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Rapid and efficient removal of estrogenic pollutants from water by using beta- and gamma-cyclodextrin polymers

Peixiao Tang, Qiaomei Sun, Zili, Suo, Ludan Zhao, Hongqin Yang, Xinnuo Xiong, Hongyu Pu, Na Gan, and Hui Li*

School of Chemical Engineering, Sichuan University, Chengdu 610065, China.

Abstract:

The existence of estrogenic hormones in water systems has a potential adverse impact on the environment and public health. Cyclodextrin (CD) can encapsulate small molecules to form host-guest complexes with high stability; thus, it is being applied to remove pollutants in water systems. Beta-cyclodextrin (β -CD) and gamma-cyclodextrin (γ -CD) have different cavity diameters, which directly affect their inclusion ability. Therefore, it's predicted that there may be a certain difference in the adsorption performance of β -CD- and γ -CD-based polymers. In this study, mesoporous polymers of β -CD and γ -CD were prepared, and their adsorption efficiency on estrogen pollutants, including 17 β -estradiol (E2), 17 α -ethinylestradiol (EE2), and bisphenol A (BPA), at environmentally relevant concentrations was investigated. The results indicated that both β -CD polymer (β -CDP) and γ -CD polymer (γ -CDP) exhibited rapid and efficient removal of the three estrogens and maintained high performance after regeneration. The adsorption processes fitted well with the pseudo-second-order and Langmuir isothermal adsorption model. γ -CDP exhibited better adsorption ability on E2 and EE2 than β -CDP. These phenomena were further clarified by the inclusion mechanism between CDs and estrogens gained from Job's plot and molecular docking. β -CD can only embed one estrogen molecule in its cavity, whereas γ -CD can embed two E2 or EE2 molecules due to its larger cavity. In addition, both β -CDP and γ -CDP can efficiently remove other estrogens such as estrone, estriol, diethylstilbestrol, octyl phenol, and nonylphenol. This study showed the potential of CD polymers, especially γ -CDP, in rapidly and efficiently removing estrogen pollutants.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: lihuilab@sina.com (Hui Li); Tel.: +86 028 85405149; Fax: +86 028 85401207.

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