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Ultrafast selective ionic transport through heat-treated polyethylene terephthalate track membranes with sub-nanometer pores

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Abstract

12-µm-thick *polyethylene terephthalate* (PET) track membranes with sub-nanometer pores fabricated with the newly developed track-UV technique without chemical etching showed ultrahigh selective ionic transport yet low permeability. We discovered that the permeability of these track membranes could be irreversibly improved by two to three orders of magnitude via heat treatment. Meanwhile, the heat-treated track membrane maintains the high selectivity of ions. Our experimental results suggest heat treatment on the track membranes with sub-nanometer pores could provide a reliable and controllable way to increase the channel size of the nanopores of the sub-nanometer in radius, and bring the track membrane to promising applications on ion separations, water purification, diaphragm material and so on.

Key words: track membrane, high permeability, high selectivity, track-UV technique, PET membrane, ion irradiation

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