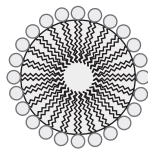


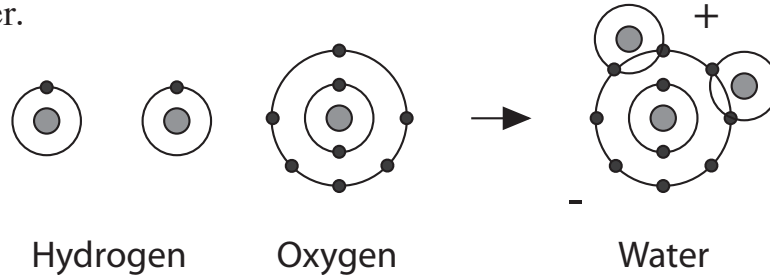
Emulsification

An Introduction to the
Emulsification
of
Lipids within a Watery Environment

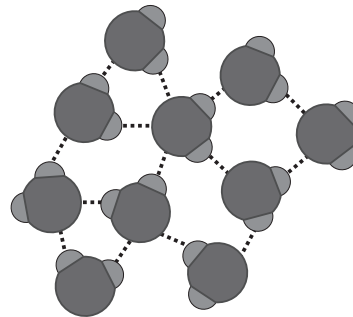


By Noel Ways

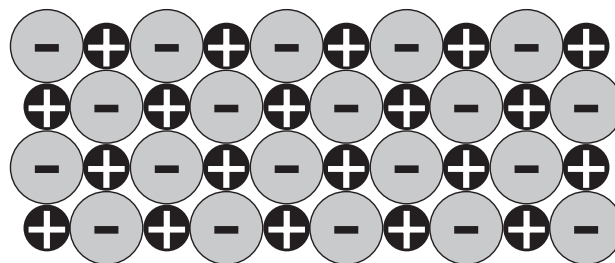
To begin the process of understanding emulsification, let's start with water. First, we note that water is a polar molecule due to its molecular structure. This polarity is due to the hydrogen being found at one side of the molecule. There is now an unequal distribution of charge, with more positively charged protons and one side, and more negatively charged electrons at the other.



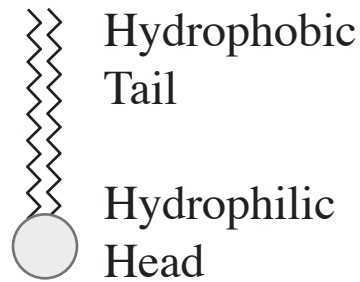
When water is in a liquid form, the polar characteristics of the water molecules will cause them to orient in such manner that the positively charged protons of the hydrogen will be attracted to the negatively charged oxygen. Such attractive forces create bonds called "hydrogen bonds".



Now consider the molecular structure of a salt. Here, atoms or molecules that make up the salt will have charges, due to their receiving or losing electrons so that the outer most electron shell can be full in order to achieve stability. See your text or lecture notes for a further explanation. In the absence of water these charged particles will be arranged in an alternating fashion due to the fact that "opposites attract".



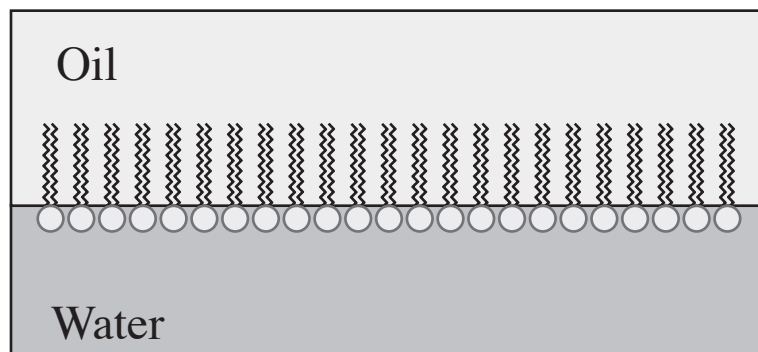
We can redraw a phospholipid to look like:



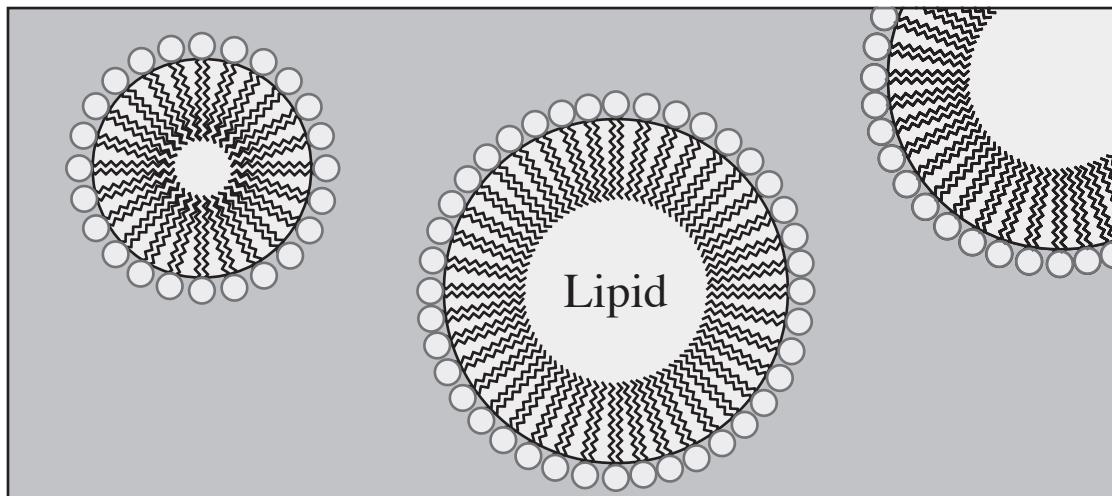
Turning our attention again to lipids, if we mix water and lipids together, they will separate, in part, due to the fact that lipids and water have no attraction toward each other.



Now, suppose we put phospholipids in the mixture illustrated above. We would find that the phospholipids would orient themselves in such manor that the charged ends (the hydrophilic heads) would be attracted to and in the water. The fatty acid hydrophobic ends, however, would be found in the oil as the fatty acids do not dissolve in water.



Suppose we take the oil/water mixture with phospholipids and shake it up. As expected, the oil would form droplets in the water. The phospholipids as shown on page 3 would orient themselves along the water/oil interface with the hydrophobic fatty acid tails in the oil and the charged hydrophilic heads in the water as the water being attracted to them.



Now, when the water "sees" the oil, it does not "see" the oil; but rather the charged heads of the phospholipids. The result is that the small droplets of oil now behaves like a salt. It does this because the phospholipids are acting like a "bridge" between the oil and the water. When this happens, the oil will remain suspended in the water, and we would say that the oil is emulsified.