

Probing maltodextrins surface properties by atomic force microscopy: Interplay of glass transition and reconstitution properties

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1 PROBING MALTODEXTRINS SURFACE PROPERTIES BY

2 ATOMIC FORCE MICROSCOPY: INTERPLAY OF GLASS

3 TRANSITION AND RECONSTITUTION PROPERTIES

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12 Highlights:

- Glass transition significantly impacted maltodextrin reconstitution properties
- Surface topographies revealed surface smoothing above glass transition
- Surface nanoscale hollow formation was observed at the rubbery state
- Young modulus decreased significantly at the rubbery state

17

18 Abstract

Reconstitution kinetics of three maltodextrins powders with different dextrose-equivalent
(DE) values (low, intermediate, high DE) were evaluated under the glassy and rubbery states.

21 Reconstitution times were found mostly shear rate of agitation in water and DE dependent in

the glassy state, with shorter reconstitution times for high shear rates and DE. For powders 22 under the rubbery state, reconstitution times were less shear rate dependent, especially for 23 high DE values. To have a better understanding of powder surface features that can impact 24 reconstitution properties, single particles surface topographies and nanomechanical properties 25 were probed by Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM). It was shown that surface roughness was 26 higher for high DE maltodextrins under the glassy state, whereas a surface smoothing and 27 slight hollows formation was observed for all powders under the rubbery state. Also, a 28 29 significant reduction and uniformity of Young modulus at the particle surface were observed under the rubbery state. Finally, surface modification at microscale (smoothing and softening) 30 was linked to powder behavior evolution at macroscale (relative shear rate independence 31 during reconstitution) when the powder crosses the glass transition. 32

33

Keywords: Maltodextrin, Reconstitution, Glass transition, Powder, Surface topography,Nanoindentation.

36

38 1. INTRODUCTION

Powdered ingredients are involved in many manufacturing products and regularly used in 39 the food industry, primarily for their ease of use, handling, transport and extended storage 40 41 properties (Bhandari, 2013; Gaiani, Burgain, & Scher, 2013). Powders originate from the conversion of a liquid into a solid by various drying methods (such as spray-drying, freeze-42 drying, crystallization) or from size reduction processes (such as grinding, crushing, milling) 43 (Bhandari, 2013; Islam & Langrish, 2013; Ratti, 2013; Woo & Bhandari, 2013). Because of 44 these various origins and natures, powders physicochemical properties can be highly variable, 45 thus influencing their technofunctional properties. 46

Reconstitution ability of dehydrated products in aqueous media is one of the most relevant 47 functionalities to describe when one talk about food powders for industrial applications 48 (Crowley, Kelly, Schuck, Jeantet, & O'Mahony, 2016; Gaiani et al., 2007a; Selomulya & 49 Fang, 2013). For industrial applications, but also at the consumer level, quick and complete 50 51 reconstitution properties are generally prerequisites (Forny, Marabi, & Palzer, 2011; 52 Fournaise, Petit, & Gaiani, 2021). For example, coating or agglomeration processes are oftently used by industrials to improve powder reconstitution (Barringer, 2013; Cuq & 53 Mandato, 2013; Gaiani, Schuck, Scher, Desobry, & Banon, 2007b). Powder reconstitution is a 54 complex process that can be generally divided into four main steps including wetting, sinking, 55 dispersion and solubilization, which may sometimes occur concurrently (Crowley et al., 2016; 56 Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Fitzpatrick, Ji, & Mao, 2021; Forny, et al., 2011; Gaiani et al., 2007a; 57 Mitchell et al., 2014). Reconstitution conditions (e.g., shear rate, temperature, viscosity), 58 particle size, shape, and porosity, highly influence reconstitution kinetics (Selomulya & Fang, 59 60 2013; Crowley et al., 2016).

The glass transition is one of the most critical parameters to consider during powdersprocessing and storage. At a critical temperature, molecular mobility increases when an

amorphous solid undergoes from a glassy to a rubbery state (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007; Roos & 63 64 Drusch, 2016; Roudaut, Simatos, Champion, Contreras-Lopez, Le Meste, 2004; Yoshioka & Aso, 2007). This event is also highly dependent on relative humidity, as water plays the role 65 of a plasticizer. An increase of water content in the food powder is highly responsible for a 66 decrease in the glass transition temperature (Tg) (Roos, 2002; 2006). This phenomenon 67 consequently impacts powder properties. Particles become stickier because of increased 68 surface energy, enhancing interactions with materials that are in contact with powder surface. 69 70 Powders are also susceptible to forming strong cakes under the rubbery state (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007) and time-dependent crystallization phenomenon can occur (Wang & Truong, 2017). 71 72 Glass transition is also accompanied by a significant decrease of the Young modulus at the particle surface (Palzer, 2007). Thus, particle surface elastic behavior drastically changes 73 when the powder surface reaches the glass transition temperature. 74

75 Knowing that the powder surface is the first layer in contact with water during powder reconstitution, this later layer is expected to play a major role in this process. Powder surface 76 77 is therefore highly dependent on environmental conditions (i.e., temperature and relative humidity). In the past decade, numerous powder surface analysis techniques have been used 78 to further understand the role of the particle surface on the impairments of powder 79 80 functionalities. For example, microscopy techniques such as Scanning Electron Microscopy, Confocal Laser Scanning Microscopy or even chemical composition techniques such as X-ray 81 Photoelectron Spectroscopy are already widely used (Burgain et al., 2017; Murrieta-Pazos et 82 al., 2012). Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM) is currently a rising star in the food powder 83 surface analysis field, mainly due to its high-resolution capacity. AFM is such an unusual 84 85 microscopy technique based on the use of a probe (mounted on a cantilever), which can reconstruct the surface topography by sweeping the sample surface. This system gives AFM 86 87 its characteristic nanoscale sensitivity as the probe can record nanoscale height variation

thanks to a laser reflected towards the probe and detected by a photodiode (Burgain et al., 88 89 2017; Dufrene, 2002). AFM exhibits many advantages, such as nanoscale sensitive resolution capacity or the ability to analyze samples without pretreatment or vacuum conditions. 90 91 Additionally, AFM is also a versatile tool compared to other surface analysis techniques, as it allows to estimate surface roughness. For example, Burgain et al. (2016a) were able to better 92 understand surface modifications during high-temperature storage of whey protein isolate 93 powders. They studied surface roughness and highlighted the formation of hollow structures 94 related to improper storage conditions. Murrieta-Pazos et al. (2011) also used AFM to 95 investigate the particle structure and roughness of skim and whole milk powders evolution 96 during water adsorption. In addition to the topographical information, one of the other major 97 assets of this technique is its ability to study nanomechanical properties due to 98 nanoindentation experiments (Butt, Cappella, & Kappl, 2005; Gaboriaud & Dufrene 2007). 99 100 This technique allows the detection of very localized variations of surface elasticity, as data are then useful for building highly resolutive elasticity maps. Despite all these advantages, 101 102 powder nanoindentation experiments by AFM are mainly developed in the pharmaceutical 103 field to relate particle hardness to powder tableting and compaction (Wu, Li, & Mansour, 2010), to characterize mechanical properties of excipients particles (Liao & Wiedmann, 2003; 104 Masterson & Cao, 2008; Perkins et al., 2007; Ramos & Bahr, 2007) or to study particle-105 106 particle interactions in inhaled powders formulations (Arora et al., 2016; Berard et al., 2002; Traini, Young, Rogueda, & Price, 2006; Weiss, McLoughlin, & Cathcart, 2015; Young, 107 Tobyn, Price, Buttrum, & Dey, 2006). On the contrary, regarding the application in the food 108 powder field, nanoindentation experiments are scarcely used (Burgain, Scher, Petit, Francius, 109 & Gaiani, 2016b; Haider et al., 2013; Prime, Stapley, Rielly, Jones, & Leaper, 2011a; Prime 110 et al., 2011b). Knowing that AFM brings at the same time topographical and mechanical 111

information of powder surface at the particle scale, this technique could be relevant to obtaina deeper understanding of powders functionalities, such as reconstitution.

Carbohydrate-based powders, especially maltodextrins, can be found in many products and 114 115 are widely used in the food industry as thickener agents, for flavour enhancement, filmforming properties, encapsulating agents or even as excipients in pharmaceutical products 116 (Castro, Durrieu, Raynaud, & Rouilly, 2016; Descamps, Palzer, Roos, & Fitzpatrick, 2013; 117 118 Li, Pan, Ma, Miao, & Ji, 2020). Maltodextrins are polymer chains produced by the hydrolysis of starch. They are generally classified by their polymer chain length, estimated by the 119 120 Dextrose Equivalent (DE) value (Avaltroni, Bouquerand, & Normand, 2004; Chronakis, 121 1998). The different DE values are related to the hydrolysis degree and show very distinct functional properties. Low DE maltodextrins exhibit high viscosity and high Tg, whereas high 122 DE maltodextrins exhibit low viscosity and low Tg (Castro et al., 2016; Rong, Sillick, & 123 Gregson, 2009; Siemons, Politiek, Boom, van der Sman, & Schutyser, 2020). This makes the 124 choice of the DE of the maltodextrin matrix crucial. For example, mixtures with added 125 126 maltodextrins are commonly used on food powder to master the glass transition temperature (Fongin, Kawai, Harnkarnsujarit, & Hagura, 2017; Frascareli, Silva, Tonon, & Hubinger, 127 2012; Shrestha, Ua-arak, Adhikari, Howes, & Bhandari, 2007). Moreover, maltodextrins are 128 highly susceptible to caking phenomena, and their reconstitution properties are highly 129 dependent on the DE value. Indeed, high DE maltodextrins reconstitute faster (Dupas, Girard, 130 & Forny, 2017; Descamps et al., 2013). 131

Bringing new information about maltodextrins surface properties and the interplay between physical state and reconstitution properties is relevant to optimize powder uses in the food industry. The present study aims to provide a deeper understanding of maltodextrins reconstitution properties, depending on their physical state and molecular chain length (or DE), while bringing new insights about particle surface properties using AFM.

137 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

138 **2.1. Material**

139 Maltodextrin powders with three different DE values were employed in the present study. Higher DE values correspond to more enzymatically hydrolyzed products than those with 140 lower DE values. Spray-dried maize maltodextrins with DE 4-7 (i.e., low DE) and 16.5-19 141 (i.e., high DE) were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (Saint-Louis, Missouri, USA) and those 142 with DE 12 (i.e., intermediate DE) were purchased from Roquette Frères (Lestrem, France). 143 Maltodextrins were chosen to cover a range of DE between 4 and 19. DE values higher than 144 20 are considered to be dextrins or glucose syrups (Chronakis, 1998) which usually are in a 145 liquid state. 146

147 **2.2. Powder physical properties**

148 2.2.1. Glass transition temperature (Tg)

Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) was used to determine the Tg. DSC was 149 150 calibrated using Indium metal as a standard. For the calibration, 5 repetitions were made, each with 3 sequent heating segments and with a heating rate of 20 °C/min. A first heating ramp 151 from 20 to 210 °C was performed, followed by a cooling to 50 °C. Then, a second heating 152 ramp from 50 to 210 °C and another cooling to 50 °C was also done. A third and final heating 153 ramp to 210 °C was also performed. Finally, to ensure good DSC calibration, onset melting 154 155 point was determined on the second and third heating curves. This later should be measured at 156.6 °C within a range of 0.2 °C. 156

Powders samples were first equilibrated at different water activities (a_w) thanks to a climatic chamber (Climacell, MMM Medcenter, Fisher Bioblock Scientific, Illkirch, France), which allowed to control relative humidity (RH) and temperature. For this purpose, powders were deposited under a thin layer on petri dishes to allow RH and temperature equilibrium. 161 When the equilibrium relative humidity (ERH) is reached, a_w is equal to the ERH divided by 162 100 (i.e. $a_w = ERH/100$). Thus, a_w can be adjusting by controlling the relative humidity 163 (Kong & Singh, 2016). In order to reach very low a_w , phosphorus pentoxide (P₂O₅) was 164 employed for equilibrium which is known to be a desiccant salt (0% RH).

Before DSC experiments (DSC2500 discovery series from TA Instruments, Hüllhorst, Germany), a_w was measured for each sample thanks to a HygroPalm23- a_w portable device (Rotronic, France) at room temperature (22 ± 2 °C).

Equilibrated powders (10 - 15 mg) were hermetically sealed in aluminium Tzero pans (TA Instruments, Hüllhorst, Germany). An empty pan was used as a reference and nitrogen as a carrier gas. Samples were first equilibrated for 1 min at - 60 °C. This step was followed by a first heating ramp up to 180 °C (10 °C/min) in order to erase the thermal history of the sample. Pans were then equilibrated for 1 min at 180 °C and cooled to the initial temperature of - 60 °C (10 °C/min). A second heating ramp was finally performed up to 180 °C (10 °C/min).

T_g was determined thanks to the heat flow change on the second heating ramp with the TRIOS analysis software (TA Instruments, Hüllhorst, Germany). The half slope height method was used to calculate the midpoint T_g . The onset and endset point of the glass transition events were also determined. All measurements were performed in triplicate and T_g values were averaged.

180 **2.2.2. Particle size distribution**

The particle size distribution was analyzed using a Mastersizer MS3000 (Malvern Instruments, UK) with Aero S air unit which allows powder dispersion. In order to obtain a good laser obscuration, analytical conditions were defined with the following parameters: air pressure at 2 bars, hopper length of 2 mm, powder feed rate between 20 - 30%. Finally, classical descriptors were used to estimate particle size distributions (D_{10} , D_{50} , D_{90}). These parameters represent the diameters for which 10%, 50% or 90% have lower sizes. The Span was also used to estimate the width of the particle size distribution and is calculated thanks to **Equation 1**. Experiments were performed in triplicate.

189
$$Span = \frac{D_{90} - D_{10}}{D_{50}}$$
 eq (1)

190 <u>2.2.3. Numeric microscopy</u>

Maltodextrin particles were observed thanks to a Dinolite AM73915MZT numeric 191 microscope. A small powder quantity was gently dispersed on a petri dish and was then 192 equilibrated under a range of RH within 30 to 70% and temperature under a range of 20 to 80 193 °C, thanks to a climatic chamber (Climacell, MMM Medcenter, Fisher Bioblock Scientific, 194 Illkirch, France) as described in 2.2.1. Particles morphology was then characterized thanks to 195 microscopy for all conditions and classified as individual particles, caked particles or liquid 196 state. For each maltodextrin powder, 20 conditions were tested in the range 0.3 - 0.7 water 197 activity vs. 20 – 80 °C temperature. For each condition, at least 10 pictures were taken. 198

199 2.3. Single particle surface characterization by Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM)

All AFM measurements were performed in air and at 22 ± 2 °C using a Flex-Axiom (Nanosurf, Liestal, Switzerland) with the Nanosurf C3000 controller software.

202 2.3.1. Sample preparation and single particle selection

Maltodextrins powders were fixed on a circular cover made of borosilicate glass (12 mm radius, 0.13 - 0.17 mm thickness). Powders were gently dispersed on a thin layer of epoxy glue spread on the glass. The samples were left overnight under controlled temperature and RH conditions (as described in 2.2.1.) in order to be in a glassy or rubbery state for AFM 207 experiments. Single particles were selected for analysis using a micrometer-scale camera208 mounted on the AFM device.

209 **2.3.2. Surface topography and roughness analysis**

Surface topographies were acquired in air thanks to contact mode. The cantilevers used to 210 image the powder surface (Stat0.2LauD cantilevers from Nanosurf, Liestal, Switzerland) have 211 a theoretical spring constant (k_c) of about 0.2 N/m. The scan rate was set at 0.8 s/line. 212 Scanned areas were of $10 \,\mu\text{m} \times 10 \,\mu\text{m}$; $5 \,\mu\text{m} \times 5 \,\mu\text{m}$ or $1 \,\mu\text{m} \times 1 \,\mu\text{m}$ with a resolution of 256 213 points × 256 lines. A PID (Proportionnal, Integrative, Derivative) retroaction loop allows to 214 keep constant the cantilever oscillation amplitude. The average surface roughness (Sa) was 215 estimated after levelling AFM images thanks to a second order polynomial filter (Eaton & 216 West, 2010), and was calculated on scanned areas thanks to the equation 2. 217

218
$$Sa = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} |y_i|$$
 eq (2)

where y is the height (z) measured by the piezoelectric scanner at a given pixel (i) in theimage. At least 3 images were analyzed to be able to average the surface roughness value.

Finally, height and roughness profiles for a line were extracted from raw data to be able to
highlight slight or localized variations on surface roughness (C3000 software, Nanosurf,
Liestal, Switzerland).

224 2.3.3. Mapping nanomechanical properties: Young modulus (E)

AFM nanomechanical properties experiments were performed thanks to cantilevers (DYN190Al-10 cantilevers, Nanosurf, Liestal, Switzerland) with a radius curvature lower than 10 nm. The first step consisted of AFM device calibration before any measurement.

Spring constant was calculated thanks to the thermal calibration method (Levy & Maaloum, 2002) and was estimated to be about 20-30 N/m.

230 Deflection sensitivity also needed to be calibrated with a sample (i.e, glass or silicon) harder than the stiffness of cantilever. This calibration consisted of press and retract 231 movements of the tip on the stiff surface to record five force-distance curves in order 232 to link the cantilever deflection, measured by photodiodes, to the z-axis movement of 233 the scanner. Thus, the displacement gradient of the z-axis piezoelectric scanner related 234 to cantilever deflection allows itself to convert the voltage measured by photodiodes 235 into a reference deflection in nanometer per volts. Generally, this deflection sensitivity 236 was about 80 nm/V and was considered acceptable when the deviation was under 5% 237 238 (Clifford & Seah, 2005).

To investigate the surface Young modulus of single particles, 1024 force-distance curves were recorded on a grid of 32×32 pixels on a 10 µm ×10 µm area. AFM tip modulation time was set at 250 ms and distance range at 1 µm. Thanks to the previously calculated spring constant, the cantilever deflection can be converted into a force thanks to the Hooke's law (Equation 3).

$$F = -k_c \times d \qquad \text{eq (3)}$$

Where F is the Force (N), k_c the cantilever spring constant (N/m) and d the distance (nm).
Thus, maximal load at the particle surface was set at 50 nN. All force-distance curves were
individually analyzed thanks to the ANA Software (Nanosurf, Liestal, Switzerland). Young
modulus (E), also called elastic modulus, was thus analyzed on approach curves using the
Hertz Theory for elastic media using conical indenters (Calabri, Pugno, Menozzi, & Valeri,
2008; Cardenas-Perez et al., 2019; Clifford & Seah, 2005; Hertz, 1882) (Equation 4).

252
$$F = \frac{2E \tan \alpha}{\pi (1 - v^2)} \,\delta^2$$
 eq (4)

Where F is the force applied (N), E the Young modulus (Pa), υ the Poisson constant, δ the indentation depth (m) and α the top angle of the tip. Poisson ratio of polymers varies between 0.3 and 0.5. A variation of the Poisson ratio of 0.1 will result in a maximal variation error of the Young modulus value of less than <10% (Dokukin & Sokolov, 2012). Thus, Poisson ratio was set at 0.5, which is the value generally used for AFM indentation on biological samples (Shojaei et al., 2013; Guz, Dokukin, Kalaparthi, Sokolov et al., 2014).

Finally, the analysis of the 1024 approach curves and the Young modulus calculation allow to build highly resolutive elasticity maps. The whole experimental process is summarized in **Figure 1**. At least three elasticity maps were done on independent particles in order to ensure experiment repeatability.

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264



267 **<u>2.4. Powder reconstitution properties</u>**

In order to identify the impact of the material (i.e., glass transition phenomenon and DE value) and the stirring rate, the reconstitution ability was measured thanks to a conductimeter (SevenCompact S230, Mettler Toledo, Greifensee, Switzerland) calibrated with a KCl solution (at 1413 μ S/cm). The setup was made up of an agitated and instrumented vessel (250 ml beaker with a magnetic stirrer of 6 × 20 mm), in which the temperature was controlled and maintained at 25 °C thanks to a thermostated water bath Eco Gold (Lauda, Germany). The conductivity of the solution was followed during the whole reconstitution. This experimental setup was chosen to be in adequation with the standard geometric ratio established by Rushton, Costich, & Everett (1950) and was inspired by Mitchell et al., (2014) and Fournaise, et al., (2021).

Five grams of maltodextrin powder for a final volume of one hundred milliliter were weighed (5% w/v). Shear rate was set at 500, 750, 1 000, 1 250 and 1 500 rpm. Finally, the powder was poured all in once in the instrumented vessel after 10 s and the conductivity was measured every second during the whole reconstitution, allowing to plot reconstitution kinetic curves. Reconstitution was considered as over when the solution reached 90% of its maximal conductivity.

During powder reconstitution, conductivity evolves from an initial value of 0 μ S/cm to a final and maximal value which depends on the powder nature. Thus, conductivity values were normalized according to **Equation 5**. (Fournaise et al., 2021) (Gaudel et al., 2022).

287
$$c(t) = \frac{\kappa(t) - k_{ini}}{k_{end} - k_{ini}}$$
 eq (5)

288 Where c(t) is the normalized conductivity, $\kappa(t)$ the conductivity at a time t, k_{ini} the initial 289 distilled water conductivity and k_{end} the final conductivity. Finally, reconstitution kinetics 290 curves were plot thanks to SigmaPlot (Systat Software Inc, San Jose, California, USA).

291 **<u>2.5. Statistical analyses</u>**

Statistical analyses were carried out using the OriginPro Software (OriginLab, Northampton, United States). Data were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA and means were compared thanks to the Tukey-HSD test at a level of significance of p < 0.05.

295

3. <u>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</u>

296 3.1. Maltodextrin glass transition

For the three maltodextrins, onset Tg values were determined on DSC curves at different 297 298 beforehand equilibrated a_w (Appendix A). Figure 2 shows that a_w and DE values are two important factors influencing the glass transition for maltodextrin powders. Tg values, 299 300 whatever the DE, tended to decrease with increased water activity. This phenomenon was attributed to the plasticizing effect of water, which can be modelled using the Gordon-Taylor 301 equation (Roos, 2002; Palzer, 2007). Water increases the molecular mobility of the polymer 302 303 chains by creating hydrogen bonds. This plasticization phenomenon thus expands the free 304 volume, allowing the overall molecular mobility, leading to a decrease of Tg (Castro et al., 2016; White & Lipson, 2016). Also, a clear tendency of Tg appears related to the DE values. 305 For a given a_w, the Tg value decreases when the DE increases, meaning that maltodextrin 306 molecular weight is directly correlated to the Tg. Maltodextrins with higher DE values exhibit 307 a lower molecular weight distribution and a lower polymer chain length which directly 308 impacts their physical behavior (Avaltroni et al., 2004; Rong et al., 2009; Siemons et al., 309 310 2020). Moreover, heating at high temperatures during the DSC measurements did not involve 311 other thermal events on maltodextrins. Castro et al. 2016 also studied the thermal stability of 312 maltodextrins on a large DE value range. A first stage of dehydration was observed within the range of 25 to 150 °C and an onset decomposition temperature around 260 °C for all 313 maltodextrins, meaning that maltodextrins can withstand temperature up to 250 °C. 314





Figure 2. Glass transition onset temperature (Tg) for different maltodextrins depending on their water activity
 (aw) represented by the midpoint value

However, when the material undergoes glass transition with a_w and/or temperature increase, powders physical properties are impacted. Indeed, maltodextrin particles can be observed as individual or agglomerated particles. They can also be found at the liquid state when the powder is equilibrated at high a_w values. A qualitative map (one for each DE value) of these various material states is displayed in **Figure 3**, which shows particles morphology between 0.3-0.7 a_w and 20-80 °C.





Figure 3. Qualitative map of particle morphology (A. low DE; B. intermediate DE; C. high DE) under controlled
temperature and relative humidity conditions observed thanks to numeric microscopy (colored crosses, yellow
for individual particles, orange for caked particles and red for liquid state). Particle morphology was checked
under each temperature/a_w condition. The glass transition curve is represented by a colored area which is
comprised between the Tg onset and endset. Experimental conditions to set powders under the glassy or the
rubbery state for the rest of the experiments are identified in the qualitative map as black circle (glassy state) or
black triangle (rubbery state).

As it can be highlighted from **Figure 3**, powders are initially well-dispersed. With the increase of a_w, a caking phenomenon is observed and is directly correlated to the glass transition region. In addition to its plasticizing effect, the increase in water activity is somehow correlated to the caking phenomenon, primarily because of the water sensitivity and hygroscopicity. Thus, powders are susceptible to form strong undesired aggregates from the onset of the glass transition, by the formation of liquid then solid bridges, as shown in the study of Descamps et al., (2013) on caking behavior of high DE value maltodextrins. Also, at very high aw, high DE maltodextrins were found to be at the liquid state, due to the saturationof the powder with water.

Above glass transition temperature, molecular mobility increases critically (Roudaut et al., 341 342 2004; Yoshioka & Aso, 2007). Thus, a time-dependent phenomenon of crystallization of low molecular weight components may occur if the powder is under rubbery state conditions, as it 343 is the case of lactose or fructose for example (Roos & Karel, 1992; Roos, 2002; Saavedra-344 345 Leos et al., 2014; Wang & Truong, 2017). As maltodextrins are relatively long polymer chains, depending on the DE, they are unlikely subject to crystallization. However, high DE 346 maltodextrins exhibit shorter polymer chains and crystallization of maltose or dextrose only 347 348 could be possible. Microstructure of different DE values was already detailed in the literature. Thanks to X-ray diffraction, it was shown that diffraction pattern of different DE 349 maltodextrins, at a large range of a_w, shows an amorphous structuration, which remains for all 350 DE and at all the water activities (Saavadra-Leos, Leyva-Porras, Araujo-Diaz, Toxqui-Teran 351 & Borras-Enriquez, 2015). However, to minimize issues encountered at the rubbery state, 352 353 powder samples need to be stored the nearest possible to the endset region of Tg. As higher DE maltodextrins show lower Tg values, they need to be stored at the lower water activity 354 possible under the rubbery state. 355

Powders were stored at the experimental conditions described in Table 1 in order to be in a
glassy (i.e., < Tg) or a rubbery state (i.e., > Tg) as presented on qualitative maps into Figure 3
by a black circle or triangle respectively.

Table 1. Powder storage conditions to keep the powders under a glassy or a rubbery state.

	GLASSY STATE		RUBBERY STATE	
	RH (%)	Temperature (°C)	RH (%)	Temperature (°C)
low DE	0	20	60	80
intermediate DE	0	20	50	80
high DE	0	20	40	80

361 **3.2.** Powders reconstitution ability

The reconstitution time was investigated for maltodextrin stored under or above the Tg by following the reconstitution kinetics. Reconstitution times were evaluated by considering the reconstitution as over when conductivity value reaches 90% of its maximal value. Examples of reconstitution kinetic curves, before and after normalization are given in **Appendix B**. **Figure 4** shows that reconstitution times seem to directly depend on the DE value, the powders glassy/rubbery state and the shear rate.



Figure 4. Reconstitution times of maltodextrins with different DE values, under glassy or rubbery states and at different shear rates. Statistical analyses were carried out using OriginPro Software using a one-way ANOVA test and Tukey-HSD means comparison method (**: $p \le 0.01$; *: $p \le 0.05$).



The reconstitution times observed for the three maltodextrins prove the DE values' crucial 373 374 role and thus of the molecular weight (Figure 4). First, a tendency for faster reconstitution times is observed when the DE values increase whatever the stirring rate and the 375 glassy/rubbery state. This reconstitution improvement is particularly strong between low and 376 intermediate DE values but not significant between intermediate and high DE values. The 377 tendency of shorter reconstitution times with the increase of the DE value is confirmed under 378 379 the glassy and the rubbery state. That means that lower molecular weight powders (i.e., high DE) tend to reconstitute faster. Thus, the hydrolyzing process upstream of the powder 380 manufacturing is determinant to anticipate the reconstitution of the powder, knowing that 381 382 maltodextrin powders are derivate products of starch hydrolysis. The first reconstitution step, the wettability, may explain the reconstitution differences observed. Indeed, the powder 383 wettability was observed to be longer when the DE value was lower, as it also shown by the 384 385 reconstitution kinetics (Appendix C). This observation was supported by Dupas et al., (2017), who studied the contact angle of maltodextrins powders (DE 2, 6 and 29) with water. This 386 later was lower for higher DE value maltodextrins, meaning that low molecular weight 387 maltodextrins should present a better wettability and thus better reconstitution times. Longer 388 reconstitution times for low DE maltodextrins could also be related to the solution viscosity. 389 390 Low DE maltodextrins solutions are more viscous than those with high DE values. The high viscosity is directly related to the molecular weight (Castro et al., 2016; Dokic, Jakovljevic, & 391 Dokic-Baucal, 1998; Dokic, Jakovljevic, & Dokic, 2004; Siemons et al., 2020, Juszczak, 392 Galkowska, Witczak, & Fortuna, 2013). Knowing that, low DE powders may lead to poor 393 water diffusion between intra and interparticular pores, thus delaying the wetting time and 394 increasing the overall reconstitution time (Ong, Taylor, & Ramaioli, 2020). 395

The impact of glass transition on reconstitution can also be highlighted in **Figure 4**. Reaching the Tg for powders under the rubbery state gives systematically shorter

reconstitution times for low and intermediate DE values. This may be first related to the fact 398 399 that particle surface is more hydrated, as powders are at higher a_w in the rubbery state, as detailed in experimental conditions defined in Table 1. However, this is only true for low and 400 intermediate DE maltodextrins, as differences in the reconstitution times between the glassy 401 and the rubbery state tend to attenuate with higher DE values. Indeed, there are no significant 402 differences in the reconstitution times for high DE powders between the glassy and the 403 rubbery state. To better understand these differences, the impact of particle size should be 404 taken into account. The glass transition is most of the time accompanied by caking, making 405 interparticular forces (such as liquid or solid bridges) stronger. This phenomenon may delay 406 407 the reconstitution times by the formation of lumps during powder reconstitution, making the dispersion step more difficult (Dupas et al., 2017; Fitzpatrick, 2021; Roos, 2002). In order to 408 see if there is a possible impact of particle size on powders reconstitution time, particle size 409 410 distribution was evaluated (Figure 5).



GLASSY STATE	D ₁₀ (μm)	D ₅₀ (μm)	D ₉₀ (μm)	Span
Low DE	27.4 ± 0.7	91.6 ± 2.0	220 ± 2.6	2.10 ± 0.1
Intermediate DE	11.4 ± 0.5	86.7 ± 1.7	204.3 ± 15.3	2.20 ± 0.2
High DE	14.5 ± 0.1	42.5 ± 0.3	204.3 ± 2.1	1.98 ± 0.1

RUBBERY STATE	D ₁₀ (μm)	D ₅₀ (μm)	D ₉₀ (μm)	Span
Low DE	29.5 ± 0.3	93.0 ± 1.4	253.3 ± 43.1	2.0 ± 0.1
Intermediate DE	12.0 ± 0.2	88.7 ± 2.6	271.0 ± 9.0	2.3 ± 0.1
High DE	16.3 ± 0.1	55.2 ± 1.1	142.6 ± 7.2	2.3 ± 0.1

411

412 Figure 5. Maltodextrins (low, intermediate, and high DE values) particle size distribution under glassy and

413

rubbery states.

It can be highlighted that low and high DE powders presented a monomodal particle size 414 distribution while intermediate DE presented a bimodal distribution. The impact of glass 415 transition on particle size and the width of particle size distribution was only observed for 416 high DE maltodextrins with a D₅₀ increase from 42.5 µm to 55.2 µm. No significative 417 differences were found between the glassy and the rubbery state conditions for low and 418 intermediate DE maltodextrins. Therefore, particles size was not directly correlated to both 419 420 the DE value and the powder glassy or rubbery state. However, those results could explain the reconstitution times obtain at low shear rates, as particle hydration and swelling could be 421 responsible of lumping tendency, especially for low DE maltodextrins, making particles 422 423 dispersion more difficult, thus making reconstitution longer.

424 3.2.3. Shear rate effect

425 Beyond the material effect (i.e. DE values and glassy/rubbery state), the reconstitution time was also directly dependent on the shear rate (Figure 4). The increase of the shear rate from 426 427 500 to 1500 rpm decreases significantly the reconstitution time whatever the powder. For 428 example, the reconstitution time decreases 99% under the glassy state and 97% under the 429 rubbery state for low DE powders and it varies in the same way for the other DE value maltodextrins. These results agree with those in the literature, describing that high shear rate 430 431 allows logically shorter reconstitution times, and is also useful to prevent lump formation or sedimentation, especially for maltodextrins powders (Mitchell et al., 2014). Differences 432 between the reconstitution times for all maltodextrins tend to attenuate with the increase of 433 the solution stirring. Indeed, high shear rates allow instant reconstitution properties, whatever 434 the powder. However, a high variability for the reconstitution time is noticed at high shear 435 436 rates (1250 rpm), as it is particularly the case for high DE maltodextrins in the rubbery state and to a lesser extent in the glassy state. 437

Also, the shear rate seems to improve the reconstitution time, but the impact is not the 438 439 same depending on the material's physical state. Until now, only a few works accurately describe the effect of both shear rate and powder physical state on reconstitution. Gaudel et 440 441 al., (2022) studied the impact of the glass transition on different fruit-based powders and highlighted that reconstitution rate was impacted by the powder physical state. They observed 442 that fruits powders under the glassy state were shear rate dependent, while the same powders 443 444 under a rubbery state were shear rate independent. A viscous layer was formed at the particle 445 surface for powders under a rubbery state, preventing water from diffusing. Our results are in agreement with this study as maltodextrin powders under the glassy state were found more 446 447 shear rate dependent than powders under the rubbery state. Nevertheless, shear rate differences between glassy and rubbery powders reconstitution times were attenuated by the 448 increase of DE, showing its strong impact. 449

All these results agree with the role of the powder physical (glassy/rubbery) and chemical (DE values) properties on reconstitution. In particular, the shear rate applied to reconstitute the powders was found to have a greater impact when the material is under the glassy state, meaning that increasing stirring improves reconstitution properties. The results also highlighted that wetting seems to be a determining step of powders reconstitution behavior at low shear rates, especially for maltodextrins (Dupas et al., 2017).

456 3.3. Probing single particle surface properties by Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM)

457 AFM is a powerful and resolutive tool to analyze the surface of food powders. This 458 technique is also very versatile as it allows to characterize with a nanoscale precision the 459 surface topography, its roughness and the nanomechanical properties of single particles 460 (Burgain et al., 2017; Murrieta-Pazos et al., 2012).

461 **<u>3.3.1. Surface topography and roughness analysis</u>**

462 AFM topographies and their associated height profiles performed under the glassy or 463 rubbery states on single maltodextrins particles are displayed in **Figure 6**.



465 Figure 6. A. AFM deflection views of all maltodextrins under glassy (left) or rubbery (right) experimental conditions. B. Height profiles under glassy (left) or rubbery (right)
 466 states associated to the previous topographies. Dash lines in A. are corresponding to the height profiles extracted from raw data in B.

Powders surface topography seem to be directly correlated to the DE value, especially 467 when they are under the glassy state (Figure 6A). By taking a closer look at the height 468 profiles of powders under the glassy state, increasing the DE value makes the surface more 469 levelled with a lot of irregularities (Figure 6B). Thus, low DE maltodextrins appear to have a 470 more regular surface and smooth than higher DE maltodextrins. To highlight the effect of the 471 DE values on surface topography, the average surface roughness (Sa) was calculated on $10 \times$ 472 473 10 µm scanned areas, according to Equation 2. Extracted roughness profiles from acquired images are also displayed in Figure 7A. 474



476 Figure 7. Low, intermediate, and high DE maltodextrins roughness profiles under the glassy (A.) or rubbery (B.)
477 state experimental conditions

475

Thus, low DE maltodextrins were the ones with the lowest estimated average surface 478 roughness value (Sa = 12.36 ± 5.59 nm) under a glassy state. Then, a localized increase in the 479 surface roughness was observed for intermediate DE maltodextrins (Sa = 79.09 ± 26.56 nm) 480 followed by high DE maltodextrins (Sa = 128.83 ± 25.36 nm). That means that the more the 481 maltodextrin is hydrolyzed, the higher the global overall particle surface roughness will be. 482 Thanks to SEM, Takeiti et al. (2010) evidenced the effect of the botanical source and the 483 drying process conditions on the size and shape of produced maltodextrin powders. Siemons 484 et al. (2020) highlighted the effect of the DE value on the particle morphology in a single 485

sessile droplet drying. Low DE value maltodextrins were generally smoothly shaped particles 486 487 with large cavities. The opposite can be observed for high DE value maltodextrins presenting many surface irregularities. Here, for the first time, AFM was used to evidence localized 488 variations of the surface roughness of maltodextrins correlated to their DE value, showing that 489 high DE value maltodextrins exhibit a much more irregular surface than those by a lower DE 490 491 value. These variations on particles surface topographies could also explain the better 492 reconstitution times observed at low shear rates for high DE value maltodextrins compared to lower ones (Figure 4). An increase of the overall surface roughness at the particle surface 493 could enhance the contact with water, by increasing the surface area in contact with the 494 495 reconstitution media, thus allowing shorter reconstitution times. On the best knowledge of authors, the effect of surface roughness on reconstitution properties is poorly described in the 496 literature. A few studies detailing how roughness can influence contact with water were 497 498 reported on other food materials, such as spaghettis. Their rehydration kinetics were improved by altering the overall surface roughness by the use of different dies during manufacturing. It 499 500 was shown that low surface roughness materials had longer rehydration times compared to 501 higher surface roughness materials, meaning that measuring roughness was relevant when it comes to reconstitution kinetics, as it could be an enhancer of contact with water (Ogawa & 502 Adachi, 2014, Ogawa & Adachi, 2017). 503

The impact of glass transition on single-particle topography and surface roughness can also be highlighted (**Figure 6**) (**Figure 7B**). The surface appears much smoother when the material is rubbery than when it is in the glassy state. Average surface roughness was estimated to be 8.70 ± 2.30 nm for low, 6.19 ± 5.34 nm for intermediate and 7.82 ± 4.45 nm for high DE values. This surface smoothing observed under the rubbery state could be explained by the increased water adsorbed as a thin layer at the particle surface, when powders are exposed to high relative humidity. These results could also be related to the reconstitution times (**Figure** 4). Improved reconstitution times were observed under the rubbery state due to a more
hydrated surface layer. This enhanced the powder wettability, thus allowing lower
reconstitution times, except for high DE maltodextrins.

In addition to the overall surface smoothing, the glass transition was accompanied by the formation of slight hollow zones of about 3 to 10 nm, as shown in **Figure 6**. This kind of hollow area, which seems to appear randomly, could be related to water adsorption at the particle surface followed by a swelling phenomenon. Indeed, the swelling observed by Deslandes et al., (2019) for carbohydrates polymers at a temperature range within 60 to 80 °C corresponds to the experimental conditions used in this work (**Table 1**).

520 <u>3.3.2. Mapping single particles nanomechanical properties</u>

Another use of AFM is the analysis of the Young modulus at the particle surface by the generation of elasticity mapping, giving information about single particles nanomechanics. Elasticity mapping and associated distribution histograms of all maltodextrins are displayed in **Figure** 8.



Figure 8. Young modulus mapping (10×10 μm) and associated distribution histograms for maltodextrin single particles. A. under a glassy state and B. under a rubbery state
 (Up: low DE; middle: intermediate DE; bottom: high DE)

In the glassy state, all maltodextrins show two Young modulus populations (Figure 8A) 528 529 with a distribution rather scattered and presenting nanoscale slight variations. Glassy state maltodextrins exhibit two Young modulus populations with a gaussian distribution. Thus, low 530 531 DE maltodextrins modulus distribution was calculated at 1.22 ± 0.06 GPa for the first population and 2.84 ± 0.04 GPa for the second one. In the same way, modulus of intermediate 532 DE maltodextrins was estimated at 1.79 ± 0.02 GPa and 2.81 ± 0.33 GPa and was about 1.19 533 534 \pm 0.03 GPa and 3.54 \pm 1.15 GPa for high DE maltodextrins. The presence of two Young modulus populations with harder regions could not be first related to crystallized areas, as 535 crystallization is unlikely for maltodextrins. This could maybe be explained by a low range of 536 molecular association between polymer chains, similar to starch retrogradation. Indeed, 537 retrogradation is induced at low temperatures and is dependent on the molecular weight. 538 During this event, association of different molecular weight polymer chain occurs and 539 540 intermolecular distance decreases, leading to a water removal (Karim, Norziah, & Seow, 2000; Sobolewska-Zielinska & Fortuna, 2010). This could lead to the creation of pockets with 541 542 lower moisture content and which show a higher Young modulus, explaining the nanoscale 543 variation of the Young modulus.

Up to now, nanoindentation studies have been mostly performed on pharmaceutical 544 545 powders which contain various carbohydrates as excipients. Masterson and Cao, (2008) report a better understanding of the mechanical properties of complex pharmaceutical powders with 546 the characterization of the modulus of crystalline sucrose and lactose single particles. They 547 found that the hardness value varies from 1.8 to 2.4 GPa for crystalline sucrose particles and 548 from 0.18 to 0.51 GPa for lactose particles. Only few authors used AFM to assess the 549 nanomechanical properties of food powders. Burgain et al., (2016b) investigated rehydration 550 551 impairments linked to the surface hardening of micellar casein powders depending on storage 552 conditions, especially temperature. The Young modulus of fresh casein powders was

estimated at 0.2 GPa whereas it was about 20 GPa for aged casein powders. Haider et al., (2013) characterized the Young modulus of glassy DE 21 maltodextrins. They found a modulus value of 3.34 ± 1.1 GPa, which is relatively close to the values obtain in this work.

556 Elasticity mapping and modulus histograms distribution of the different maltodextrins in rubbery state are displayed in Figure 8B. As shown, powders Young modulus value are of 557 0.41 ± 0.01 GPa for low DE, 0.73 ± 0.01 GPa for intermediate DE and 0.39 ± 0.01 GPa for 558 high DE maltodextrins. A large decrease of the Young modulus at the surface of the 559 maltodextrin particle can be observed. Moreover, a single Gaussian population is observed, 560 meaning that the elasticity distribution at the surface becomes less dispersed and more 561 562 homogenous. Particles under a rubbery state are thus softer because of a hydrated surface layer. Already existing water adsorption at the particle surface, explaining the decrease of the 563 surface hardness and the initiation of the wetting step for particles under a rubbery state. 564

Table 2. Summary of the results presented in this work, showing the direct link between material physical state,
from macro- to microscale and reconstitution properties.

567	Maltodextrin powders (low/intermediate/high DE values)	Glassy state	Rubbery state	
	Macroscale properties			
	Glass transition temperature	 Tg decreases with the increase of the DE value (i.e., decreasing polymer chain length) Increasing water content leads to a decrease of Tg (plasticizing effect) 		
	Reconstitution time	• Reconstitution strongly shear rate dependent	• Reconstitution poorly shear rate dependent	
	 Better reconstitution times for high DE values Better reconstitution times when maltodextrin is u rubbery state Differences in reconstitution times between glassy rubbery states are attenuated for high DE values 		for high DE values when maltodextrin is under the on times between glassy and ed for high DE values	
568		rubbery states are altenuated for high DE values		

Mesoscale / Microscale

properties

Particle size	• All maltodextrins	• Slight particle size increase
	present the same particle	due to water adsorption at
	size	the surface
Particle surface	Rough particles	• Smooth particles and low

topography	• Increase of surface roughness with the DE values	surface roughnessFormation of nanoscale hollows structures
Young modulus	 High Young modulus Bimodal distribution with harder points (related to lower moisture content regions) 	Low Young modulusHomogenous distribution

569

570 <u>4.</u> <u>CONCLUSION</u>

This work evaluated the reconstitution properties of maltodextrin powders depending on their 571 physical state (Table 2). To characterize the material properties, Tg of different maltodextrins 572 were first determined, and Tg was found dependent on both the maltodextrin molecular 573 574 weight and a_w. Also, powder reconstitution times under the glassy state were mostly shear rate 575 and DE dependent, with better reconstitution times while increasing these two parameters. On the contrary, the reconstitution properties of powders under the rubbery state were less shear 576 577 rate and DE dependent with better reconstitution times while increasing these two parameters. Particle surface properties were also analyzed by AFM, which has been yet poorly used on 578 food powders. Particles under a glassy state were relatively rough and hard with a lot of 579 surface irregularities, whereas powders under a rubbery state were much smoother and softer. 580 581 The decrease of the Young modulus under the rubbery state was also related to a more 582 hydrated surface, which enhanced the wetting step. Finally, nanoscale hollows formation was highlighted for particles under the rubbery state. The correct management of powder 583 reconstitution needs to consider powder macroscopic properties (granulometry, Tg, chemical 584 585 composition) which are related to surface microscopic features (roughness, elasticity, hygroscopicity). In this work the interplay between the two measurement scale is described 586 for maltodextrin powders and can be henceforward applied to other food powders. 587

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592 <u>6.</u> <u>References</u>

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