LESSON

23

Kidneys

# Solid Evidence

## Precipitation Reactions



Sometimes reactions between dissolved substances result in the formation of a solid. In your kidneys, for example, dissolved substances can react to form solid calcium oxalate. If there is enough of this solid, a painful blockage called a kidney stone can form.

Which substances precipitate from aqueous solutions?

To answer this question, you will explore

- Precipitation of Ionic Solids
- Solubility
- Toxicity of Precipitates

## Exploring the Topic

Precipitation of Ionic Solids

Sometimes certain anions and cations combine and come out of solution as a solid, or a precipitate. This kind of reaction is called a precipitation reaction.

The formation of kidney stones is an example of a precipitation reaction. If the concentrations of calcium ions, Ca2+, and polyatomic oxalate ions, C2O42-, in urine become too great, calcium oxalate, CaC2O4, precipitates as kidney stones.

Dissolved calcium chloride . Dissolved sodium oxalate

2NaCl(aq)

Dissolved sodium calcium chloride oxalate

CaC2O4(s) Solid

Kidney stone crystal

The equation for the formation of kidney stones shows that it is a double exchange reaction. Many other similar chemical combinations result in precipitation reactions.

### Example I

#### Precipitation of Lead Iodide

An aqueous solution of lead nitrate,  $Pb(NO_3)_2(aq)$ , is mixed with an aqueous solution of potassium iodide, KI(aq). The result is a bright yellow solid, lead iodide, PbI,(s), in a clear solution. Write a balanced chemical equation for this precipitation reaction.

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#### WEATHER CONNECTION

Precipitation can refer to either water coming out of the atmosphere as rain or snow, or compounds coming out of an aqueous solution as solids.



This is a double exchange reaction. The lead and potassium cations exchange anions with one another. Begin by writing an equation for what you know.

$$\begin{array}{c|c} & \text{Pb}(NO_3)_2(aq) + KI(aq) \longrightarrow \text{PbI}_2(s) + ? \\ \hline & \text{potassium} & \text{lead} \\ & \text{nitrate} & \text{iodide} & \text{iodide} \end{array}$$

The potassium ions, K+, and the nitrate ions, NO3-, combine in a 1:1 ratio to form KNO3.

$$Pb(NO_3)_2(aq) + KI(aq) \longrightarrow PbI_2(s) + KNO_3(aq)$$
 $lead$ 
 $potassium$ 
 $lead$ 
 $potassium$ 
 $load$ 
 $potassium$ 
 $potassium$ 
 $potassium$ 
 $potassium$ 
 $potassium$ 

Balance the equation.

$$Pb(NO_3)_2(aq) + 2KI(aq) \longrightarrow PbI_2(s) + 2KNO_3(aq)$$
 $lead potassium lead potassium nitrate iodide nitrate$ 

## Solubility

Ionic substances vary significantly as to how much they will dissolve in water. For some ionic substances, large quantities dissolve in water. These substances have a high solubility. For other ionic substances, only very small quantities dissolve. These substances have a low solubility. Substances with a low solubility tend to form precipitates in aqueous solutions.

Some ionic solids are more soluble than others. When a compound reaches the limits of its solubility, undissolved solid is visible.

You can use a solubility table such as the one shown here to determine the solubility of various ionic compounds. To use the table, combine a cation from the rows on the left with an anion from the columns on the right to determine i the compound formed is very soluble (S), insoluble, or not very soluble (N).

#### Solubility Trends

|  | Anions   |   |   |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
|  | NO <sub>3</sub> -  | CI-   | OH-   | SO <sub>4</sub> 2-   | CO32-  | C2O42-  | PO <sub>4</sub> <sup>3</sup>  |
| Most alkali metals,<br>such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>                         | S  | s   | S   | S  | S  | S   | s   |
| Most alkaline earth metals,<br>such as Mg <sup>2+</sup> , Ca <sup>2+</sup> , Sr <sup>2+</sup>  | s  | S.  | N   | s  | N  | N   | N   |
| Some Period 4 transition metals,<br>such as Fe <sup>3+</sup> , Co <sup>3+</sup> , Ni <sup>2+</sup> , Cu <sup>2+</sup> , Zn <sup>2+</sup> | s  | S   | N.  | S  | N  | N   | N   |
| Other transition metals,<br>such as Ag <sup>+</sup> , Pb <sup>2+</sup> , Hg <sup>2+</sup>  | S  | N,  | N   | N  | N  | N   | N   |
| and a Solid  | 1  | au (  | do 1  | my la  | ab/  | USUF  | 5   |
| BALLIM DAY UM  | p G  | oms   | )are  | 70   | ncal.  | 11, 0   | 1.7   |
|  | Some Period 4 transition metals, such as Fe <sup>3+</sup> , Co <sup>3+</sup> , Ni <sup>2+</sup> , Cu <sup>2+</sup> , Zn <sup>2+</sup> Other transition metals, such as Ag <sup>+</sup> , Pb <sup>2+</sup> , Hg <sup>2+</sup> | Most alkali metals, such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> Most alkaline earth metals, such as Mg <sup>2+</sup> , Ca <sup>2+</sup> , Sr <sup>2+</sup> Some Period 4 transition metals, such as Fe <sup>3+</sup> , Co <sup>3+</sup> , Ni <sup>2+</sup> , Cu <sup>2+</sup> , Zn <sup>2+</sup> Other transition metals, such as Ag <sup>+</sup> , Pb <sup>2+</sup> , Hg <sup>2+</sup> S  AHA A SOLO | Most alkali metals, such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> Most alkaline earth metals, such as Mg <sup>2+</sup> , Ca <sup>2+</sup> , Sr <sup>2+</sup> Some Period 4 transition metals, such as Fe <sup>3+</sup> , Co <sup>3+</sup> , Ni <sup>2+</sup> , Cu <sup>2+</sup> , Zn <sup>2+</sup> Other transition metals, such as Ag <sup>+</sup> , Pb <sup>2+</sup> , Hg <sup>2+</sup> S  MAN A SOLO | Most alkali metals, such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> Most alkaline earth metals, such as Mg <sup>2+</sup> , Ca <sup>2+</sup> , Sr <sup>2+</sup> Some Period 4 transition metals, such as Fe <sup>3+</sup> , Co <sup>3+</sup> , Ni <sup>2+</sup> , Cu <sup>2+</sup> , Zn <sup>2+</sup> Other transition metals, such as Ag <sup>+</sup> , Pb <sup>2+</sup> , Hg <sup>2+</sup> N  MATA SOLO | Most alkali metals, such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> S  Most alkaline earth metals, such as Mg <sup>2+</sup> , Ca <sup>2+</sup> , Sr <sup>2+</sup> Some Period 4 transition metals, such as Fe <sup>3+</sup> , Co <sup>3+</sup> , Ni <sup>2+</sup> , Cu <sup>2+</sup> , Zn <sup>2+</sup> Other transition metals, such as Ag <sup>+</sup> , Pb <sup>2+</sup> , Hg <sup>2+</sup> S  N  N  N  N  N  N  N  N  N  N  N  N | Most alkali metals, such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> S  Most alkali metals, such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> S  S  S  S  S  S  S  S  S  S  N  S  N  S  N  S  N  S  N  S  N  S  N  S  N  N | NO <sub>3</sub> CI OH SO <sub>4</sub> CO <sub>3</sub> C <sub>2</sub> O <sub>4</sub> Co <sub>2</sub> Most alkali metals, such as Li <sup>+</sup> , Na <sup>+</sup> , K <sup>+</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS |

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#### EARTH SCIENCE CONNECTION

Stalactites and stalagmites are caused by precipitation of solids from water that drips from cave walls. The word stalagmite comes from the Greek word for "drip." These beautiful cave structures are often formed from calcium carbonate.



## Example 2

#### Predicting Solid Products

some ionic solids are not very soluble.

Suppose that you combine aqueous calcium nitrate, Ca(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, with aqueous sodium phosphate, Na<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, and there is a double exchange reaction. Do you expect a precipitate to form?

Recall that in Unit 1: Alchemy, you characterized ionic solids as soluble in water.

This is true for many ionic solids. But as you can see from the solubility table,

#### Solution

First, write a balanced chemical equation for this reaction. You know that the two aqueous cations exchange anions:

$$3Ca(NO_3)_2(aq) + 2Na_3PO_4(aq) \longrightarrow Ca_3(PO_4)_2(?) + 6NaNO_3(?)$$

Next, use the solubility table to determine if there is a precipitate. According to the table, NaNO<sub>3</sub> is soluble in water, so it remains dissolved. Ca<sub>3</sub>(PO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub> is insoluble, so it forms a precipitate.

$$3Ca(NO_3)_2(aq) + 2Na_3PO_4(aq) \longrightarrow Ca_3(PO_4)_2(s) + 6NaNO_3(aq)$$

Reactions in aqueous solutions usually involve ions in solution. To describe what is happening, you can write a **complete ionic equation**, which shows all of the dissolved ions involved in the reaction. Examine the complete ionic equation for the reaction in Example 2.

$$3Ca^{2+}(aq) + 6NO_3^{-}(aq) + 6Na^{+} + 2PO_4^{3-}(aq) \xrightarrow{} Ca_3(PO_4)_2(s) + 6Na^{+} + 6NO_3^{-}$$

An ion that appears on both sides of a complete ionic equation and does not directly participate in the reaction is called a **spectator ion**. For example, Na<sup>+</sup> and NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> are spectator ions in this reaction. To write a more efficient equation for this reaction, you can cancel the spectator ions on each side of the equation:

$$3Ca^{2+}(aq) + 6N\Theta_3^-(aq) + 6Na^+ + 2PO_4^{3-}(aq) \longrightarrow Ca_3(PO_4)_2(s) + 6Na^+ + 6N\Theta_3^-$$

The result is a **net ionic equation** that describes the reaction in terms of only the ions that are involved in the reaction:

$$3Ca^{2+}(aq) + 2PO_4^{3-}(aq) \longrightarrow Ca_3(PO_4)_2(s)$$

#### Toxicity of Precipitates

There are positive and negative aspects to the solubility of toxic substances. On the one hand, if a substance is not very soluble, it might not react with anything, and it might pass through the body relatively unnoticed. For example, some metals that can be ingested go through our bodies without causing harm. (Imagine a child swallowing a nickel.) However, many metal compounds are soluble, and once our bodies absorb them, they can do long-term damage.

#### CAREER

#### CONNECTION

Doctors use a type of treatment called chelation therapy to treat patients who have had long-term exposure to metals like arsenic, mercury, or lead, usually in the workplace. In chelation therapy a compound is introduced into the bloodstream of the patient. This compound bonds with heavy metals, forming water-soluble products that are then passed out of the body.

