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Your universally applicable Polymer

CLARIANT TRADE NAMES		<i>Physical forms of PEGs</i>	19	<i>Cosmetic industry</i>	26
<i>Clariant trade names for Polyethylene glycols/Macrogols/PEGs</i>	5	<i>Pyrolysis</i>	19	<i>Creams, lotions, facial lotions</i>	27
<i>Available types</i>	5	<i>Molar mass distribution of PEGs</i>	20	<i>Deodorant, perfume and insect-repellent sticks</i>	27
MANUFACTURE AND NOMENCLATURE		PHYSIOLOGICAL PROPERTIES		<i>Lipsticks</i>	27
<i>Manufacture</i>	6	<i>Animal toxicity</i>	22	<i>Toothpastes</i>	27
<i>Modification</i>	6	<i>Human toxicity</i>	22	<i>Soaps, hand-cleansing pastes and detergent sticks</i>	27
<i>Nomenclature</i>	6	ANALYSIS		<i>Hair care products, facial</i>	27
TECHNICAL DATA		<i>Qualitative detection with tetraiodobismuthic acid</i>	23	<i>Masks and depilatories</i>	27
<i>Technical data</i>	8	<i>Thin-layer chromatography</i>	23	<i>Hair styling</i>	27
PROPERTIES		<i>Methods of determination Involving complex formation</i>	23	<i>Bath oils and foam baths</i>	27
<i>Properties</i>	10	<i>Methods of determination Involving ether cleavage</i>	23	<i>Denture cleaners, bath cubes, effervescent tablets</i>	27
<i>Surface tension</i>	10	APPLICATIONS OF PEGs		<i>Food industry</i>	27
<i>Latent heat of fusion</i>	10	<i>Pharmaceutical industry</i>	24	SAFETY AND HANDLING	
<i>Specific heat</i>	10	<i>PEGs as excipients</i>	24	<i>Ecological data</i>	30
<i>Thermal conductivity</i>	10	<i>Liquids</i>	24	<i>Waste disposal</i>	30
<i>Coefficient of thermal expansion</i>	10	<i>Ointment bases</i>	24	STORAGE	
<i>Viscosity</i>	10	<i>Suppositories</i>	24	<i>Recommended conditions</i>	31
<i>Solubility on water</i>	14	<i>Tablets</i>	25	APPENDIX	
<i>Water content</i>	14	<i>PEGs as actives</i>	25	<i>Bibliography</i>	32
<i>Non-volatility and thermal stability</i>	15	<i>Ophthalmic demulcents</i>	25	<i>Index</i>	34
<i>Hygroscopicity</i>	16	<i>Laxatives</i>	25		
<i>Solubility properties</i>	17	<i>Organ preservations</i>	26		
<i>Compatibility</i>	17	<i>PEGs as reaction compounds for drug delivery systems</i>	26		
<i>Substances soluble in PEGs</i>	17	<i>Incompatibility</i>	26		
<i>Solubility of various substances in PEG 400 at room temperature</i>	18				



This brochure provides comprehensive information on polyethylene glycols (PEGs), their chemical and physical properties and the most important fields of application in the pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food industry.

Clariant trade names

CLARIANT TRADE NAMES FOR POLYETHYLENE GLYCOL / MACROGOLS / PEGs

Clariant uses the name Polyglykol as a trade name for polyethylene glycols.

After the word Polyglykol the number indicates the mean molecular weight of the polymer.

For liquid / waxy Polyglykols no additional descriptor is used, with the exception of Polyglykol 200 USP. The capital letters USP indicate that this special grade of Polyglykol 200 complies with the requirements for mono and diethylene glycol of the USP/NF.

For solid types the capital letter following the molecular weight number indicates the physical form of the material:

S (German Schuppen = flakes),

P (powder, milled), PF (powder fine, milled) or

PS (powder, spray dried).

Bulk quantities of melt can be delivered in heated road tankers under the code FL.

AVAILABLE TYPES

Polyglykol 200 USP
Polyglykol 300
Polyglykol 400
Polyglykol 600
Polyglykol 800
Polyglykol 1000
Polyglykol 1500 S / FL
Polyglykol 2000 S
Polyglykol 3000 S / P
Polyglykol 3350 S / P / PS
Polyglykol 4000 S / P / PF / PS
Polyglykol 6000 S / P / PF
Polyglykol 8000 S / P / PF
Polyglykol 10000 S / P
Polyglykol 12000 S / P
Polyglykol 20000 S / P
Polyglykol 35000 S
Lanogen® 1500

Lanogen® 1500 is an ointment base according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia, containing Polyglykol 300 and 1500 in a ratio of 1:1.

® = registered trademark of Clariant

Manufacture and Nomenclature

MANUFACTURE

Polyethylene glycols, also called macrogols in the European pharmaceutical industry, are manufactured by polymerization of ethylene oxide (EO) with either water, mono ethylene glycol or diethylene glycol as starting material, under alkaline catalysis^(1, 2). After the desired molecular weight is reached (usually checked by viscosity measurements as in-process control) the reaction is terminated by neutralizing the catalyst with acid. Normally lactic acid is used, but also acetic acid or others can also be used.

The result is a very simple chemical structure: $\text{HO}-(\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{O})_n-\text{H}$, where (n) is the number of EO-units.

MODIFICATION

X-ray structural analysis has shown that PEG chain may possess two different types of microstructure. The shorter chains, with a degree of polymerization not exceeding 10, are said to have a zigzag structure, while longer chains form a so-called meandering structure. The oxygen forms ether bridges at regular intervals in both types of chain which are responsible for many of the properties of PEGs⁽³⁻⁵⁾.

An even more accurate examination of the structure^(6,7) shows that PEG chain in the crystalline state is spiral shaped. The microstructure of PEG molecular chains is important in relation to the behaviour of PEGs towards various solvents and also to the formation of addition compounds which link with the "residual valencies" of the ether oxygen atoms.

NOMENCLATURE

Although technically these products should be called polyethylene oxides, for products with mean molecular weights of 200 to 35000, the term polyethylene glycols is normally used to indicate the significant influence of the hydroxyl end groups on the chemical and physical properties of these molecules. Only products made by polymerization of ethylene oxide in solvents, with molecular weights up to several millions, are called polyethylene oxides.

As an abbreviation for polyglycols, the term "PEG" is used, in combination with a numerical value. Within the pharmaceutical industry, the number indicates the mean molecular weight, whereas in the cosmetic industry the number refers to the number (n) of EO-units in the molecule⁽⁸⁾. Since the molecular weight of ethylene oxide is 44, the average molecular weight values of PEGs are given as round values of $n \times 44$.

Unfortunately, the various pharmacopoeias use different nomenclature for some PEG molecular weights. The table lists in addition to the European, US and Japanese monographs, also the nomenclature of the British Pharmacopoeia II from 1993. Even though this monograph is no longer valid, the nomenclature is still often used today.

DIFFERENT NOMENCLATURES FOR PEGs					
MEAN MOLECULAR WEIGHT	CLARIANT POLYGLYKOL	NOMENCLATURE Ph. EUR. 2007 (9)	NOMENCLATURE USP29-NF24 (10)	NOMENCLATURE JAPANESE Ph. 15	NOMENCLATURE BRITISH Ph. II (12)
1500	1500	1500	1450 / 1500	—	1540
3000	3000	3000	3000	4000	—
3350	3350	3350	3350	4000	4000
4000	4000	4000	4000	—	—
6000	6000	6000	6000	—	—
8000	8000	8000	8000	6000	—
ointment base 300:1500=1:1	Lanogen® 1500	—	—	1500	—

It is hoped that through the international harmonization of the pharmacopoeias ⁽¹³⁾ a unique and less confusing nomenclature will be developed.

Technical Data*

POLYGLYKOL	INCI PEG -	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION AT 20°C	HAZEN COLOUR 25% A.I. IN WATER (EN 1557)	MOLAR COLOUR MASS g / mol	OH VALUE MG KOH / G (DIN 55240)	SOLIDIFICATION POINT (Ph.Eur.) °C	VISCOSITY AT 20°C M PA · S (DIN 51757)
200 USP	4	clear, viscous,	max. 30	190 - 210	534 - 591	abt. - 50	60 - 67
300	6	hygroscopic	max. 15	285 - 315	356 - 394	-15 - -10	88 - 96
400	8	liquids	max. 15	380 - 420	267 - 295	4 - 8	112 - 124
600	12	liquid or wax	max. 15	570 - 630	178 - 197	17 - 22	50% 17 - 18
800	16	soft	max. 15	760 - 840	134 - 148	28 - 33	50% 21 - 23
1000	20	wax	max. 30	950 - 1050	107 - 118	35 - 40	50% 24 - 28
1500	32	white waxy	max. 30	1400 - 1600	70 - 80	44 - 48	50% 36 - 42
2000	40	flakes	max. 30	1800 - 220	51 - 62	48 - 52	50% 50 - 58
3000	60		max. 30	2700 - 3300	34 - 42	52 - 56	50% 75 - 95
3350	75	white waxy	max. 30	3050 - 3685	30 - 37	53 - 57	50% 85 - 105
4000	90	flakes	max. 30	3700 - 4400	25 - 30	53 - 58	50% 114-142
6000	150	or powder	max. 30	5600 - 6600	17 - 20	55 - 60	50% 210 - 262
8000	180		max. 30	7300 - 9000	12 - 16	55 - 61	50% 290 - 450
10000	220	pale, hard	max. 30	9000 - 11250	10 - 12	55 - 62	50% 550 - 750
12000	240	waxy flakes	max. 30	10500 - 15000	7.5 - 11.0	> 57	50% 1100 - 1400
20000	new 450 (old 350)	or powder	max. 30	16000 - 25000	4,5 - 7,0	57 - 64	50% 2700 - 3500
35000	800	pale, hard waxy flakes	max. 30	approx. 35000	—	> 57	50% 11000 - 14000
Lanogen® 1500	6 (and) 32	PEG ointment mixture 1500:300= 1:1	max. 15	470 - 530	212 - 239	37 - 41	50% 18 - 25

	VISCOSITY AT 98.8°C = 270°F mm ² / s (USP-NF)	pH 5% AQUEOUS SOLUTION (DIN EN 1262)	STABILIZER (BHA) ppm	WATER CONTENT % m/m (DIN 51777)	DENSITY AT 20°C g/cm ³ (± 0.001) (DIN 51757)	VAPOUR PRESSURE AT 20°C hPa	SOLUBILITY IN WATER AT 20°C % m / m
	3.9 - 4.8	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	1.124	< 0.1	∞
	5.4 - 6.4	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	1.125	< 0.1	∞
	6.8 - 8.0	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	1.126	< 0.01	∞
	9.9 - 11.3	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	1.126	< 0.01	∞
	12.5 - 14.5	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.126	< 0.001	80
	16-19	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.126	< 0.001	75
	26 - 32	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	62
	38 - 49	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	58
	67 - 93	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	56
	76 - 110	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	56
	110 - 158	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	55
	250 - 390	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	54
	470 - 900	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	54
	—	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	53
	—	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	53
	—	4.5 - 7.5	100 - 200	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	52
	—	5 - 7	100 - 200	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	50
	—	5 - 7	—	max. 0.5	solidified melt 1.20	< 0.001	> 70

* No delivery specification

Properties

PROPERTIES

Polyethylene glycols with a mean molecular weight up to 400 are non-volatile liquids at room temperature. PEG 600 shows a melting range of about 17 to 22°C, so it may be liquid at room temperature but pasty at lower ambient temperatures, while PEGs with 800 to 2000 mean molecular weight are pasty materials with a low melting range. Above a molecular weight of 3000, the polyethylene glycols are solids and are available not only in flaked form but also as powder. Polyglykols up to a molecular weight of 35000 are commercially available. The hardness of Polyglykols increases with increasing molecular weight, however the melting range goes up to a maximum value of about 60°C.

The most important property of all PEGs is their solubility in water, making them ideally suited for use in countless different applications. Liquid PEGs up to PEG 600 are miscible with water in any ratio. But even solid PEG grades have excellent solubility in water. Although it falls slightly with increasing molar mass, even 50% (w / w) of a PEG 35000 can be dissolved. The solubility and viscosity of the solutions is not affected by the presence of electrolytes, since PEGs are nonionic substances. PEGs are quite soluble in hard water or in other aqueous solutions of various salts.

Some physical and chemical properties are described in more detail in the following chapters.

SURFACE TENSION

The surface tension of the liquid PEGs 200 to 600 is about 47 mN/m at room temperature. There is only a slight difference in the surface tension of liquid and solid PEGs in aqueous solutions; a 10% solution of PEG 400 has a value of 64 mN/m, while a 10% solution of PEG 4000 has a value of about 60 mN/m at 20°C.

PEGs possess no characteristic surface-active properties and can therefore not be included in the class surfactants. Nevertheless, they frequently prove to be useful dispersing agents or solubilizers. It is not possible to give an HLB value for PEGs.

LATENT HEAT OF FUSION

The latent heat of fusion of the solid PEGs is 167-196 kJ/kg, depending to some extent on the degree of crystallinity.

SPECIFIC HEAT

The specific heat (heat capacity) of the liquid PEGs at room temperature is about 2.1 kJ/kg K. With rising temperature it increases steadily and at 120°C reaches about 2.5 kJ/kg K.

THERMAL CONDUCTIVITY

For liquid PEG grades the thermal conductivity at room temperature is 0.23 W/m K. (Water: 0.6 W/m K).

COEFFICIENT OF THERMAL EXPANSION

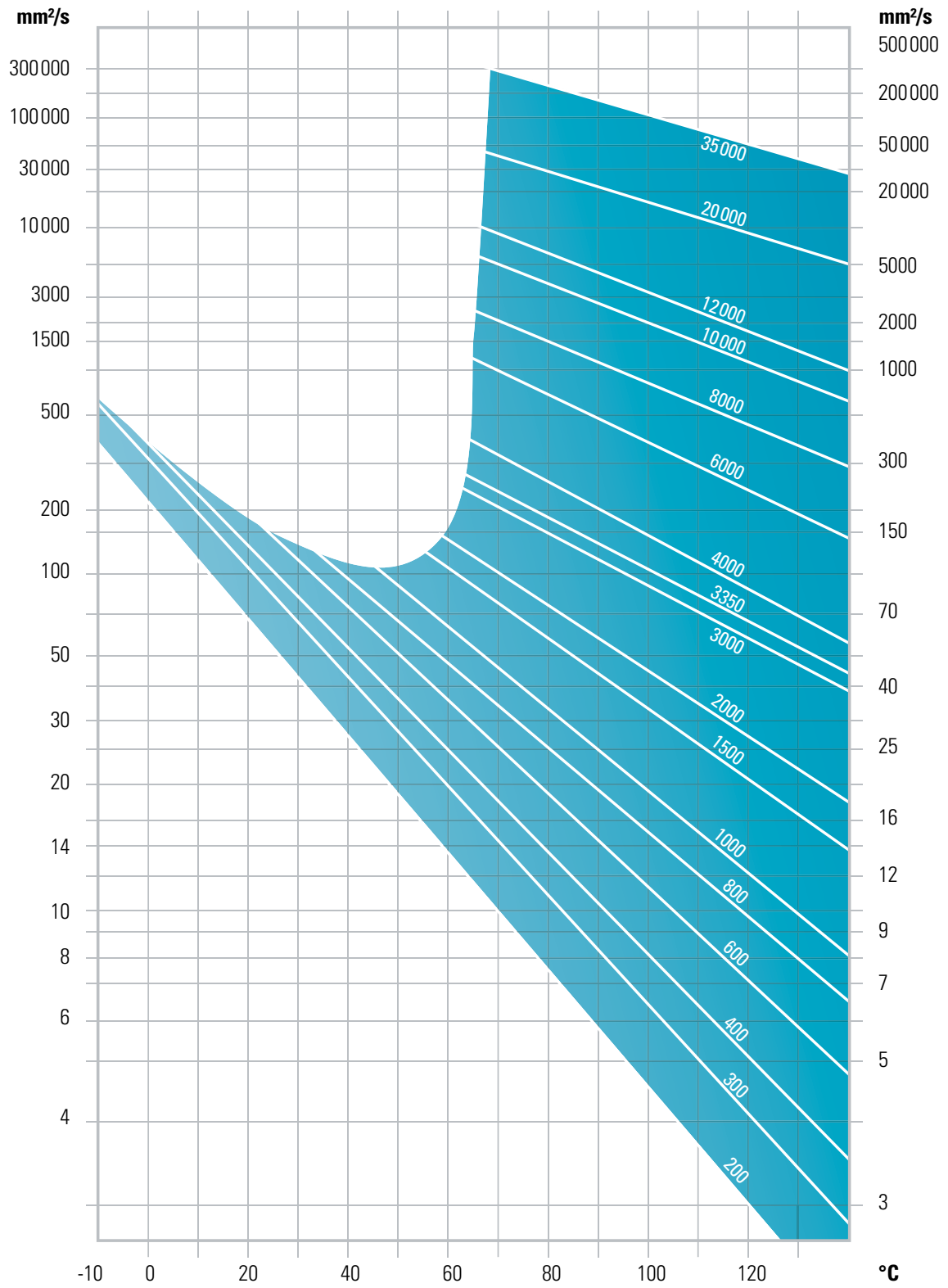
The coefficient of volumetric thermal expansion of liquid PEGs at 20°C is about 0.00073 K⁻¹ and increases linearly up to 0.00080 K⁻¹ at 160°C.

VISCOSITY

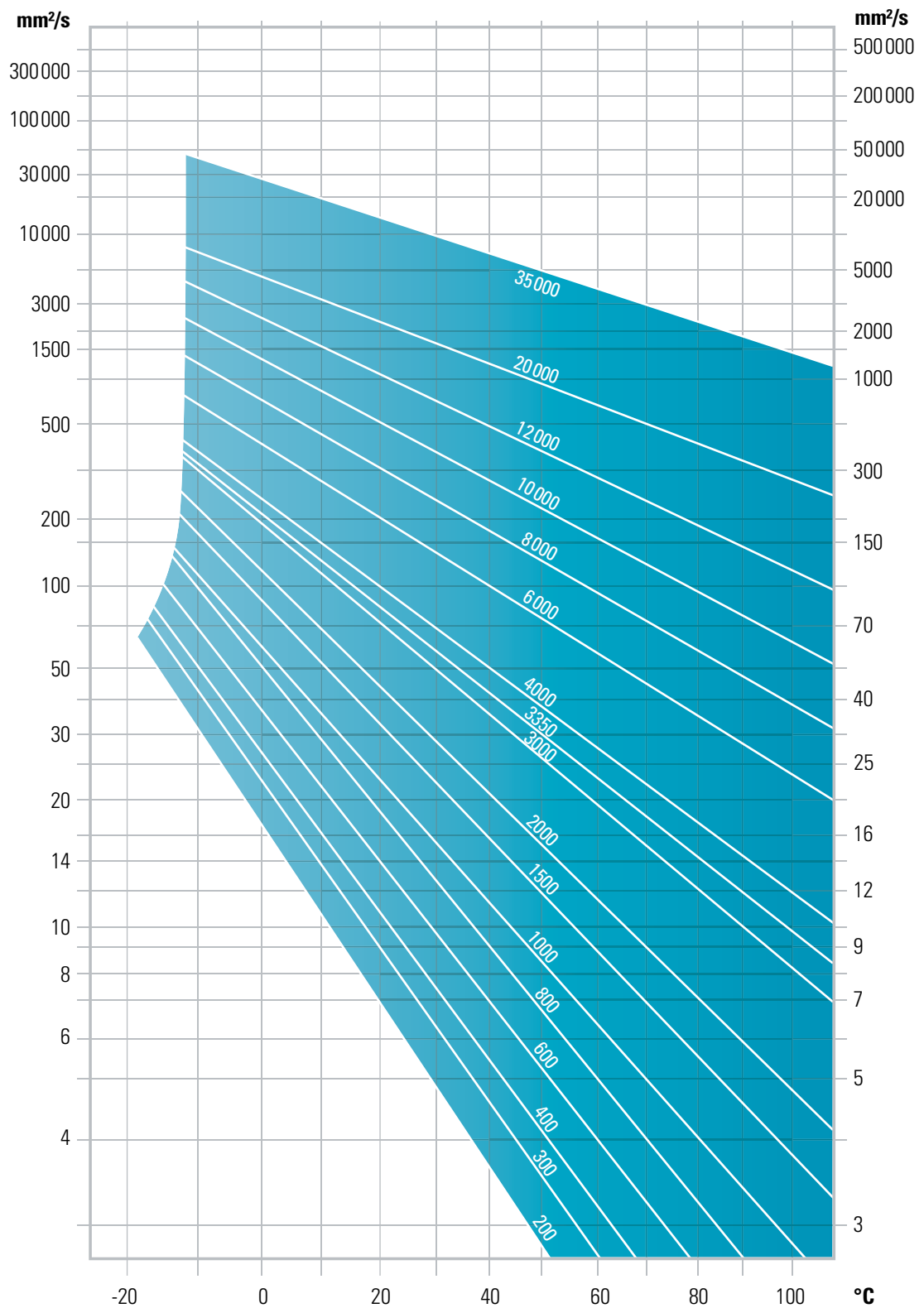
The dynamic viscosity (mPa · s) can be converted into kinematic viscosity (mm²/s) and vice versa according to the following formula, taking the density into account:

$$\text{mm}^2/\text{s} = \frac{\text{mPa} \cdot \text{s}}{\text{density}}$$

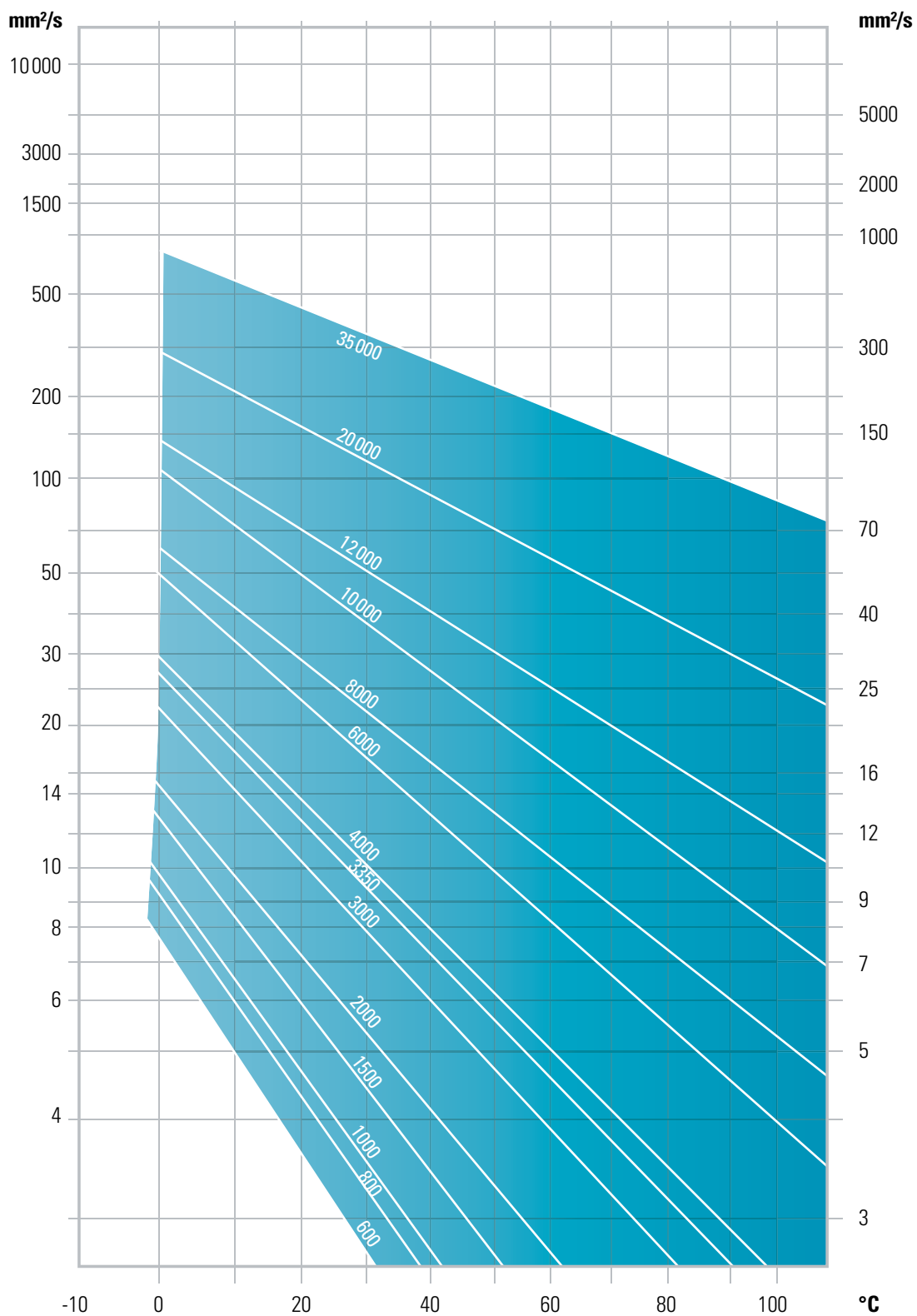
Viscosity of PEGs 200 - 35000 as a function of temperature



PEG 200 - 35000, viscosity of 50% aqueous solution as a function of temperature



PEG 600 - 35000, viscosity of 25% aqueous solution as a function of temperature



SOLUBILITY IN WATER

When liquid PEGs are mixed with water, a volume contraction takes place. When equal parts by weight PEG 400 and water are mixed together, this contraction amounts to about 2.5%.

At the same time a marked heat effect occurs. The temperature rise taking place when equal parts by weight PEG and water are mixed is about 12°C for PEG 200 and about 14°C for PEG 600.

Even solid PEG grades have excellent solubility in water. For example, 75 parts by weight

of PEG 1000 can be dissolved at room temperature in only 25 parts by weight water.

Although the solubility in water falls slightly with increasing molar mass, it does not fall below 50% even in the case of PEG 35000. The dissolving process can be greatly accelerated by heating about the melting point.

PEGs exhibit nonionic behaviour in aqueous solution. They are not sensitive to electrolytes and are therefore also compatible with hard water.

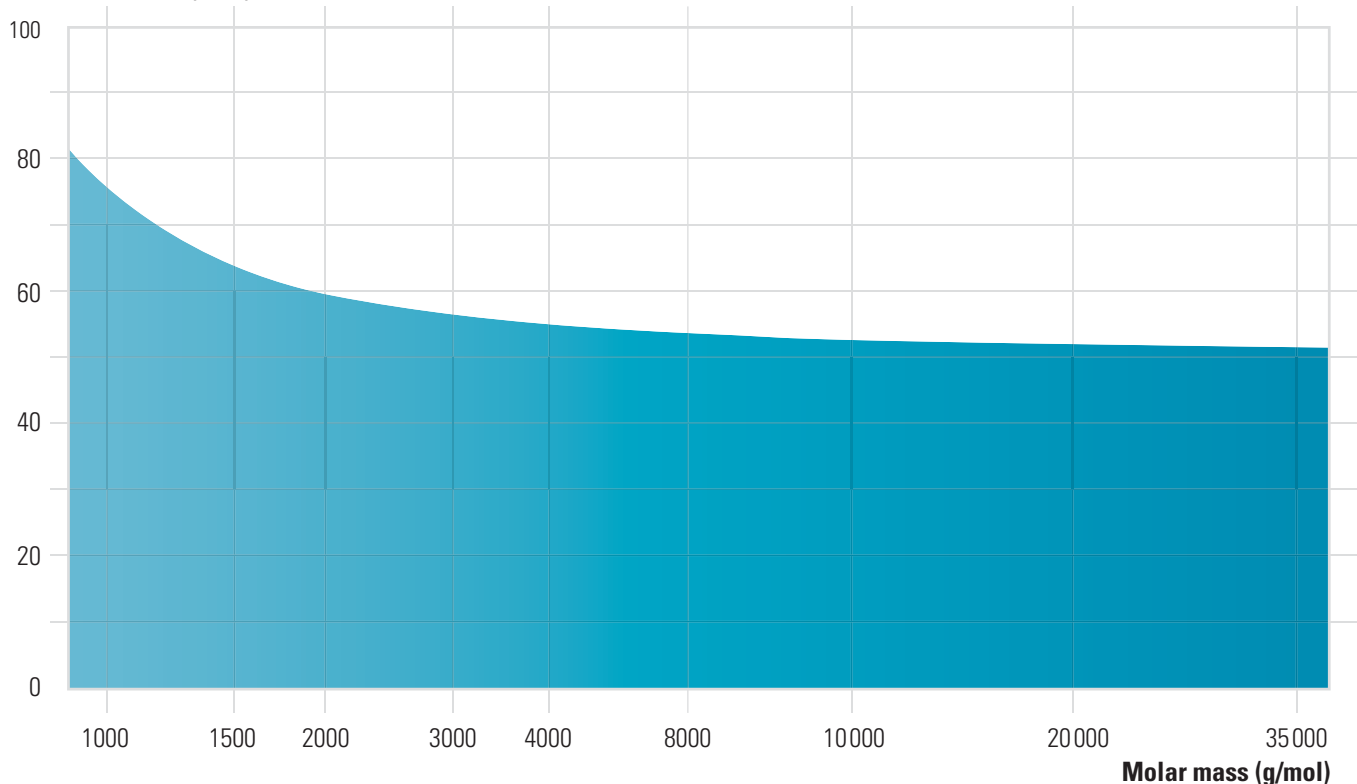
WATER CONTENT

When our PEGs are despatched, the water content is not more than 0.5 %. Some pharmacopoeias permit a maximum water content of 2%.

If necessary, the water content can be reduced to 0.1% in drying oven at 105°C; with fresh or well regenerated molecular sieves (pore size 3-4 Å) it can be reduced to 0.05%.

Solubility in water of PEG 1000 - 35000 at room temperature

dissolved PEG % (m/m)



NON-VOLATILITY AND THERMAL STABILITY

PEGs are non-volatile, a factor of considerable importance in connection with their use as plasticizers and humectants.

If a certain weight loss is established despite the non-volatility of PEGs when maintained at a constant temperature of 150°C and above (e.g. when used as heating bath liquids), this is due not to evaporation but to loss of volatile products of decomposition.

The breakdown products of PEGs may vary, depending on the ingress of air; apart from water, carbon dioxide and aldehydes, simple alcohols, acids and glycol esters are formed.

Troublesome fumes from decomposition products have not been known to have an adverse effect on health.

Since the lower PEG grades are hygroscopic, moisture may be reabsorbed in the case of fairly long down times.

At temperatures above 100°C it is essential to add a suitable antioxidant to PEG. The type and quality of antioxidant is governed by the requirements imposed on PEG. Thus, not only the temperature and dwell time but also the physiological properties of the antioxidant and its solubility or insolubility in water must be taken into consideration. Where exposure to high thermal stress is involved, up to 3% antio-

xidant should be added. The following substances have proved effective as antioxidants:

1. trimethyl dihydroquinoline polymer
2. diphenylamine derivatives
3. phenothiazine
4. phenyl- α -naphthylamine
5. 4,4'-methylene-bis-2,6-di-tert.-butylphenol
6. butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA)
7. methoxy phenole (hydroxyanisole)

As the following figure shows, oxidative decomposition can be slowed down considerably by the addition of antioxidants even at high temperatures (200°C). The bath was stabilized with 3% of one of the inhibitors numbered 1 to 4 in turn. No major differences were observed between the individual substances.

The pure thermal degradation without presence of oxygen can hardly be influenced with antioxidants.

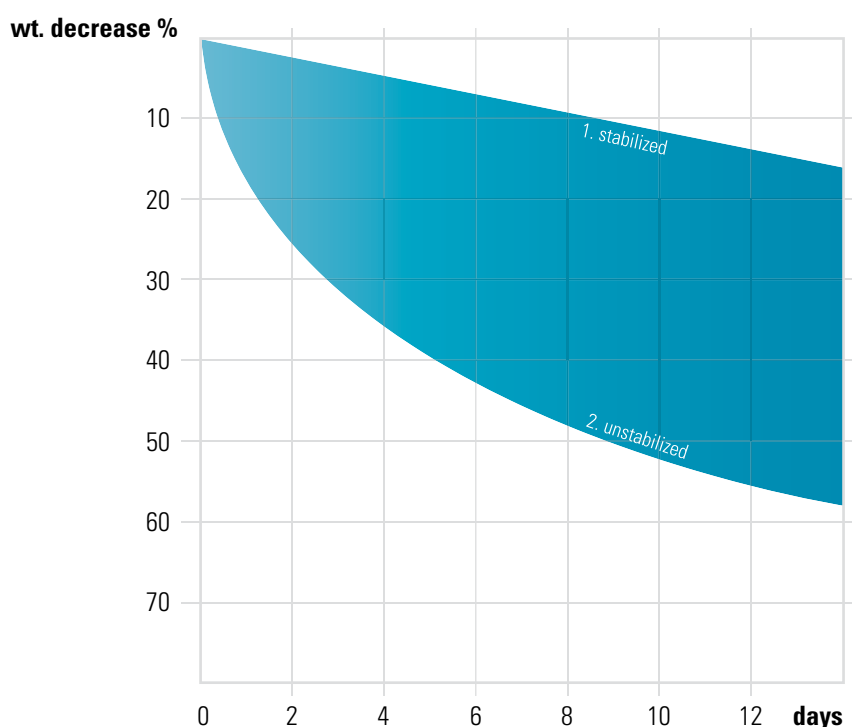
Curve 1 applies to the following stabilizers (3% addition):

- trimethyl dihydroquinoline polymer
- diphenylamine-styrene adduct
- phenothiazine
- phenyl- α -naphthylamine

The phenolic stabilizers numbered 5-7 in the list are effective only at lower temperatures – up to about 150°C – but have two advantages: they cause less discoloration and some of them are water-soluble.

The ingress of air should be excluded if possible or the bath should be blanketed with an inert gas atmosphere (nitrogen, carbon dioxide, etc.). This applies particularly to temperatures between 200 and about 220°C. Hot PEGs attack iron and steel only slightly, but as a precaution when liquid PEGs are used, a certain margin of alkalinity should be created by the addition of about 0.3% hydrated borax or triethanolamine. Other materials should be tested to establish their resistance to corrosion by PEGs.

Thermal stability of PEGs at 200°C



HYGROSCOPICITY

The liquid PEG grades are hygroscopic, although not to the same extent as diethylene glycol or glycerol for example. The ability to absorb water decreases with increasing molar mass.

A rule of thumb is: With a relative humidity of about 50% PEG 200 has about ¼ of the

hygroscopicity of glycerol. PEG 400 has about half, PEG 600 a third and PEG 1000 only a quarter. PEG 2000 and higher grades are no longer hygroscopic.

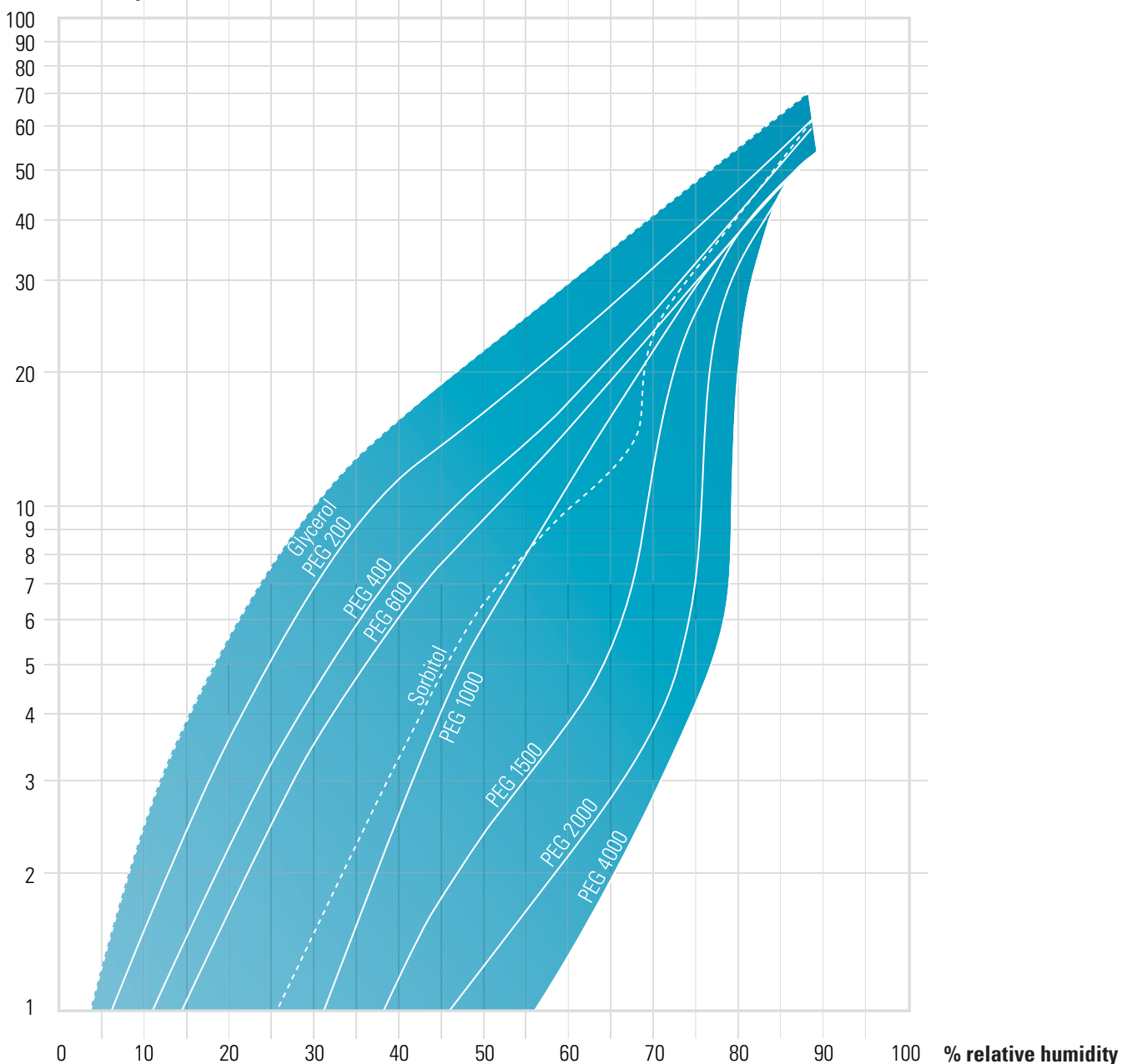
PEGs take moisture from the air until an equilibrium is reached. By plotting the water content of the substance in the equilibrium state as a function of the relative humidity, absorpti-
on isotherm is obtained.

The moisture absorption of lower glycols such as monoethylene glycol, diethylene glycol or 1,2-propylene glycol corresponds roughly to that of glycerol.

An adaptable moderate hygroscopicity may be advantageous for a conditioning agent because products treated with it are less sensitive to climatic changes and have better storage stability.

Sorption isotherms ($23 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$) for PEG 200 - 4000, glycerol and sorbitol

max. water absorption % (m/m)



SOLUBILITY PROPERTIES

The excellent solubility characteristics of PEGs are of great importance in relation to their applications. Two advantages are especially significant:

Firstly, the ability of PEGs to dissolve many substances and, secondly, their good solubility in numerous solvents.

In the preparation of aqueous solutions PEGs sometimes act as specific solubilizers.

The dissolving power and the solubility of PEGs decrease as the molar mass increases. Both properties are improved by heating. Here is a list of solvents in which the liquid PEGs are very readily miscible and in which the solid PEGs dissolve:

<i>Alcohols</i>	<i>e.g. ethanol, isopropanol, benzyl alcohol</i>
<i>Esters</i>	<i>e.g. methyl acetate, utyl acetate</i>
<i>Glycol ethers</i>	<i>e.g. methyl glycol, butyl glycol and their acetates</i>
<i>Ketones</i>	<i>e.g. acetone, cyclohexanone</i>
<i>Chlorinated</i>	<i>e.g. ethylene chloride, hydrocarbons chloroform</i>
<i>Benzene</i>	<i>e.g. benzene, xylene hydrocarbons</i>

PEGs are insoluble in aliphatic hydrocarbons.

COMPATIBILITY

PEGs have good compatibility with cetyl alcohol, glycerol, stearic acid, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, casein, vegetable albumin, dextrin, starch, chlorinated starch and various resins, e.g. colophony. Some ethereal oils are absorbed extremely well by liquid and molten PEGs.

SUBSTANCES SOLUBLE IN PEGs

Substances that dissolve at room temperature in PEG 400 are soluble to roughly the same extent in molten PEG 4000 (60-70°C).

The following values indicate the approximate percentage of PEG 4000 in the solutions saturated at room temperature:

	% (m/m)
<i>Aniline</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Benzene</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Carbon tetrachloride</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Chloroform</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>1,4-Dioxane</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Ethanol 60%</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Ethylene chloride</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Formamide</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Methanol</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Methylene chloride</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Pyridine</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Trichlorethylene</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Water</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>White spirit</i>	<i>i.</i>
<i>Xylenol</i>	<i>50</i>

The solubility of PEGs increases sharply with rising temperature, as the following example shows:

PEG 20000 is soluble in pure ethanol as follows

<i>at 20°C</i>	<i>0.1%</i>
<i>at 32°C</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>at 34°C</i>	<i>about 20%</i>

This means that a PEG that is insoluble at room temperature can be brought into solution by moderate heating (see page 10).

It is worth noting that solid PEGs are completely insoluble in liquid PEGs at room temperature.

SOLUBILITY OF VARIOUS SUBSTANCES IN PEG 400 AT ROOM TEMPERATURE

A		Diethanolamine		∞	Lead stearate	i.	S	
Acetanilide	16%	Diethylene glycol	∞		Lecithin	i.	Saccharin	10%
Acetic anhydride	∞	Diethylene glycol dimethyl ether	∞		Lithium stearate	i.	Salicylaldehyde	∞
Acetone	∞	Diisopropyl adipate	∞				Salicylic acid	30%
Acrylic acid	∞	Dimethyl acetamide	∞		M		Sodium chloride	0.3%
Acrylonitrile	∞	Dimethyl formamide	∞		Magnesium chloride • 4 H ₂ O	*25%	Sodium cyclamate	3%
Allyl alcohol	∞	Dimethyl phthalate	∞		Manganese (II) chloride • 4 H ₂ O	*40%	Sodium nitrite	0.4%
Ammonia (25%)	∞	Dimethyl sulphoxide	∞		Menthol	10%	Sodium sulphate	i.
Amyl acetate	∞	Dioctyl phthalate	i.		Mercury (II) acetate	*10%	Sorbic acid	5%
Amyl alcohol	∞	Dioxane	∞		Methanol	∞	Sorbitol	sl.s.c.
Aniline	∞	Diphenyl ether	∞		Methoxybutyl acetate	∞	Stearic acid	sl.s.c
Antipyrine	10%	Dipropylene glycol	∞		Methyl acetate	∞	Stearylamine	i.
Azulene (guaia azulene)	10%	Dodecyl alcohol	∞		Methyl diglycol	∞	Styrene	∞
B		E			Methyl ethyl ketone	∞	Styrene oxide	∞
Beeswax	i.	Eosinic acid	10%		Methyl glycol	∞	Sulphanilamide	10%
Benzaldehyde	∞	Ephedrine (1/2 H ₂ O)	20%		Methyl glycol acetate	∞	Sulphathiazole	10%
Benzene	∞	Ester waxes	i.		Methyl methacrylate	∞	Sulphuric acid , 50%	∞
Benzocaine	50%	Ethanol	∞		Methyl salicylate	∞		
Benzoic acid	10%	Ethyl acetate	∞		Methylene chloride	∞	T	
Benzyl alcohol	∞	Ethylbenzene	∞		Mineral oils	i.	Tannin	50%
Borax cryst.	0.3%	Ethylene diglycol	∞		Morpholine	∞	Terpineol	∞
Bromobenzene	∞	Ethylene glycol	∞		N		Tetrahydrofuran	∞
n- Butanol	∞	Ethylene glycol acetate	∞		Naphthalene	10%	Tetralin	55%
Butyl acetate	∞	2-Ethylhexenol	∞		b-Naphtanol	40%	Thiourea	10%
Butylamine	∞	Ethyl urethane	50%		Nitrobenzene	∞	Thymol	50%
Butyl diglycol	∞	Ethylene chloride	∞		Nitromethane	∞	Tin (II) chloride • 2H ₂ O	*55%
Butyl glycol	∞	Eucalyptus oil	10%		O		Trichlorobutyl alcohol	10%
Butyl glycolate	∞				Octyl alcohol	∞	1,1,1-Trichloroethane	∞
C		F			Oleic acid	∞	Trichloroethylene	∞
Calcium chloride • 2 H ₂ O	*20%	Formamide	∞				Trichloroethyl phosphate	∞
Camphor	10%	Furfural	∞		P		Triethanolamine	∞
Carbon disulphide	10%	G			Paraffin oil	i.	Triethylene glycol	∞
Carbon tetrachloride	∞	Gelatin	i.		Paraldehyde	50%	U	
Carnauba wax	i.	Glacial acetic acid	∞		PEG laurate	∞	Urea	3%
Casein	i.	Glycerol	∞		PEG sorbitan oleate	sl.s.c.	V	
Castor oil	1%	Glycerol monoestearate	sl.s.c.		Perchloroethylene	43%	Vanillin	10%
Ceresin wax	i.	Glycerol triacetate	∞		Petroleum jelly	i.	Vegetable oils	i.
Cetyl alcohol	sl.c.s.	Glycol	∞		Phenacetin	10%	W	
Cetyl stearyl alcohol	sl.c.s.	Gum arabic	i.		Phenol	50%	White spirit	i.
Chloral hydrate	50%	H			Phenol (90%)	∞	X	
Chloramine T	10%	Hexachlorophene	45%		Phenothiazine	15%	Xylene	∞
Chlorobenzene	∞	Hydrochloric acid, 37%	∞		Phenyl acetate	∞	Xylenol	∞
Chloroform	∞	I			Phenylmercuric acetate	10%	Z	
Chlorothymol	50%	Iodine	20%		Phenyl salicylate	50%	Zinc chloride • 2H ₂ O	*20%
Chloroparaffin 56 and 70	∞	Iron (III) chloride • 6 H ₂ O	*50%		Phosphoric acid (85%)	∞	Figures in % (m/m) ∞ = miscible in all proportions sl.s.c. = slightly soluble at room temperature but soluble at 70 - 80°C i. = insoluble	
Citric acid	25%	Isobutanol	∞		Piperazine	10%		
Cobalt (III) chloride • 6 H ₂ O	*50%	Isobutyl acetate	∞		Polyethylene glycol 4000 (soluble when heated)	i.		
Coconut fatty amine	10%	Isodecyl alcohol	∞		Polypropylene glycol 400	∞		
Colophony	50%	Isopropanol	∞		Potassium iodide	*15%		
Copper (III) chloride • 2 H ₂ O	∞	Isotridecyl alcohol	∞		Propanol	∞		
Cresol	20%	L			1,2.Propylene glycol	∞		
Cyclohexane	i.	Lactic acid (90%)	∞		Pyridine	∞		
Cyclohexanol	∞	Lavender oil	10%		Pyrocatechol	50%		
Cyclohexanone	∞	Lead acetate	1%		R			
D					Resorcinol	50%		
Diacetone alcohol	∞							
Dibutyl phthalate	∞							
β,β-Dichloroethyl ether	∞							
Di-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate	i.							

* When heated to about 100°C these metal salts go into solution and form highly viscous liquids with PEG 400 that are stable even at room temperature.

PHYSICAL FORMS OF PEGs

All solid PEGs (1500-35000) are available as flakes with sizes of about 0.3 to 2 cm. PEG grades 3000 to 20000 are available in powder form (P), the grades 4000 to 8000 also as fine powders (PF) and 3350 to 4000 as spray dried powders (PS).

Solid PEGs are used in powder form wherever it is necessary for them to be intimately dry-mixed with component of a different kind, for example in tablet manufacture, or in dry granulation.

To convey an impression of the particle size distribution, an average screen analysis of the clarant powder grades is given in the next table.

Particle size distribution of PEG powder (typical values measured with Crystelsizer)

Micron	Powder (P) 3000-20000 %	Fine powder (PF) 4000-8000 %	Spray dried powder (PS) 3350-4000 %
< 90	10-30	75-95	max. 15
90-200	10-30	5-25	20-45
> 200	50-75	max. 5	35-70

Power density (kg/m³)

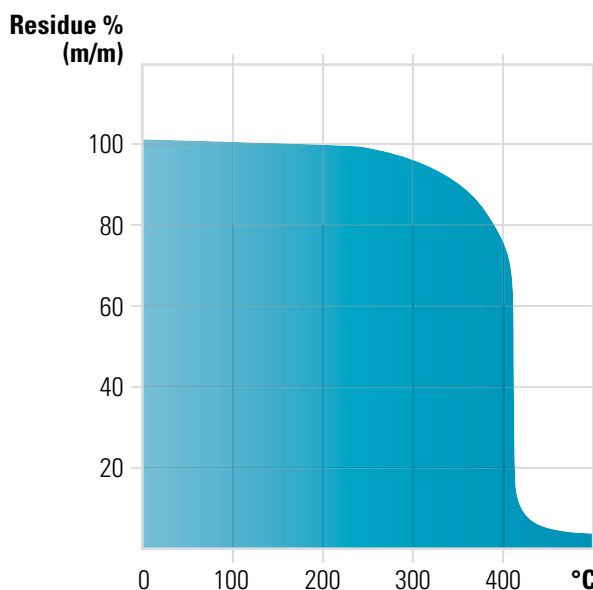
Flakes (S)	Powder (P)	Fine powder (PF)	Spray dried powder (PS)
400-500	500-700	450-550	450-650

PYROLYSIS

When air is excluded⁽¹⁴⁾, PEG chain breaks down only at temperatures above 250°C, the chain length and the molar mass being insignificant factors in the range of about 300 to 6000. The rate of decomposition of PEGs is shown by the following thermogravimetric (TG) curve.

The thermogravimetric curve was plotted by means of a combined DTA/TG instrument in a nitrogen atmosphere at a heat-up rate of 5°C/min.

Thermogravimetric curve for PEG 4000 under exclusion of air



MOLAR MASS DISTRIBUTION OF PEGs

The various PEG grades are not uniform chemical compounds but rather mixtures of similar polymer members of the homologous PEG series.

Bis-trimethylsilyl derivatives are suitable for analysis of PEGs by gas chromatography⁽¹⁵⁾. By the use of gas chromatography we were able to determine the composition of our PEGs 200, 300 and 400 as follows⁽¹⁶⁾:

Polyglykol 200 USP is available as special type in pharma quality with a specified Mono- and Diethylene Glycol content of max. 0.20%.

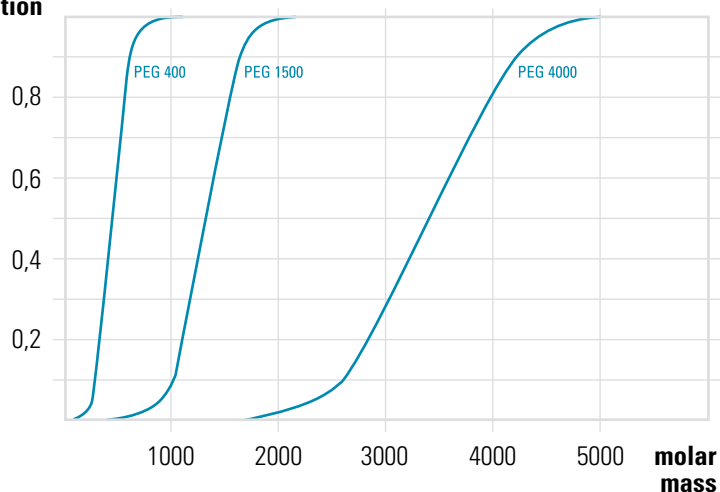
Information on the molar mass distribution of PEG grades is given by column chromatographic analyses based on the different migration rates of the fractions in microporous gel (GPC, gel permeation chromatography)^(17, 18).

When our PEGs 400, 1500 and 4000, dissolved in tetrahydrofuran, were fractionated over Styragel, the molar mass distribution was very narrow.

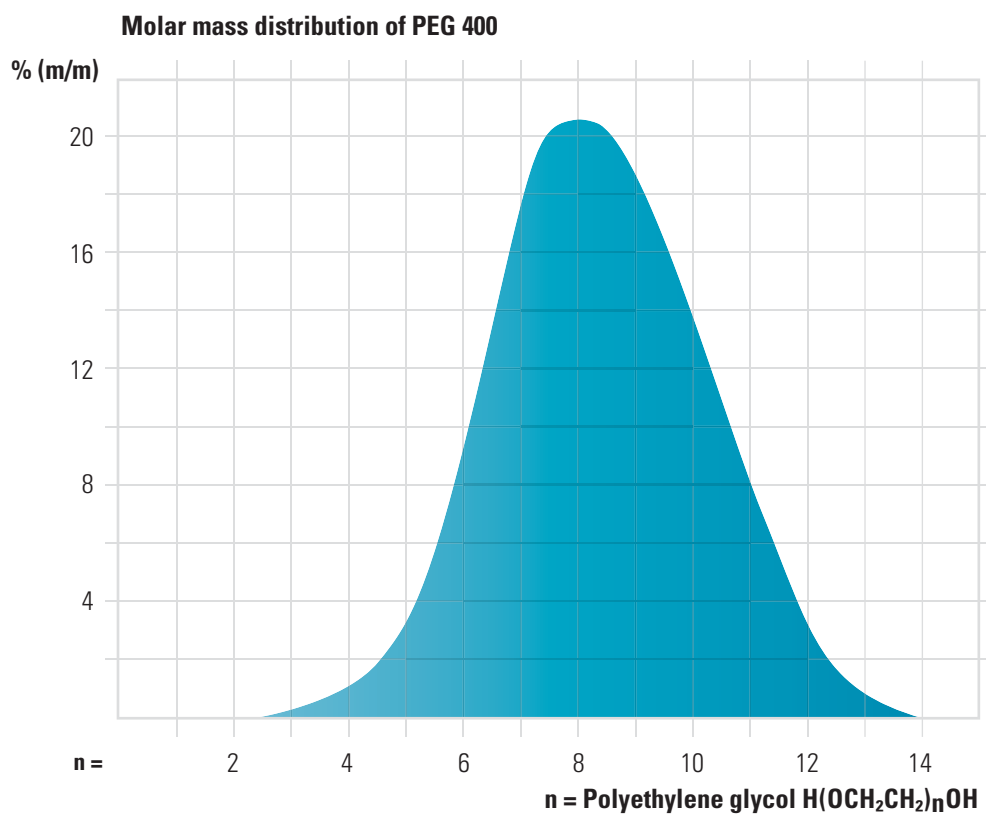
	PEG 200 %	PEG 200 USP %	PEG 300 %	PEG 400 %
<i>Monoethylene glycol</i>	0.1	—	—	—
<i>Diethylene glycol</i>	3.4	0.1	0.2	—
<i>Triethylene glycol</i>	21.2	28.9	2.4	0.1
<i>Tetraethylene glycol</i>	31.2	37.6	9.0	0.7
<i>Pentaethylene glycol</i>	24.4	21.8	16.4	2.1
<i>Hexaethylene glycol</i>	14.0	8.8	25.5	7.2
<i>Heptaethylene glycol</i>	5.4	2.3	25.2	14.4
<i>Octaethylene glycol</i>	0.3	0.4	15.0	19.1
<i>Nonaethylene glycol</i>	—	0.1	4.2	19.2
<i>Decaethylene glycol</i>	—	—	2.0	15.7
<i>Undecaethylene glycol</i>	—	—	0.1	10.2
<i>Dodecaethylene glycol</i>	—	—	—	5.9
<i>Tridecaethylene glycol</i>	—	—	—	3.4
<i>Tetradecaethylene glycol</i>	—	—	—	1.5
<i>Pentadecaethylene glycol</i>	—	—	—	0.5

Gel permeation chromatographic analysis of PEGs 400, 1500 and 4000

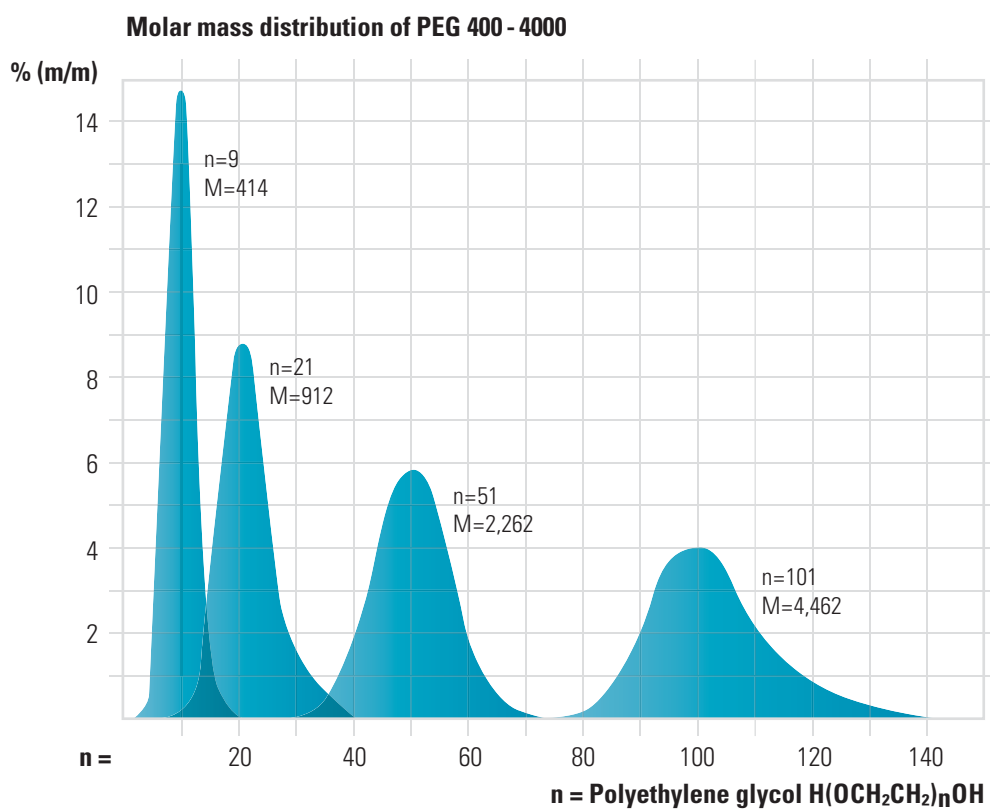
Integral molar mass distribution



Peak area (percentages by weight)
determined by gas chromatography



Distribution is in accordance
with Poisson's formula



Physiological Properties

Polyethylene glycols show outstanding toxicological safety regarding acute and chronic oral toxicity, embryotoxicity or skin compatibility^(19,20) supported by parental / absorption / excretion investigations^(21,22). Therefore they have been used for many years in cosmetics, foodstuffs⁽²⁶⁾ and the pharmaceutical industry and are registered in all relevant pharmacopoeias.

ANIMAL TOXICITY

• Acute oral toxicity

Macrogols (polyethylene glycols) are considered as practically non-toxic compounds. Acute oral toxicity, expressed as the median lethal dose (LD50), is reported to be 30.000 to 50.000 mg/kg body weight in various animal species. Higher molecular weight PEGs exhibit even greater LD50 -values above 50.000 mg/kg body weight.

• Chronic oral toxicity

Smyth et al.⁽²⁷⁾ summarized the extensive feeding studies they conducted with Macrogols. For example polyethylene glycols having average molecular weights of 400, 1500 and 4000 caused no adverse effect in dogs when fed two percent in their diet for one year. Several percent of Macrogols can be tolerated in the diet of rats without appreciable effects, indicated that they are exceptionally low in chronic oral toxicity.

• Eye irritation

Macrogols do not cause appreciable irritation to the eyes of rabbits⁽²⁸⁾.

• Skin irritation and sensitization

Although early reports by Smyth et al.⁽²⁹⁾ reported that skin sensitization was observed in guinea pigs tested with certain Macrogols, later studies show that currently produced materials are without irritation or sensitizing properties⁽²⁷⁾.

• Dermal absorption

As concluded by Smyth et al.⁽²⁷⁾ the lethal dose via dermal application of Macrogols is so large as to defy the establishment of LD50 values.

• Toxicokinetic studies / metabolism

Toxicokinetic studies on absorption, metabolism, distribution, and excretion revealed that low molecular weight Macrogols are absorbed from the rat intestine only to a very slight extent. Higher molecular weight Macrogols are not absorbed at all. Excretion of Macrogols is mainly via feces without any bio-transformation.

HUMAN TOXICITY

• Oral toxicity

Studies with human volunteers who received oral doses of 10 grams were tolerated without any toxicological or clinical symptoms⁽³⁰⁾.

• Eye irritation

No cases of injury to human eyes have been reported nor would any be expected.

• Skin irritation and sensitization

Although early reports by Smyth et al.⁽²⁹⁾ reported that skin sensitization was observed among a few human subjects tested with certain Macrogols, later studies show that currently produced materials are without irritations or sensitizing properties⁽²⁷⁾.

• ADI-value

The acceptable daily intake (ADI-value) for polyethylene glycols in foodstuffs is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a maximum of 10 mg/kg body weight⁽³¹⁾.

Analysis

QUALITATIVE DETECTION WITH TETRAIODOBISMUTHIC ACID

The modified Dragendorff reagent is of an intense yellow colour and immediately gives a bright orange precipitate in the presence of free PEG and PEG derivatives (ethoxylates) ⁽³²⁾. The reagent is suitable for a simple spot test and is used in paper and thin-layer chromatography.

The reagent is prepared as follows

Solution A	
1.7g 20 ml 100 ml	<i>basic bismuth nitrate are dissolved in glacial acetic acid. This solution is diluted up to with demineralized water</i>
Solution B	
40g 100 ml	<i>potassium iodide are dissolved in demineralized water</i>
Solution C	
100 ml +140g +200g 1000 ml	<i>Solution A Solution B glacial acetic acid are made up to with demineralized water</i>
Solution D	
20g 80 ml	<i>barium chloride are dissolved in demineralized water</i>
Ready-to-use modified Dragendorff reagent	
100 ml +50 ml	<i>Solution C Solution D</i>

THIN-LAYER CHROMATOGRAPHY

A mixture of chloroform/methanol/ water in the ration: 3:25:12 may be used as the mobile phase. Water-saturated n-butanol has proved very successful as a solvent system for simpler separating operations ⁽³³⁻³⁶⁾.

METHODS OF DETERMINATION INVOLVING COMPLEX FORMATION

Due to their ether characteristics, PEGs are capable of forming complexes which are difficult to dissolve. Precipitation with silicotungstic acid in the presence of barium chloride is used to determine PEGs gravimetrically ⁽³⁷⁾. PEGs can also be determined quantitatively by precipitation with sodium tetraphenyl borat ⁽³⁸⁾. The modified Dragendorff reagent can be employed for the detection of PEGs and for sedimentic determination ⁽²⁸⁾. Phosphomolybdic acid is used for colorimetric determination ⁽³⁷⁾.

None of the above-mentioned quantitative methods of precipitation is very easy to carry out, particularly as the molar mass of PEG in question has to be known in order to be able to evaluate the results.

To determine PEGs in the molar mass range from 300 to 1000 colorimetrically, complexes of PEGs with ammonium cobalt thiocyanate are suitable ⁽³⁹⁾.

METHODS OF DETERMINATION INVOLVING ETHER CLEAVAGE

Another method of determining PEGs is the Zeisel method of ether cleavage with hydrogen iodide ^(40 - 43).

Applications of PEGs

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

PEGs AS EXCIPIENTS

• Liquids

The very good solvent power leads to a broad use of low molecular weight PEGs 200 to 400 in liquid preparations such as drops, parenterals or fillings for gelatin capsules.

Polyethylene glycol does not soften gelatin.

The liquid PEGs have a slightly bitter taste, which can easily be adjusted by suitable additives (sweeteners). Solid PEG grades show a neutral taste.

• Ointment basics

It is very interesting that solid PEGs are not soluble in liquid polyethylene glycols.

Blending pasty or solid PEGs together with liquid PEGs will lead to a white, pasty ointment with good solubility in water, good dissolving properties and suitable for many active substances.

The three most common PEG ointment mixtures are

40% + 60%	Polyglykol 3350 Polyglykol 400
50% + 50%	Polyglykol 3000 or Polyglykol 3350 (both types comply with Mcrogol 4000 of the Japanese Ph.) Polyglykol 400
50% + 50%	Polyglykol 1500 Polyglykol 300, offered for example as Lanogen® 1500.

PEG bases can also be combined with other base, e.g. cetyl alcohol, cetyl stearyl alcohol, stearic acid, 1,2 propylene glycol, glycerol, glycerol monostearate and PEG sorbitan monooleate.

PEGs are not compatible, however, with paraffin wax, petroleum jelly, oleyl oleates and hydrogenated peanut oil. Examples of PEG-compatible pharmaceuticals^(47–52) are:

- Ammonium bituminosulphonicum
- Benzalkonium chloride
- Bismuth gallate, basic
- Camphor
- Chloramphenicol
- Diphenhydramine
- Hydrocortisone acetate
- Iodochlorohydroxyquinoline
- Nitrofurantoin
- Nitrofurazone
- Phenoxyethyl alcohol
- Polymyxin B
- Propenpyridamine
- Sulphanilamide
- Sulphathiazole
- Sulphisomidine
- Trypaflavin
- Undecylenic acid and its salts

• Suppositories

Solid polyglycols are preferred bases for suppository masses. Numerous actives can be dissolved in PEGs and have then a good bio-availability^(53–54). The dissipation of the active

takes place not only by melting within the body but also by dissolving the body fluids. During the manufacturing they show easy release from the mold, high stability and no refrigeration is required⁽⁵⁵⁾ during storage. The desired solidity can be adjusted by choosing the molecular weight and suitable ratios.

For example 25% PEG 1000 and 75% PEG 1500 S give very soft masses, whereas 25 % PEG 4000 S and 75% PEG 6000 S will give more solid products⁽⁵⁶⁾.

• Tablets

The manufacture of tablets requires numerous excipients with different functions, several of them covered by PEGs. Polyglykols may be carriers, solubilizers and absorption improvers for active substances, usually processed in the form of a melt (melt granulation), of course restricted to cases where the active substances withstand heating to about 70°C.

They also act as lubricants and binders⁽⁵⁷⁾ during the tablet processing. The relatively low melting point favours a sintering or compression technique. At the same time PEG has a plasticizing effect which facilitates the shaping of the tablet mass in the compression process and may counteract capping. Solid PEGs are also frequently used in tablet coatings. The flexibility of sugar-coated tablets is increased by PEGs and since polyethylene glycol acts as an anticaking agent, the cores are prevented from sticking together. With usually used film formers in sugar-free coatings PEG acts as softener.

PEGS AS ACTIVES

• Ophthalmic demulcents

Polyethylene glycol 300 and 400 are listed as active ingredients in ophthalmic demulcents in amounts of 0.2 to 1% ⁽⁵⁸⁾. Polyethylene glycols are treated as one class of compounds, also reflected by the use of one single CAS-number for the whole class of polyethylene glycols, it is likely that higher molecular weight PEGs show similar properties for this application. Thus polyethylene glycol 6000 is also listed as an ophthalmic demulcent active ingredient ⁽⁵⁹⁾.

• Laxatives

Since polyethylene glycol is both highly water soluble and not absorbed by humans ⁽⁶⁰⁾, it is superior to solutions of other difficult to absorb materials with an osmotic mode of action, such as e.g. mannitol. PEGs cause fewer side effects such as nausea or gas formation ⁽⁶¹⁾. Since up to now there is no review article available dealing with the osmotic activity of PEGs, only some examples from the literature are cited here in the appendix ^(62 – 64).

The USP/NF describes a blend in the monograph “PEG 3350 and Electrolytes for Oral Solution” which contains a detailed description of all potential individual salt components to be used in addition to the polyglycol with a mean molecular weight of 3350 ⁽⁶⁵⁾. The existence of this monograph explains why the mean molecular weight of 3350 is used so frequently in laxative preparations, although PEGs with other molecular weights would have an essentially equivalent effect. The confusing nomenclatures (see page 7) also contribute to the use of the type 3350, since this type is registered in Japan (under the name “4000”) ⁽⁶⁶⁾.

Remarks on the Manufacture of Laxatives on an Industrial Scale:

During the manufacture of laxative blends, the homogenous distribution of all ingredients is very important. A key criteria is the particle size distribution of all the ingredients, which are normally used in powder form. The more similar the particle size distributions of the different powders, the easier it will be to produce a homogenous blend. On the other hand the powder must not be too fine, since the generation of dust complicates the final filling of the material. Also the moisture content of the hygroscopic polyethylene glycol plays an important role, since “moist” polyglycols lead to sticking and lumping in the filling equipment.

• Organ preservations

A very specific and interesting application is the use of linear high molecular weight polyethylene glycol (20000 daltons) in compositions that exhibit antiapoptotic activity that can be used therefore to protect, preserve or restore cell, tissue or organ function ⁽⁶⁷⁾. In this application the polyethylene glycol must be seen as the active ingredient. The full explanation, why PEG shows the antiapoptotic activity and why longer chains are more efficient than short ones is missing yet. Collins ⁽⁶⁸⁾ suggests that the higher molecular weight PEG has a direct tolerogenic action on donor antigen in the transplanted organ. He assumes that some sort of attachment of PEG to transplantation antigens must have occurred, without chemical combination, but this is not proved. An earlier explanation from Daniel ⁽⁶⁹⁾ is that an essential component of the medium is a non toxic solute which does not cross the cell membrane at low temperatures and could therefore counterbalance the osmotic effect of the intracellular proteins.

PEGs AS REACTION COMPOUNDS OF DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEMS

With the who OH-groups at the ends of the polyethylene glycol molecules, all reactions typical for alcohols are possible, such as esterification, carbonates and carbamates formation. To avoid chain-building reactions Methyl-ether-capped PEGs, so called Methyl-polyethylene glycols, are available. Those MPEGs are only able to react at one end of the molecule. The wide field of PEG conjugation to proteins and other organic molecules, e.g. anticancer drugs, would exceed the scope of this text. Harris⁽⁷⁰⁾ as well as later Greenwald⁽⁷¹⁾ took carefully together overviews over the so called *PEGnology*. A first easy to read and shorter introduction might be for example the summaries of Bonora⁽⁷²⁾ or Veronese⁽⁷³⁾. Concerning anticancer drugs, polyethylene glycol may work also without linked to other molecules in some cases. In one animal test, polyglycol was found to prevent colon cancer⁽⁷⁴⁾, which should also prove true in humans^(75, 76).

INCOMPATIBILITY

PEGs are unsuitable as based for bacitracine and penicillin G an W (compete inactivation⁽⁷⁷⁾); for sulphanilthiocarbamide (evaluation of hydrogen sulphide); acetylsalicylic acid (release of salicylic acid due to transesterification⁽⁷⁸⁾); and also where discoloration is undesirable⁽⁷⁹⁾.

Substances capable of forming precipitates with PEGs in aqueous solution at particular concentrations are, for instance, phenol, cresols, resorcinol, salicylic acid, β -naphthol, tannin and potassium iodide.

COSMETIC INDUSTRY

PEGs can be used in the following cosmetic preparations:

• Creams, lotions, facial lotions

In creams, as in all preparations that tend to dry out, PEGs have a moisture- stabilizing effect and also a conditioning effect on the skin treated^(80, 81).

After application, they leave a pleasant feel on the skin similar to the natural replacement of oils without producing any sensation of stickiness.

In lotions and face lotions PEG acts as a cleansing agent.

In after-shave lotions PEG has the additional function of a non-greasy lubricant and perfume stabilizer. The most suitable type is PEG-8 (Polyglykol 400).

• Deodorant, perfume and insect-repellent sticks

PEGs are ideal carriers for sodium stearate and sodium aluminium hydroxylactate. Unlike ethanol or isopropanol, they are not volatile and thus permit reliable control of deodorant, perfume and insect-repellent sticks⁽⁸²⁻⁸⁴⁾.

The most suitable grades are the liquid types PEG-4 to PEG-12 (Polyglykol 200 USP to Polyglykol 600).

PEGs prove to be outstanding solubilizers for hexachlorophene, dimethyl phthalate, azulene, aluminium hydroxychloride (Locron[®]), etc.

• Lipsticks

PEGs can be used in lipsticks as solubilizers for tetrabromofluorescein and its derivatives. The solubility in PEG-8 (Polyglykol 400) is about 10%. Higher additions of PEG should be avoided because of their good solubility in water, since dyes then tend to "bleed".

• Toothpastes

Since PEGs are non-toxic and not-irritant, they meet the requirements for incorporation in toothpastes^(85 - 88), where their main function is to improve the consistency and storage stability. Thus glycerol and sorbitol can be replaced by PEGs in toothpaste formulations. With increasing molar mass the slightly bitter taste of PEGs, which can be easily counteracted by sweeteners, is less pronounced. PEG-4 to PEG-40 (Polyglykol 200 USP to Polyglykol 2000 S) are recommended. PEG has been proven to be highly successful in the production of transparent toothpastes. By using PEG, the refractive index of the mixture, which usually contains a large amount of silicic acid, can be adjusted to achieve good transparency.^(88, 90)

• Soaps, hand-cleanings pastes and detergent sticks

PEG 450 (Polyglykol 20000 S) is particularly suitable for use as a milling aid in toilet soap manufacture. Not only does it facilitate mechanical plasticization, it also improves the sharpness of the moulded bar contours. It stabilizes the perfume and later prevents the soap from frying out and cracking. Initial lathering is accelerated without affecting the foaming characteristics. PEGs prevent hand-cleansing pastes from drying out and leave a pleasant feel on the skin once they have dried.

Very soft smooth shaving creams can also be produced with PEGs. Soap-free blocks (detergent blocks) can be moulded or pressed when PEGs are incorporated. In this application PEG-32 to PEG-450 in the relative molar mass range of 1500 to 20000 are suitable as readily water-soluble carriers ⁽⁹⁰⁾.

The strength and solubility in water can be adjusted by the addition of a small amount of cetyl alcohol.

• Hair care products

facial masks and depilatories

PEGs have proved successful as additives for improving the consistency of non-greasy hair-care products, which can be washed off after use with clear water, a requirement that is met by PEGs, especially PEG-8 (Polyglykol 400).

• Hair styling

The efficacy of aerosol hair spray and styling products is based on synthetic resins such as cellulose derivatives, polyvinyl alcohol and acetate (Aristoflex[®] A60), polyvinyl pyrrolidone (Amine Oxide Polymers Diaformer[®]), etc. As a plasticizer and antistatic agent, PEG-8 counteracts the tendency of these substances to dry to a brittle film ⁽⁹¹⁾.

• Bath oils and foam baths

In formulations of bath oils, etc. PEG-4 to PEG-40 assist the solubilizing action of the active substances for perfume oils. In addition, consistency and skin compatibility are improved.

• Denture cleaners, bath cubes, effervescent tablets

PEGs are excellent binder when bath salts, denture cleaners etc. are pressed into tablets. By choosing the appropriate grade, e.g. PEG-75 to PEG-450 (Polyglykol 3350 P to Polyglykol 20000 P), and by incorporating suitable amounts, the dissolving rate can be controlled as required.

FOOD INDUSTRY

In the USA PEGs 200 to 9500 are approved, in accordance with the FDA, as auxiliaries and additives in the manufacture of consumer articles that come into contact with food. In certain cases they are also approved as components of the foodstuff itself, e.g. as binders and plasticizers for foods in tablet form, as excipients for tablet coatings, as carriers for aromatic substances, calorie-free sweeteners and as defoamers.

FDA Regulation of polyethylene glycols		
Regulation (21 CFR)	application	type
§ 73.1	Diluent in color additive mixtures fo coloring shell eggs	Polyglycol 6000 (S)
§ 172.210	Coatings on fresh citrus fruit as a defoamer and dispersing adjuvant	Polyglycol 200 USP and 300 to 8000 (S)
§ 172.820	Use in food. Special requirement: not more than 0.2 per cent total by weight of ethylene and diethylene glycol	Polyglycol 200 USP and 300 to 8000 (S)
§ 173.310	Boiler water additive	Polyglycol 200 USP and 300 to 8000 (S)
§ 173.340	Defoaming agent	Polyglycol 200 USP and 300 to 8000 (S)
§ 175.105	Indirect food additives: components of adhesives	Polyglycol 200 USP and 300 to 6000 (S)
§ 177.2420	Polyester resins, crosslinked	Polyglycol 6000 (S)
§ 177.2480	Polyoxymethylene homopolymer molding assistant	Polyglycol 200 USP and 300 to 6000 (S)
§ 178.3750	Indirect food additive, adjuvant and production aid Special requirement: not more than 0.2 per cent total by weight of ethylene and diethylene glycol	Polyglycol 200 USP and 300 to 8000 (S)
§ 178.3910	Surface lubricants used in the manufacture of metallic articles. Special requirement: not more than 0.2 per cent total by weight of ethylene and diethylene glycol	Polyglycol 300 to 35000 (S)
§ 181.30	Substances used in the manufacture of paper and paperboard products used in food packaging	Polyglycol 400

Selection of recommendations for use of polyethylene glycols in contact with food

BfR (German Federal Institute for Risk assessment)				
No.	Class of Substance	Position as of	End use and limits	Purity requirements
IX	Colourants for Plastics and other Polymers Used in Commodities	01.06.1994	production aid, max. 0.35% (based on coloured part of the consumer article)	less than 0.1% monoethylene glycol
XXI	Commodities based on Natural and Synthetic Rubber	01.04.2006	Processing aid, Slip and mould release agent max. 2.0%	max. 0.2% monoethylene glycol
XXVIII	Cross-Linked Polyurethanes as Adhesive Layers for Food Packaging Materials	01.06.1981	starting material	
XXXVI	Paper and board for food contact	01.04.2006	humectant	max. 0.2% monoethylene glycol
XXXIX	Commodities Based on Polyurethanes	01.06.1998	starting materials	
XLI	Linear Polyurethanes for Paper Coatings	01.01.1975	starting material	
XLIV	Artificial Sausage Casings	01.02.2005	moisturiser but only in association with a coating after Section B, No.1, in total, max. 27.5% (total quantity of all auxiliaries used for this purpose)	not more than 0.2% monoethylene glycol
XLVIII	Materials for Coating the Outside of Hollow Glassware	01.03.1975	basic substances for wax dispersion	not more than 0.2% monoethylene glycol
IL	Soft Polyurethane foams as Cushion Packaging for Fruit	15.01.1993	starting substance	

EU commission directive				
No.	Class of Substance	Position as of	End use and limits	Purity requirements
2002/72/EC	plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs	06.08.2002	starting substance, additive	

Safety and Handling

PEGs are non-toxic and physiologically safe so no special safety precautions need to be taken when handling them.

For many applications, particularly in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and foodstuffs packaging, the physiological safety of PEGs is important. When administered orally and cutaneously they are to be rated as non-toxic. The vapour pressure of PEGs is so low that inhalation of relevant amounts is impossible.

Because of their good physiological tolerability PEGs were first included in the US pharmacopoeia already in 1950. Since then they have been listed in numerous pharmacopoeias.

The tolerability of PEGs in animals improves as the degree of polymerization rises.

PEGs have no toxic or irritant effect on the skin. Because of low toxicity it was not possible to establish an exact LD50 resulting from skin penetration. The CAS number for all Polyethylene glycols is 25322-68-3.

ECOLOGICAL DATA

The behaviour of PEGs in effluent is a matter of crucial importance, e.g. in their industrial use in the textile sector and in metal processing. The rate of biodegradation of PEGs decreases with increasing molar mass. PEGs up to molar mass 1500 are regarded as readily biodegradable (Zahn-Wellens test). It must, however, be borne in mind that the activated sludge requires a certain time to adapt. In some cases the degradation of high molar mass PEGs was also observed. The microbiological degradation of other substances is not inhibited by the presence of PEGs. The toxic inhibition limit for bacteria in the fermentation tube test is 5000 mg/l.

Investigations within our own labs have shown that even in concentrations of 10000 mg/kg (1%) polyethylene glycols have no adverse effect on fish (crucian carp). Polyethylene glycols in concentration up to 10000 mg/l exhibit no harmful effect of any kind towards daphnia and protozoa.

The German water hazard class is WGK 1.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Any PEGs to be disposed of waste can be taken, in accordance with the local regulations, to a special waste incineration plant. None of PEGs, in concentrations up to 10,000 mg/l water, demonstrates an acute harmful effect on fish or bacteria.

Heating values	MJ/kg
PEG 200	23.7
PEG 300	24.0
PEG 400	25.6
PEG 600	26.0
PEG 3000	26.7

PEGs with molar masses of 200 to 1500 have good biodegradability. It is therefore possible to take them to a biological sewage treatment plant after consulting the operator provided the water and waste regulations permit.

Storage

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

PEGs are stable for 2 years when stored in the original sealed containers in a cool, dry place.

Furthermore the containers should not be exposed to direct sun light. Ambient temperatures for long term storage are preferably between 10°C and 25°C and between 0°C and 30°C as maximum. Storage at higher temperatures is possible only for a short time and should be kept below the solidification point of the products (for Polyglykol 1000 to 35000).

It is essential to ensure storage in a dry place because liquid PEGs are hygroscopic and the solid grades immediately in water. Each time the containers are opened, they should be resealed to make them airtight. Even with sealed laboratory containers it is impossible to prevent atmospheric oxygen and moisture acting on PEG owing to frequent opening⁽⁹²⁾.

We therefore recommend that laboratory samples should also not be stored longer than 2 years.

The most suitable material for storage tanks is stainless steel, pure aluminium, rubber-or polyethylene-lined containers and storage tanks made from glass-fibre-reinforced polyester (GRP). The tank should be ventilated by means of a silica gel dryer. Conventional steel tanks are of limited suitability because after prolonged storage the product may become discoloured owing to traces of iron. Liquid PEG should not be stored in internally lacquered containers because normal coatings are dissolved (epoxy and stoving enamels are resistant, however).

PEGs 600 to 1000 solidify when stored in a cool place and must be melted before use. This is best carried out in heating chambers, but the outside temperature should not exceed about 60°C. This must also be ensured when electrical drum heaters are used. Electrical immersion heaters are not suitable for melting owing to the high thermal stress occurring.

The recommended method of storing PEGs 800 to 8000 in the molten state is in stainless steel or aluminium containers fitted with an external, heating coil. The storage temperature should not exceed 70°C, and it is advisable to thoroughly mix the contents of the storage container with a dry nitrogen stream or a circulating pump.

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Index

A					
Actives	25, 26	Defoamers	27	G	
ADI-value	22	Degradation	15, 30	Gas chromatography analysis	20, 21
After-shave lotions	26	Degree of polymerization	6, 30	Gelatin capsules	24
Analysis	23	Density	8, 10, 19	Gel-permeation chromatographic	20
Antioxidants	9, 15	Denture cleaners	27	Glycerol	16, 17, 18, 24, 27
Average molecular weight	6, 7, 20, 21	Deodorant sticks	27	H	
B		Depilatories	27	Hair care products	27
Bath cubes	27	Detection	23	Hair styling	27
Bath oils	27	Diethylene glycol	5, 6, 16, 18, 20, 28	Hand-cleansing pastes	27
BfR Recommendations	29	Dioxane	17, 18	Handling	30
Bibliography	32	Dissolving power	17	Harmful effect	30
Binders	25, 27	Dissolving process	14	Heat capacity	10
Bioavailability	24	Dissolving rate	27	Heat effect	14
Biodegradable	30	Drug delivery	26	High temperature properties	15
Body care	26	Dynamic viscosity	10	HLB value	10
C		E		Hydroxyl groups	6, 8
Carrier substance	25, 27	Ecological data	30	Hydroxyl number (OH numbers)	8
CAS number	30	Effervescent tablets	27	Hygroscopicity	16
Chemical properties	10-21	Electrolytes	10, 14, 25	Hazen colour	8
Chemical structure	6	Essential oil	17, 18	I	
Coefficient of thermal expansion	10	Esterification	26	Identity testing	23
Colorimetric determination	23	Esters	26, 29	INCI names	8
Colour (number)	8	Ether cleavage	23	Incompatibility	26
Compatibility	17	Ethylene glycol	6, 16, 18, 20, 29	Inhibitors	15
Compatibility with iron	15, 31	Ethylene oxide	6	Injection preparations	24
Compatibility with lacquers	31	Excipients	24, 25	Insect-repellent sticks	27
Compatibility with steel	15, 31	Excretion	22	K	
Complex formation	23	F		Kinematic viscosity	10
Cosmetics	26, 27	Facial lotions	26	L	
Creams	26	Facial masks	27	Lanogen®	5, 7, 8-9, 24
CTFA designation	6, 8	FDA approval	27, 28	Latent heat of fusion	10
D		Film coating	25, 27	Laxatives	25
Daphnia	30	Fish	30	LD ₅₀ value	30
Decomposition	15, 19	Flakes	5, 19		
Decomposition products	15, 19	Foam	27		
		Foam baths	27		
		Food industry	27		
		Food packaging	28, 29		

Lipstick	27
Lotions	26

M

Macrogols	5, 6
Manufacture	6
Melting point	14, 25
Methods of determination	23
Microbiological degradation	30
Milling aid	27
Moisture absorption	14, 16
Molar mass	5, 10, 14, 16, 17, 20, 23
Molar mass distribution	20, 21
Monoethylene glycol	20, 29

N

Nomenclature	5, 6, 7
--------------	---------

O

OH value	8
Ointments	5, 7, 8, 24
Ophthalmic demulcents	25
Oral toxicity	22
Organ preservation	26
Oxidative decomposition	15

P

Parenterals	24
Particle size distribution	19, 25
Paste	27
Perfume sticks	27
Pharmaceutical Industry	6, 24, 25, 26
Pharmaceuticals	24
Phenol	18, 26
pH value	9
Physiological Properties	22
Platinum/cobalt colour	8
Product types (see Hazen colour)	5

Polyglykols	5
Powder characteristics	5, 19
Precipitation methods	23
Product description	8, 9
1,2-Propylene glycol	16, 18, 24
Pyrolysis	19

Q

Qualitative detection	23
-----------------------	----

R

Rate of biodegradation	30
Reactions	22
Reduction in water content	14
Refractive index	27

S

Safety	30
Shaving creams	27
Sieve analysis	19
Skin compatibility	22, 27
Skin lubricant	27
Soaps	27
Solidification point	8, 31
Solubility	14, 17, 18
Solubility in water	8, 10, 14, 24, 27
Solubilizers	10, 17, 25, 27
Soluble substances	17, 18
Sorbitol	16, 18, 27
Sorption isotherms	16
Specific heat	10
Stability	15, 16, 24, 27
Stabilizers	9, 15
Storage	31
Storage stability	16, 27, 31
Storage tanks	31
Structural analysis	6
Suppository mass	24
Surface tension	10

T

Tablet binder	25, 27
Tablet coatings	25, 27
Tablets	25, 27
Tabs	27
Taste	24, 27
Technical Data	8-9
Tetraethylene glycol	20
Tetraiodobismuthic acid	23
Thermal conductivity	10
Thermal decomposition	15, 19
Thermal stability	15
Thermogravimetric curve	19
Thin-layer chromatography	23
Toothpastes	27
Toxicity	22, 30
Trade names	5
Triethylene glycol	18, 20

V

Vapour pressure	9, 30
Viscosity	8, 10
Viscosity-temperature characteristics	11, 12, 13
Volatility	10, 15, 27
Volume contraction	14

W

Waste disposal	30
Water absorption	16
Water content	9, 14, 16
Water hazard class (WGK)	30

Z

Zahn-Wellens test	30
Zeisel method	23



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