

Nanotechnology: not just for geeks

Say “nanotechnology,” and geeks imagine iPhones, laptops and flash drives. But more than 60 percent of the 580 products in a newly updated inventory of nanotechnology consumer products are such “un-geeky” items as tennis racquets, clothing, and health products.

Maintained by the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies at <http://www.nanotechproject.org/consumerproducts>, the updated inventory includes Head® NanoTitanium Tennis Racquets, Eddie Bauer® Water Shorts with Nano-Dry® technology, Nano-In Foot Deodorant Powder/Spray, and Burt’s Bees® sunscreen with “natural Titanium Dioxide mineral...micronized into a nano sized particle.”

Since the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies launched the world’s first online inventory of manufacturer-identified nanotech goods in March 2006, the number of items has increased 175 percent—from 220 to 580 products. There are 356 products in the health and fitness category—the inventory’s largest category—and 66 products in the food and beverage category. One of the largest subcategories is cosmetics with 89 products. All are available in shopping malls or over the Internet. The list includes merchandise from such well-known brands as Samsung, Chanel, Black & Decker, Wilson, L.L. Bean, Lancome and L’Oreal.

The nanomaterial of choice appears to be silver—which manufacturers claim is in 139 products or nearly 25 percent of inventory—far outstripping carbon, gold, or silica.

“The use of nanotechnology and nanomaterials in consumer products and industrial applications is growing rapidly, and the products listed in the inventory are just the tip of the iceberg,” said Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies science advisor Andrew Maynard. “How consumers respond to these early products—in food, electronics, health care, clothing and cars—will be a bellwether for broader market acceptance of nanotechnologies in the future. This is especially true given that the Project’s recent poll shows seventy percent of the public still knows little or nothing about the technology.”

Source: Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies

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