydrocarbon

, , surfactant  
properties가

interfacial

## SURFACTANT STRUCTURES AND SOURCES

### Building Surfactant Molecules

### Functional group Modification

#### Alcohol

dodecane  $[\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_3]$ , insoluble in water

dodecanol  $[\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_2\text{OH}]$ , very low solubility in water (increased substantially)

3-dodecanol  $[\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{CH}(\text{OH})\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3]$ , slightly more soluble than primary alc.

: The effects of the position of substitution.

## Molecular Basis – Surfactant Struc. & Sources

### Acid

Dodecanoic acid [ $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COOH}$ ]: practically insoluble in water

sodium dodecanoate [ $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COONa}$ ] : very soluble in water,

Reasonable surfactant

sodium hexanoate [ $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_4\text{COONa}$ ] or octanoate

: lower solubility, very good surfactants

:balance between hydrophobic and hydrophilic portions

# Molecular Basis – Surfactant Struc. & Sources

## Acid - Solvent and Metal Ion Interaction

### Effects of di- and Tri-valent salts

In water

carboxylic acid soap    surfactant

low solubility

bathtub ring (scummy deposits)

In nonaqueous solvents

enhanced solubility    good surfactant function

Limited function of carboxylate soap

development of effective and versatile soaps



## Molecular Basis – Surfactant Struc. & Sources

### Sulfonated Ester Soap - Sulfate

Alcohol + sulfuric acid

Dodecane sulfuric acid ester :  $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_2\text{OSO}_3\text{H}$

: high water miscibility

Neutralized with alkali or amines : excellent surfactant  
[eg. sodium dodecylsulfate (SDS) ]

# Molecular Basis – Surfactant Struc. & Sources

## Polyether

Alcohol + ethylene oxide (OE) and base  
polyoxyethylene(POE) polyether



Solubility vs. n (# of OE group added)

n=10 : completely soluble in water, good surfactant

5 n<10 : water solubility decreased significantly

20 n : high water solubility, limited surfactant quality

n<5 : little significant water solubility

# Molecular Basis – Surfactant Struc. & Sources

## Sulfonated acid

Hydrocarbon + sulfuric acid

dodecane sulfonic acid :  $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_2\text{SO}_3\text{H}$

closely resembles the sulfuric acid ester , similar water miscibility

But, solution and surfactant properties are not identical

different applications

Neutralization yields good surfactant.

# Molecular Basis – Surfactant Struc. & Sources

## Ammonium salts

### Chlorination + triethylamine

dodecyltrimethylammonium chloride :  $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_2\text{N}^+(\text{CH}_3)_3\text{Cl}^-$

Good solubility, some surfactant properties

-not generally useful as the anionic analogs.

Charge-charge interaction -

## THE CLASSIFICATION OF SURFACTANTS

# Molecular Basis – Surfactant Struc. & Sources

Amphoteric = Zwitterionic ( , )

Combination of anionic and cationic

N,N-dimethyl-3-amminopropane-1-sulfonic acid :



Dodecane  
hydrophilic group

hydrocarbon

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# Molecular Basis – THE CLASSIFICATION OF SURFACTANTS

## BY THE APPLICATION

Emulsifiers, Foaming agents, Wetting agents, Dispersants.

1. **Anionic** ( )  
**hydrophilic group w/ negative charge**  
eg) carboxyl ( $\text{RCOO}^-$ ), Sulfonate ( $\text{RSO}_3^-$ ), or Sulfate ( $\text{ROSO}_3^-$ )
2. **Cationic** ( )  
**Hydrophile w/ positive charge**  
eg) ammonium halide ( $\text{R}_4\text{N}^+\text{Cl}^-$ )
3. **Nonionic** ( )  
**Hydrophile w/ nocharge, water soluble**  
eg) polyethylene ( $\text{---OCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O---}$ ), polyol groups
4. **Amphoteric (Zwitterionic)** ( , )  
**contains or can potentially contain a negative and positive charge**  
eg) sulfobetaines ( $\text{RN}^+(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{SO}_3^-$ )

## Molecular Basis – Surfactant Solubilizing Groups

Water - Hydrophilic group determines solubility

Organic solvents - hydrophobic group determines solubility

Hybrid type can be advantageous -Flexibility (appl. Personal care system)

Table 3.1

**Table 3.1.** The most commonly encountered hydrophilic groups in commercially available surfactants.

Sulfonate	$R-SO_3^- M^+$
Sulfate	$R-OSO_3^- M^+$
Carboxylate	$R-COO^- M^+$
Phosphate	$R-OPO_3^- M^+$
Ammonium	$R_xH_yN^+X^- (x = 1-3, y = 4-x)$
Quaternary ammonium	$R_4N^+X^-$
Betaines	$RN^+(CH_3)_2CH_2COO^-$
Sulfobetaines	$RN^+(CH_3)_2CH_2CH_2SO_3^-$
Polyoxyethylene (POE)	$R-OCH_2CH_2(OCH_2CH_2)_nOH$
Polyols	Sucrose, sorbitan, glycerol, ethylene glycol, etc
Polypeptide	$R-NH-CHR-CO-NH-CHR'-CO-...-CO_2H$
Polyglycidyl	$R-(OCH_2CH[CH_2OH]CH_2)_n-...-$ $OCH_2CH[CH_2OH]CH_2OH$

## Molecular Basis – Common Surfactant Hydrophobic Groups

**8 # of Carbon atoms 20 : inexpensive**

**Natural fatty acids :** obtnd from triglyceride esters (12C-18C)

**Paraffins:** obtnd from petroleum distillates. Sat. (10-20C) mix with many branched isomers.

**Olefins:** Oligomerization of ethylene or propene or cracking of high mt. Petroleum fraction.

**Alkyl benzenes:** Friedel-Craft b/w olefins and benzene. Akyl group (C8-12) highly branched.

**Alcohols:** catalytic reduction of ester. (C8-C18) even or odd number of carbon atoms, w/ significant secondary alc.

**Alkylphenols:** prod. By rexn of phenol w. olefins. Branched and random substitution along the ring w/ respect to the hydroxyl.

**Polyoxypropylene:** Base catalyzed oligo. Of propylene oxide. Important in the preparation of block copolymer surf. W. ethylene oxide.

**Fluorocarbon:** Electrolytic subs. Of fluorine for hydrogen. Or prepared by oligo. Of tetrafluoroethylene.

**Silicones:** Oligomers of dimethylsiloxane.



## Molecular Basis –ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SURFACTANTS

### Formulator must know followings:

1. characteristic chemical and physical properties
2. surface and interface phenomena
3. relationship b/w structural properties and pertinent interfacial phenomena
4. application restrictions (food , cosmetic,...)

Table 3.2 , table 3.

# Molecular Basis –ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SURFACTANTS

- Table 3.2

**Table 3.2.** Some of the major modern applications of surfactants.

Industrial	Consumer Goods
Agricultural crop applications	Adhesives
Building materials	Dry cleaning fluids
Cement additives	Foods and beverages
Coal fluidization	Household cleaning and laundrying
Coating and leveling additives	Pharmaceuticals
Electroplating	Photographic products
Emulsion polymerization	Soaps, shampoos, creams
Industrial cleaning	
Leather processing	
Lubrication	
Mold release agents	
Ore flotation	
Paper manufacture	
Petroleum recovery	
Surface preparations	
Textiles	
Waterproofing	

## Molecular Basis –ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SURFACTANTS

- Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3.** Typical (but not all) characteristics for surfactants which must be evaluated for various applications.

Application	Characteristics
Detergency	Low cmc, good salt and pH stability, biodegradability, good foaming properties
Emulsification	Proper HLB, environmental and biological (safety) aspects for application
Lubrication	Chemical stability, adsorption at surfaces
Mineral flotation	Proper adsorption characteristics on the ore(s) of interest, low cost
Petroleum recovery	Proper wetting of oil bearing formations, microemulsion formation and solubilization properties, ease of emulsion breaking after oil recovery
Pharmaceuticals	Biocompatibility, toxicity

# Molecular Basis –SURFACTANTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

## Effects of surfactants on ground water and waste treatment operation

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## Biodegradation of Surfactants

### 1. Primary degradation

Modification of chemical structure of material sufficient to eliminate any surface active properties

### 2. Ultimate degradation

complete removal from the environment.

Carbon dioxide, inorganic salts, or other materials ( )

## Generalization of the Biodegradation

1. **Primary Factor** : chemical structure of the hydrophobic group  
degree of branching -especially , branching at the alkyl terminus  
inhibits the biodegradation
2. **Nature of hydrophilic group**  
Minor effect on biodegradability
3. **Distance b/w hydrophilic group and alkyl terminus.**  
Longer distance      faster rate of degradation