

## Stability row for heavy-metal complexes (Zn, Co, Cd, and Pb) with phospholipids: a DFT study

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**Keywords:** phospholipids, metal ions, energy of complexation.

### Abstract

A theoretical modelling of complexation of divalent metal ions (Zn, Co, Cd, Pb) with phospholipids has been performed within the all-electron approximation B3LYP/DZP. The optimal structures of the complexes with analogs of phosphatidylserine, phosphatidylethanolamine and phosphatidylcholine have been found (molecules of complexation agents have methyl groups instead of the lipophilic hydrocarbon chains, which do not participate in complexing). The stabilities of the formed compounds are characterized with the total energies including solvation corrections calculated in terms of the continuum model IEFPCM-SMD. The relative energies ( $\Delta E$ ) provide the following series of stability of metal–phospholipid complexes: Cd > Pb > Co  $\approx$  Zn. The calculations show that metal cations are selectively coordinated toward the oxygen atoms bonded with phosphorus. In two possible modes of coordination phospholipid molecules behave as bi- or monodentate ligands. In the first case, the structures of the complexes are close to tetrahedral one of the Zn and Co ions. The bidentate lead complexes have pyramidal structures. In the case of the phosphates as monodentate ligands, the chain structure O–Me–O is formed, nonlinear for the lead complexes and linear for other metals. As found, formation energies of the monodentate Zn and Co complexes are lower than the respective values for the bidentate tetrahedral complexes. An opposite situation is observed in the case of the lead complexes. We find a correlation of the obtained results with experimental regularities of bioaccumulation of the heavy-metal salts by bacteria *Bacillus*. The experimental and theoretical row of activity of heavy metals are consistent except the Cd salts, which reveal strong complexation but low concentration of the metal upon accumulation. A probable reason for this inconsistency has been assumed: accordingly, low level of the cadmium bioaccumulation is caused by its extremal toxicity toward the studied bacillus strains.

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