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Standard Specification for Polyethylene Plastics for Medical Applications[1]

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1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers polyethylene plastics (as defined in Terminology D883) intended for use in medical device applications involving human tissue contact devices, short-term indwellings of 30 days or less, and fluid transfer devices. The biocompatibility of these materials as a class has not been established. Biocompatibility tests must be conducted on the final product.

1.2 This specification is not applicable to ultra-high molecular weight polyethylenes (UHMWPE) plastics, such as those used in joint implants, and so forth.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*[2]

D638 Test Method for Tensile Properties of Plastics

D671 Test Method for Flexural Fatigue of Plastics by Constant-Amplitude-of-Force (Withdrawn 2002)[3]

D695 Test Method for Compressive Properties of Rigid Plastics

D747 Test Method for Apparent Bending Modulus of Plastics by Means of a Cantilever Beam

D790 Test Methods for Flexural Properties of Unreinforced and Reinforced Plastics and Electrical Insulating Materials

D883 Terminology Relating to Plastics

D1238 Test Method for Melt Flow Rates of Thermoplastics by Extrusion Plastometer

D1505 Test Method for Density of Plastics by the Density-Gradient Technique

D1898 Practice for Sampling of Plastics (Withdrawn 1998)[3]

D4976 Specification for Polyethylene Plastics Molding and Extrusion Materials

E117 Method for Spectrographic Analysis of Pig Lead by the Point-to-Plane Technique (Withdrawn 1995)[3]

F748 Practice for Selecting Generic Biological Test Methods for Materials and Devices

2.2 *ISO Standard:*

ISO 10993 Biological Evaluation of Medical Devices[4]

3. Significance

3.1 This specification describes polyethylene plastics used in the manufacture of medical devices or components of medical devices. The properties listed should be considered in selecting material according to the specific end-use requirements.

4. Classification

4.1 Types of polyethylene plastics molding and extrusion material are described in Specification D4976.

5. General Requirements

5.1 Polyethylene plastics consist of basic polymers made with ethylene as essentially the sole monomer (as defined in Terminology D883).

5.2 Polyethylene for use in medical applications shall have a maximum extractable fraction, expressed as weight percent in polymer, in *n*-hexane of 5.5 % at 50°C.[5]

5.3 The formulated compound may contain optional adjuvant substances required in the production of the polymer or in the fabrication or intended use of the end product. The biocompatibility of these adjuvant substances shall be established on the finished compound (see Section 9).

[1] This specification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F04 on Medical and Surgical Materials and Devices and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F04.11 on Polymeric Materials.

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[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

[3] The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

[4] Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, http://www.ansi.org.

[5] *Federal Register*, Vol 21, Part 177.1520.