

Capsules that clean: New-look laundry detergents head for supermarket shelves

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Consumers who remember laundry detergents from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s are about to get that déjà vu feeling — and younger people quite a surprise — as detergent manufacturers once again try a major repackaging of their products. Laundry capsules that contain single doses of detergent and take up less space than conventional detergents are set to make a comeback. That's the topic of an article in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*, weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

C&EN Assistant Managing Editor Michael McCoy explains that the technology behind films used to package the single doses of detergent have come a long way in the five decades since their debut. Previous versions of the encapsulating films interacted poorly with the detergent and had short shelf-lives. And another type of single-dose formulation — essentially a tablet of compressed laundry powders — didn't dissolve fully, leaving partially consumed chunks among the clean clothes.

In recent years, single-dose liquids packaged in polyvinyl alcohol film have caught on in the U.K. and France. The German company Henkel now has plans to market a similar "mono-dose" in the U.S. in the coming weeks, and Procter & Gamble plan to launch "Tide Pods" within a month. The same dose is used regardless of the amount of [laundry](#) that needs to be washed. Although the main technical challenges have been solved, experts say that "the jury is still out" on whether [consumers](#) are ready for these products.

More information: [Selling Detergents One Load At A Time -
cen.acs.org/articles/90/i4/Sel ... s-One-Load-Time.html](https://cen.acs.org/articles/90/i4/Selling-Detergents-One-Load-At-A-Time-2012-01-25)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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