WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A composite comprising a microaggregate of polymer coated, nonionic surfactant stabilized particles of a substantially insoluble metal, metal salt or metal oxide, wherein the polymer is a water-soluble polymer or blend of water soluble polymers; wherein the microaggregates average from 5 microns to 50 microns in major dimension.

2. The composite of claim 1, wherein the polymer comprises hydroxypropylmethylcellulose.

3. The composite of any of claim 1 or 2, wherein the non-ionic surfactant is selected from the group consisting of polyoxyethylene-sorbitan-fatty acyl ester, a polyoxyethylene-sorbitan-fatty ether, a polyhydroxyethylene-fatty monoacyl ester, a polyhydroxyethylene-fatty diacyl ester, or a polyhydroxyethylene-fatty ether.

4. The composite of claim 3 wherein the surfactant comprises polysorbate 80.

5. The composite of any claim of claims 1 - 4, wherein the microaggregates are formed by spray drying a mixture comprising zinc oxide particles, surfactant and water-soluble polymer.

6. The composite of any claim of claims 1 - 5, wherein the microaggregates comprise zinc oxide particles coated with a cellulose ether polymer, are generally spherical in shape, and average 20 microns in major dimension.

7. An oral care composition comprising a plurality of composites according to any claim of claims 1 - 6.

8. The composition of claim 7, wherein the composition is a toothpaste.

9. Use of a plurality of composites according to any claim of claims 1 – 6 in the manufacture of a medicament for retarding the accumulation of dental plaque and/or calculus.

10. A method of making a composite according to any claim of claims 1 - 6, comprising

mixing a coating polymer and a substantially insoluble metal, metal salt or metal oxide and a surfactant, optionally together with a nonpolymer carrier and/or an antifoaming agent, in a suitable solvent or carrier,

spray-drying the mixture; and

recovering the composite thus obtained,

wherein the polymer is a water-soluble polymer or blend of water soluble polymers.

11. A composite according to any of claims 1 to 6 or a composition according to any of claims 7 or 8 for use in the retardation of the accumulation of dental plaque and/or calculus.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A composite comprising a microaggregate of polymer coated, surfactant stabilized particles of a substantially insoluble metal, metal salt or metal oxide, wherein the polymer is a water-soluble polymer or blend of water soluble polymers.

2. The composite of claim 1, wherein the polymer comprises hydroxypropylmethylcellulose.

3. The composite of any claim of claims 1 - 2, wherein the surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant.

4. The composite of Claim 3 wherein the non-ionic surfactant is selected from the group consisting of polyoxyethylene-sorbitan-fatty acyl ester, a polyoxyethylene-sorbitan-fatty ether, a polyhydroxyethylene-fatty monoacyl ester, a polyhydroxyethylene-fatty diacyl ester, or a polyhydroxyethylene-fatty ether.

5. The composite of claim 4 wherein the surfactant comprises polysorbate 80.

6. The composite of any claim of claims 1 - 5, wherein the microaggregates average from 5 microns to 50 microns in major dimension.

7. The composite of any claim of claims 1 - 6, wherein the microaggregates are formed by spray drying a mixture comprising zinc oxide particles, surfactant and water-soluble polymer.

8. The composite of any claim of claims 1 - 7, wherein the microaggregates comprise zinc oxide particles coated with a cellulose ether polymer, are generally spherical in shape, and average 20 microns in major dimension.

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9. An oral care composition comprising a plurality of composites according to any claim of claims 1 - 8.

10. The composition of claim 9, wherein the composition is a toothpaste.

11. A method for retarding the accumulation of dental plaque and/or calculus comprising contacting oral surfaces with a plurality of composites according to any claim of claims 1 - 8.

12. A method of making a composite according to any claim of claims 1 - 8, comprising

mixing a coating polymer and a substantially insoluble metal, metal salt or metal oxide and a surfactant, optionally together with a nonpolymer carrier and/or an antifoaming agent, in a suitable solvent or carrier,

spray-drying the mixture; and

recovering the composite thus obtained,

wherein the polymer is a water-soluble polymer or blend of water soluble polymers.

13. A composite according to any of claims 1 to 8 or a composition according to any of claims 9 or 10 for use in the retardation of the accumulation of dental plaque and/or calculus.

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