



Polymers

Background

During fractional distillation crude oil is separated into useful parts. A petrochemical is a product of the fractional distillation process. Usually consisting of long chains, a monomer is a link in the chain. All of the monomer links connected together make a polymer chain.

Chemically bonded monomers form polymers in a process called polymerization. Polymers created from petrochemicals are synthetic or man-made polymers. We use many of these polymers, such as plastics, everyday.

Polymer One

Questions

- How do polymers behave?
- Do they have the same properties?

Materials

- Cornstarch
- Water
- Sealable plastic sandwich bags
- Measuring spoons
- Food coloring
- Paper plates

Procedure

1. Put 6 tablespoons of cornstarch in a plastic bag.
2. Add 5 drops of food coloring.
3. Add 4 tablespoons of water.
4. Close the bag and mix together by kneading.
5. If the polymer seems too runny (you cannot pick it up), add a spoonful of cornstarch to thicken. If the polymer seems too thick or crumbly (dry), add a spoonful of water to make it thinner.
6. Open the bag and pour the polymer onto the plate.
7. Use your finger to gently poke the polymer. What happens?
8. Now quickly poke the polymer. What happens?
9. Pick the polymer up. What happens?
10. Roll the polymer in a ball. What happens?

Conclusion

1. Is this polymer a liquid or a solid? Explain.