

Yet another use found for nanoparticles

March 14 2006

University of Illinois scientists have found yet another use for nanoparticles -- use them to 'armor' lipid molecules.

Steve Granick, a professor of materials science, chemistry and physics, said such nanoparticle-studded capsules would have a variety of uses.

"You can treat them as if they were ... very durable objects," he told the Champaign (Ill.) News-Gazette. That would make the capsules useful for such purposes as delivering drugs to specific sites in the body or delivering DNA, proteins and other genetic material in gene therapies.

Granick and graduate student Liangfang Zhang created the tiny nanoparticle-covered capsules of biocompatible lipid molecules that, among other things, could be covered with other reactive molecules to become molecular-scale sensors to detect toxins, tumors, or similar properties, the News-Gazette reported.

The research, which appeared online recently ahead of publication in the journal Nano Letters, was funded by the U.S. Department of Energy.

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Citation: Yet another use found for nanoparticles (2006, March 14) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-03-nanoparticles.html>

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