Elastomeric Closures for Lyophilization Applications

Francis Carroll
Specialist TCS, EU

Date 27th Oct 2022

PDA Freeze Drying in Practice, Osterode, Germany

Agenda

- Considerations for Elastomeric Stoppers for Lyophilization
- Challenges & Solutions: Stopper pop-up
- Challenges & Solutions: Stoppers sticking to the Lyo Shelf
- Challenges & Solutions: Moisture Uptake and Transmission
- Vial System Considerations
- New Stopper for Lyophilization Applications

Considerations for Lyophilization Closures: Elastomer Formulation

- Low absorption and adsorption characteristics
- Low extractable volatiles
- Low oxygen transmission
- Low moisture absorption
- Low moisture permeation
- Easy to dry
- Low particulates

- Low coring/fragmentation
- Good resealing
- Optimum container closure integrity
- Good machineability

Considerations for Lyophilization Closures: Design

Legged Design

- More flexible during insertion
- Symmetric: keeps horizontal position during freeze drying
- Twining effect of stoppers possible

Igloo Design

- More stable in the vented position due to more contact with the glass vial and a less flexible plug part
- Asymmetric balance point: can get out of vertical axis during stoppering
- Igloo design prevents twinning

Challenges & Solutions: Stopper Pop-Up/Pop-Off

Check list:

- ✓ Blowback features
- ✓ Interference fit of the stopper plug and vial neck
- ✓ Siliconization of the stopper and vial

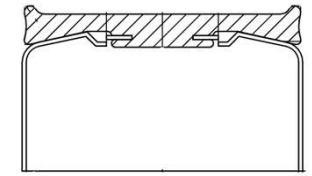
Challenges & Solutions: Stopper Pop-Up/Pop-Off
Interference Fit of stopper plug and vial neck

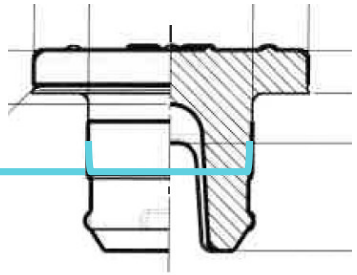
Interference Fit : Analysis which shows the dimensional interference between stopper plug and vial inner neck

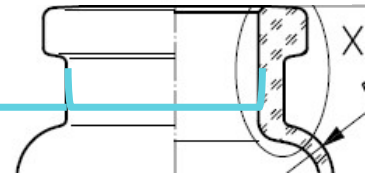
Stopper plug outer diameter [mm]	13.10
Vial neck inner diameter* [mm]	12.60
Nominal Interference Fit [%]	**3.8**

Industry Standard is 2 - 10%

Consider min and max values!







$$Interference\ fit\ [\%] = 100 \bullet \frac{[(stopper\ plug\ outer\ diameter) - (vial\ inner\ neck\ diameter)]}{(stopper\ plug\ outer\ diameter)}$$

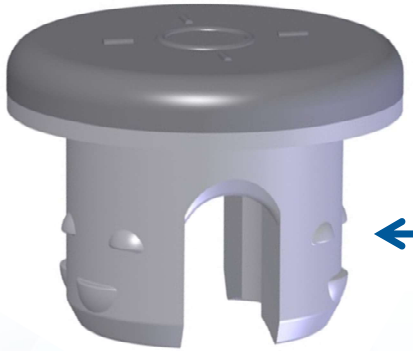
** According to ISO 8362-1:2009 Injection containers and accessories — Part 1: Injection vials made of glass tubing

Holistic Considerations in Optimizing a Sterile Product Package to Ensure Container Closure Integrity. Fran L. DeGrazio. PDA Journal of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology Jan 2018, 72 (1) 15-34; DOI: 10.5731/pdajpst.2017.007658

Challenges & Solutions: Stopper Pop-Up/Pop-Off

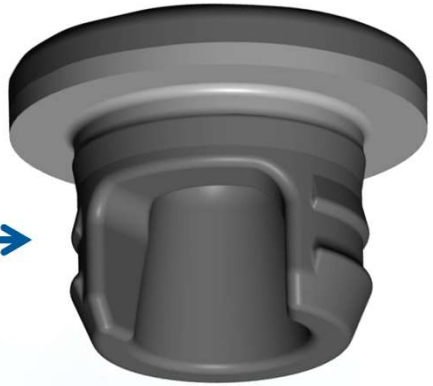
Blowback features

Non-blowback stopper



protruding nubs or rings
for stopper positioning

Blowback stopper



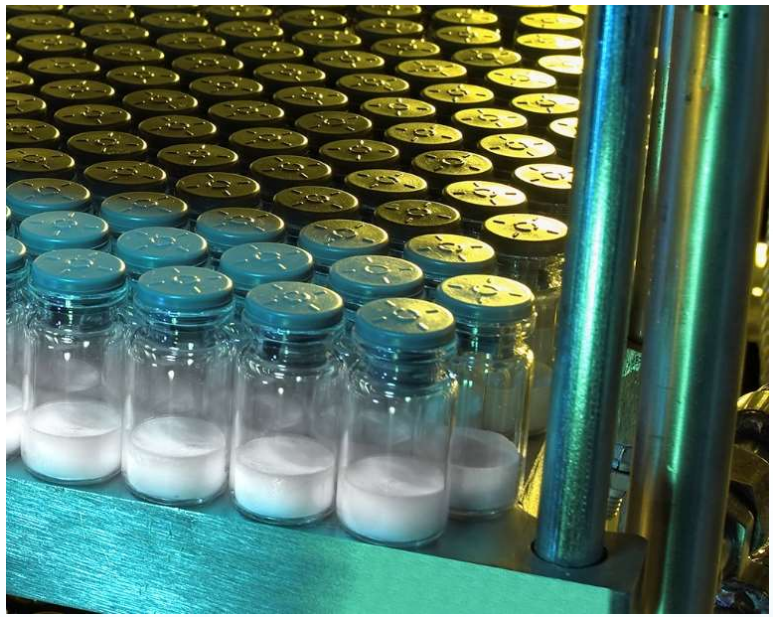
Blowback feature

Challenges & Solutions: Stoppers Sticking to the Lyo Shelf

The closure surface can stick to the lyo shelf and lift the whole vial when closing the vials after lyophilization

Solution: FluroTec® film to prevent sticking

- Eliminate sticking to the lyo chamber shelf
- Reduce clumping/sticking and twinning issues
- Minimize adsorption and absorption
- Minimize extractable volatiles from the elastomer
- Increase lubricity and thus ensuring a smoother transport in the filling line, leading to higher throughput
- Base elastomer formulation remains the same - regulatory burden for change is smaller

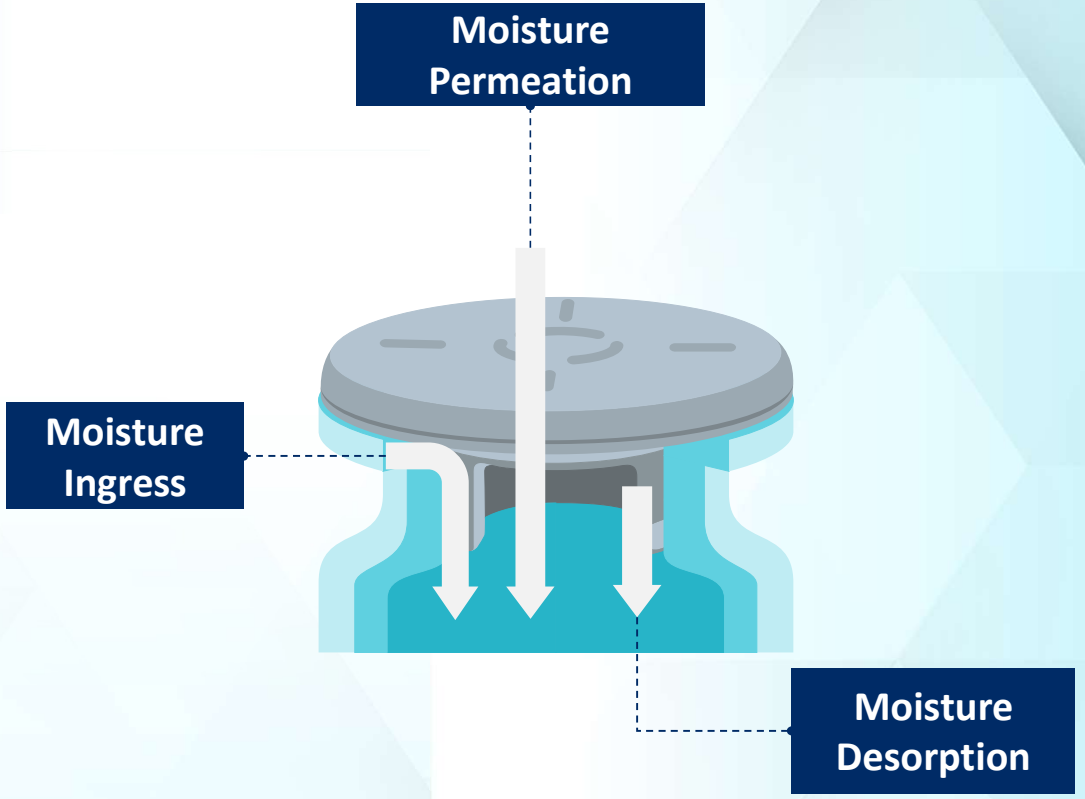


Challenges & Solutions: Moisture Uptake and Transmission

- Moisture Vapor Transmission Rate (MVTR) can be measured
- For most drugs, the target residual moisture is < 1% lyophilized product
- Contributions to moisture include
  - Washing procedure
  - Sterilization cycle
  - Drying parameters dependent
  - Migration through the stopper

Challenges & Solutions: Moisture Uptake and Transmission

- Container closure integrity (CCI):
  Moisture ingress via the stopper-vial interface when lacking intact seal
- Moisture Vapor Transmission Rate (MVTR):
  Water vapor permeates from the environment through the stopper during long-term storage
- Residual moisture in the closure:
  Desorbs or releases from the stopper after processing (washing and steam sterilization)



Challenges & Solutions: Moisture Uptake and Transmission

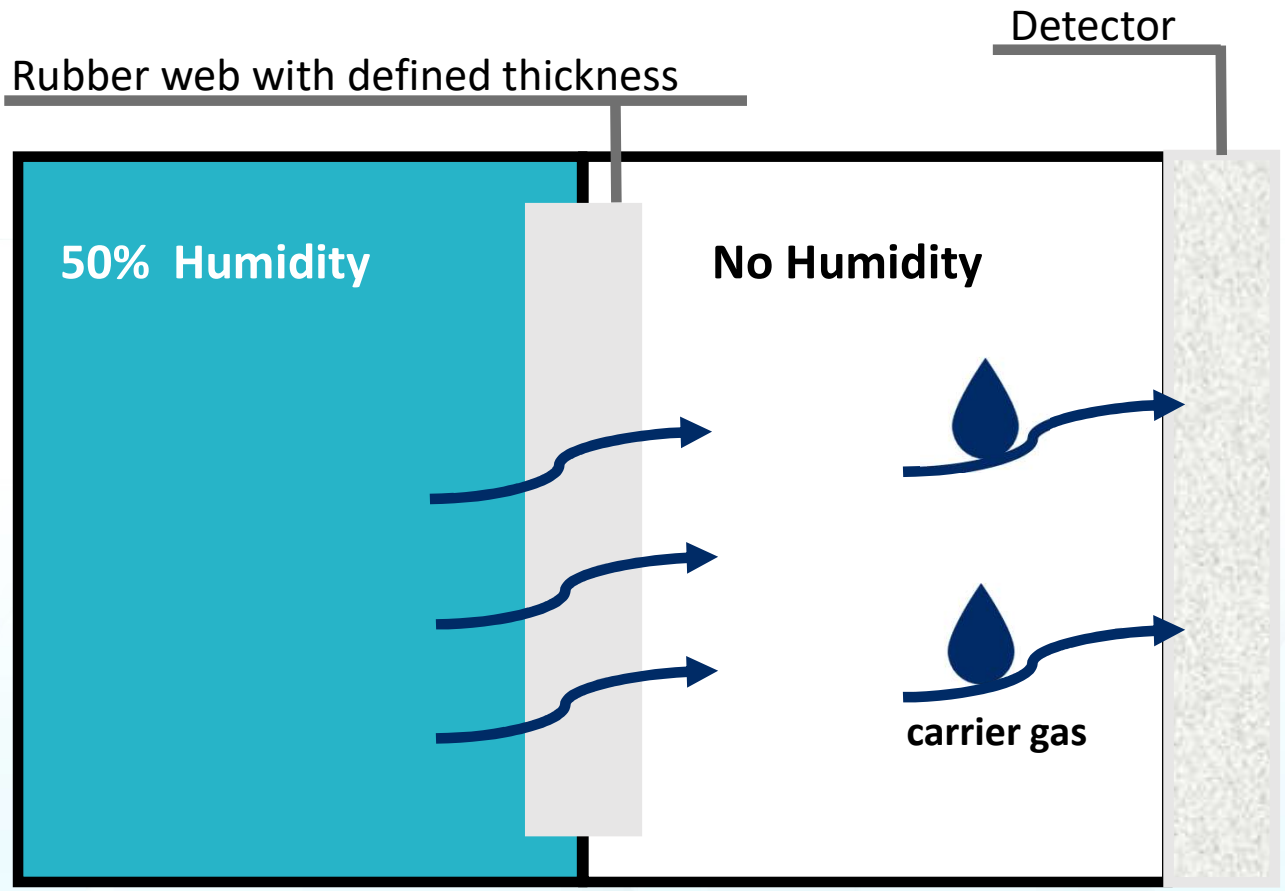
Reference: ISO 15106-3:2005, ASTM F1927

- **Critical Parameters:** temperature, humidity, thickness, flow rate, gas concentration

- Test item: Web
- Equilibrium needed before analysis

- MVTR is a material constant but is dependent on stopper design

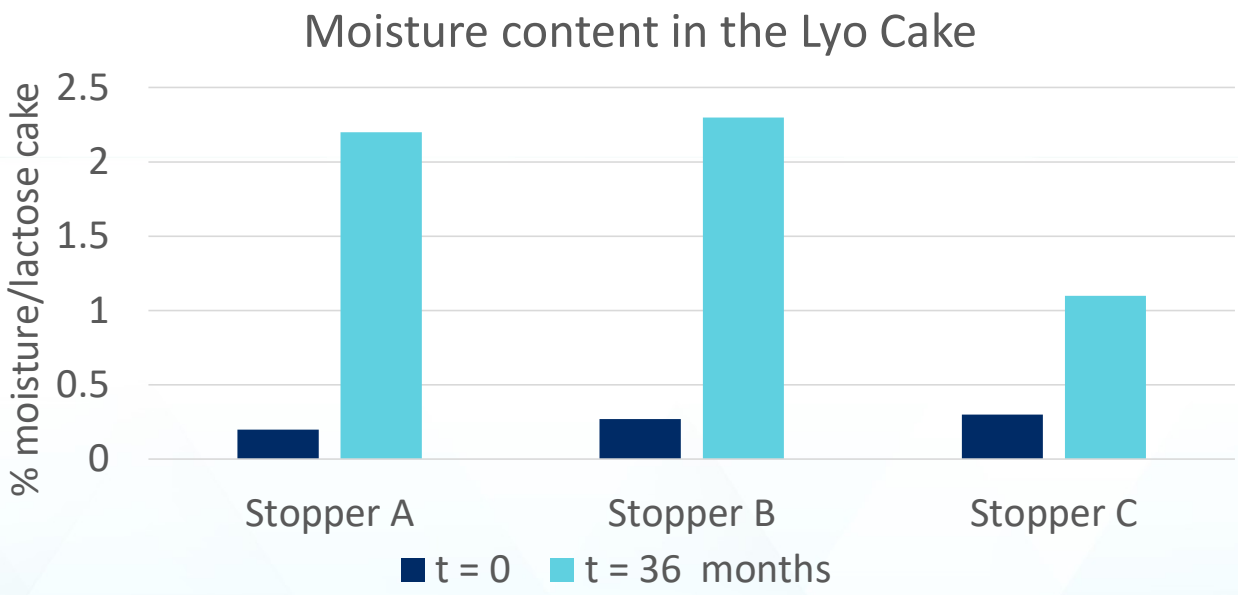
- Typical data range: 0.06 – 6 g/m^2*day



Challenges & Solutions: Moisture Uptake and Transmission

Case Study: MVTR and moisture uptake by the lyophilization cake

- Autoclaving: 60 min, 121^{0}C
  Drying: at 105^{0}C for 8 hours
- Filling: 2 mL of 5% lactose in water solution
- Storage of lyophilized product vials for 3 years at 25^{0}C/60% RH for 36 months

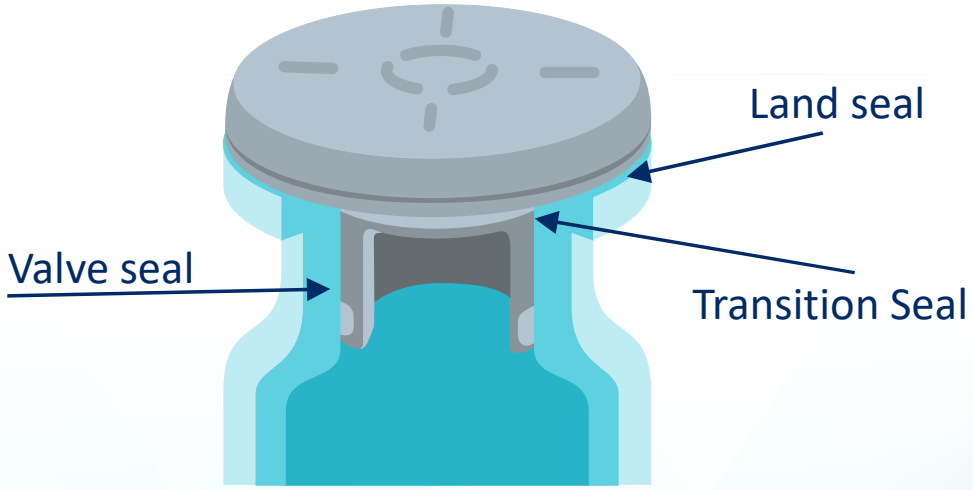


Moisture uptake by the lyo cake correlates with the MVTR of the rubber formulation

WEST Technical Report 2007/116: Lyophilization Stoppers and End Product Moisture Evaluation

Vial System Considerations: Container Closure Integrity

- For an optimal CCI - use interference fit and stack up assessment
- The land seal is the main sealing surface
- An integral container closure system supports a low MVTR
- Methods to measure CCI, e.g., in USP <1207> CCI Testing



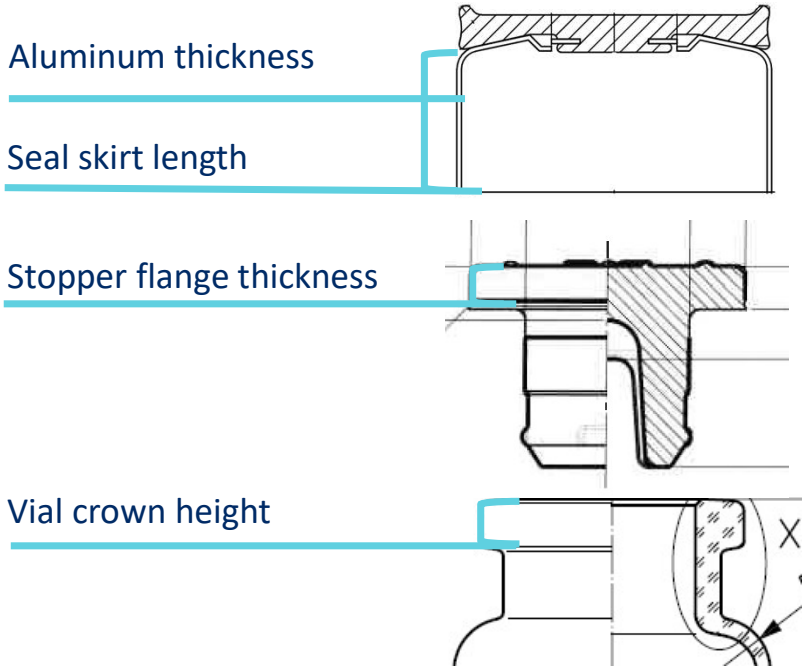
Holistic Considerations in Optimizing a Sterile Product Package to Ensure Container Closure Integrity. Fran L. DeGrazio. PDA Journal of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology Jan 2018, 72 (1) 15-34; DOI: 10.5731/pdajpst.2017.007658

Vial System Considerations: Stack-Up Analysis of Vial, Stopper and Crimp Seal

Stack-Up Analysis: Shows the stack-up of vial, stopper and seal

Seal skirt length [mm]	7.5
Stopper flange thickness [mm]	3.43
Vial crown height * [mm]	3.60
Nominal excess skirt length ** [mm]	**1.04**

Industry Standard is 0.76 – 1.3 mm

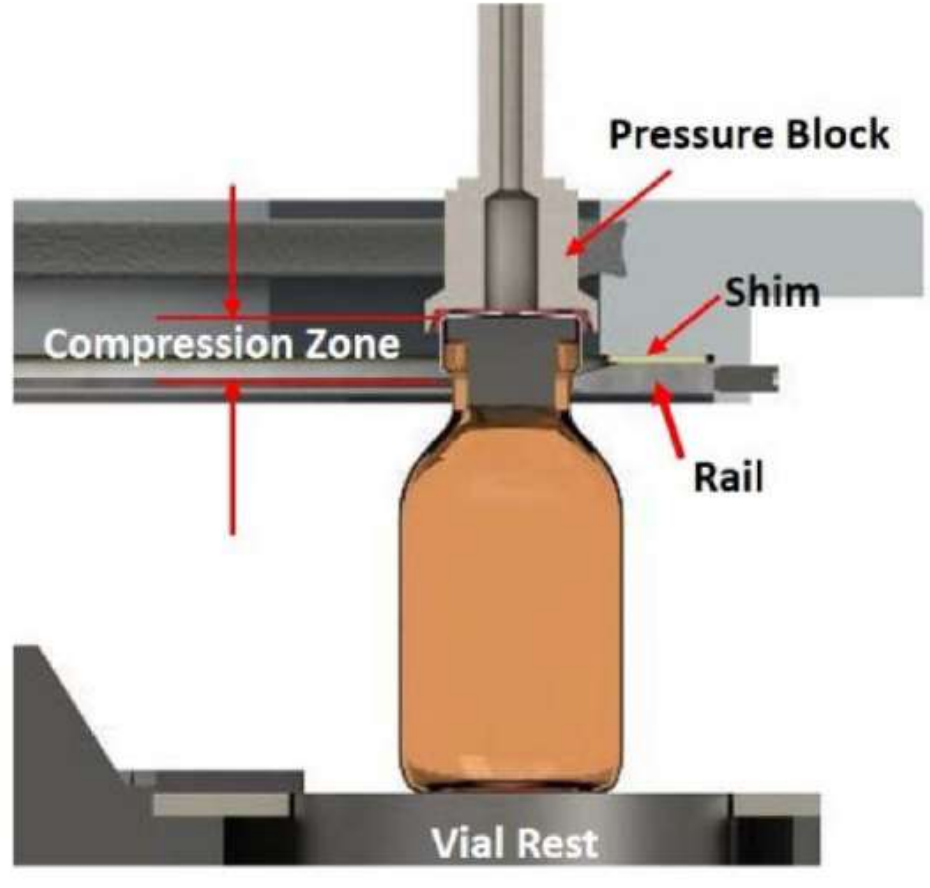


Excess skirt length =
(seal skirt length) – (aluminum thickness) – (vial crown height) – [(stopper flange thickness) • (1 – % stopper compression)]

* According to ISO 8362-1:2009 Injection containers and accessories — Part 1: Injection vials made of glass tubing
** at 20% compression, aluminum thickness 0.2 mm

Vial System Considerations: Crimping Process

- Capper parameter variables for sealing rail capper
- Head height
- Pressure block
- Vial rest position
- Pre-compression force
- Sealing rail vertical position
- Sealing rail lateral position
- Sealing rail angles and angle contour
- Compression zone
- Applied top spring force

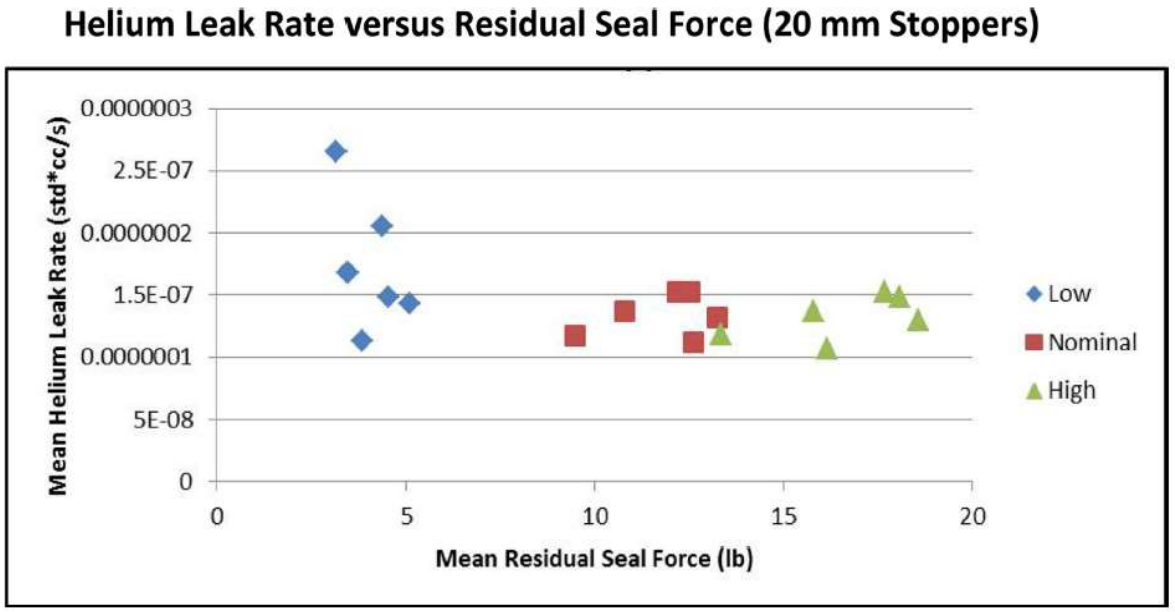


Holistic Considerations in Optimizing a Sterile Product Package to Ensure Container Closure Integrity.
Fran L. DeGrazio. PDA Journal of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology Jan 2018, 72 (1) 15-34; DOI: 10.5731/pdajpst.2017.007658

Vial System Considerations: Residual Seal Force

Residual Seal Force (RSF) is the stress a compressed elastomeric closure flange continues to exert on a vial land seal after crimping

- The stopper acts like a “compressed spring”
- Quantifying the RSF is a test method for the indirect estimation of elastomeric closure compression
- Sufficient compression is essential to seal integrity



RSF can be correlated to CCI, but needs to be evaluated for each specific container/closure/seal combination

Roger Asselta, Parenteral Vial Sealing & Integrity, PDA Europe Parenteral Packaging, Barcelona, Spain, 2017

Vial System Considerations: Volatile Leachables

Reconstituted solutions might show haze formation

- Volatiles from the rubber composition can adsorb to the solid cake
- Antioxidants, oils, waxes, oligomers, low molecular weight PDMS, …
- This is more likely with legacy formulations than with modern formulations
- FluroTec® barrier film can help prevent leachables issues
- A “low extracting” rubber formulation might help as well …

Blue area: FluroTec® film coverage

Blue is for illustration purposes only

New Stopper for Lyophilization Application: 4040/40

Formulation:

Chlorobutyl 4040/40

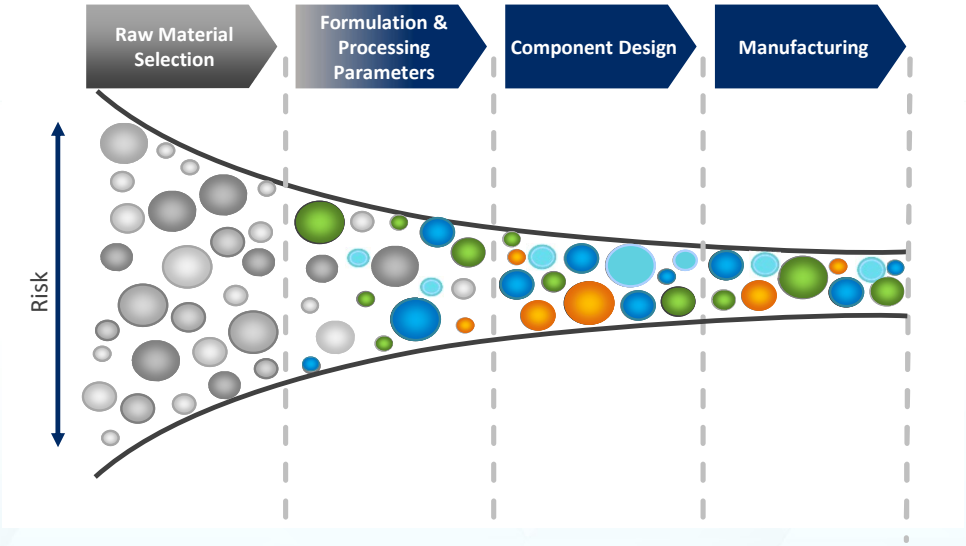
Design:

V-50-I (13mm), S-87-I (20mm), Igloo LyoTec®
Stopper
FluroTec® on top
B2 Coating on plug part

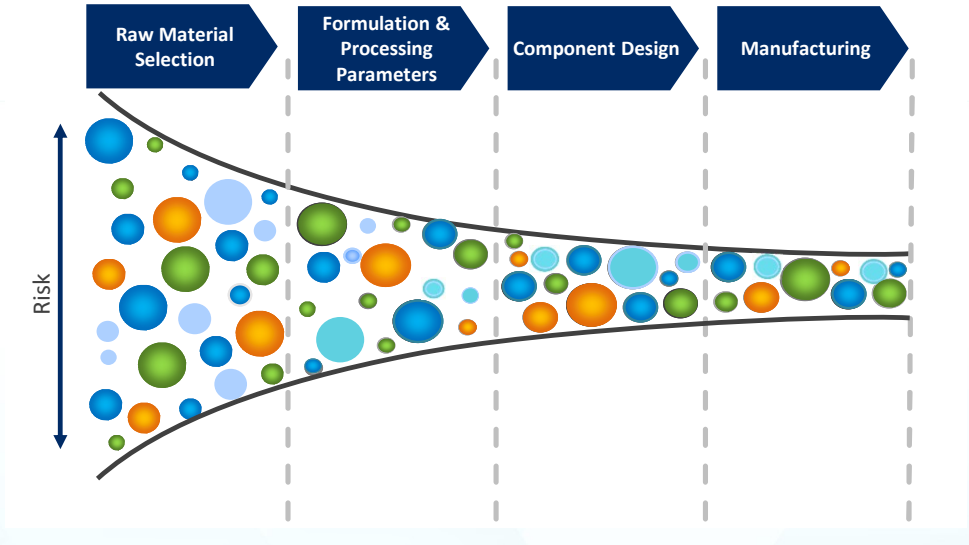
Westar® washed
Ready-to-Sterilize and Ready-to-Use
Steam and Gamma compatible
Envision™ verification

Quality by Design Approach: 4040/40 Development

Historical Approach



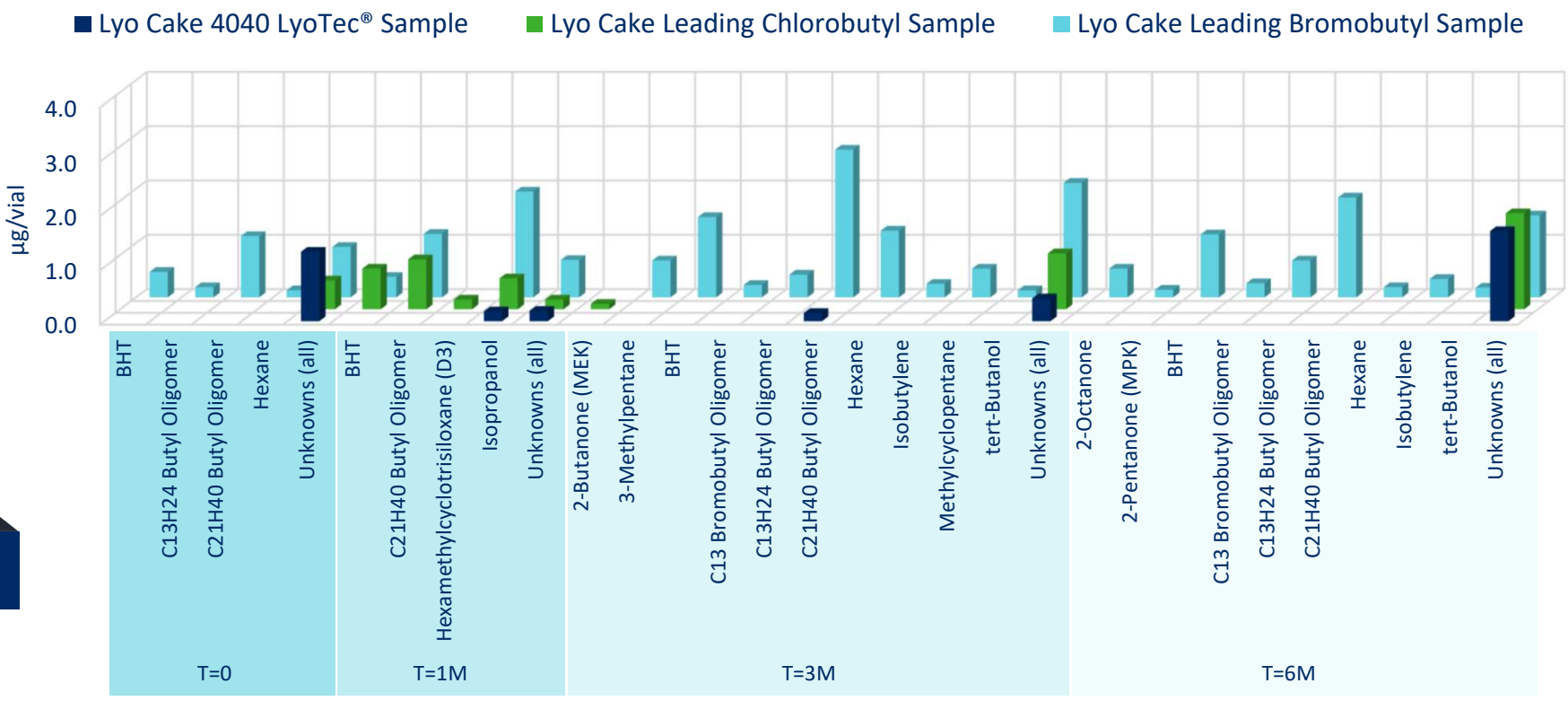
4040/40 Portfolio Approach



West's deep elastomer expertise & Quality by Design approach to development of the 4040/40 portfolio has focused on mitigating risk from raw material selection of the formulation to the final product

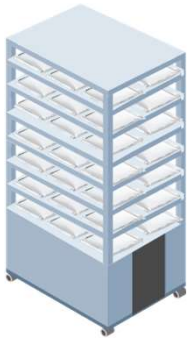
4040/40 Leachables Over Time with Comparators

Volatile Leachables Lyo Cake Gas Chromatography–Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) Headspace Reporting Threshold ≥ 0.1 µg/g



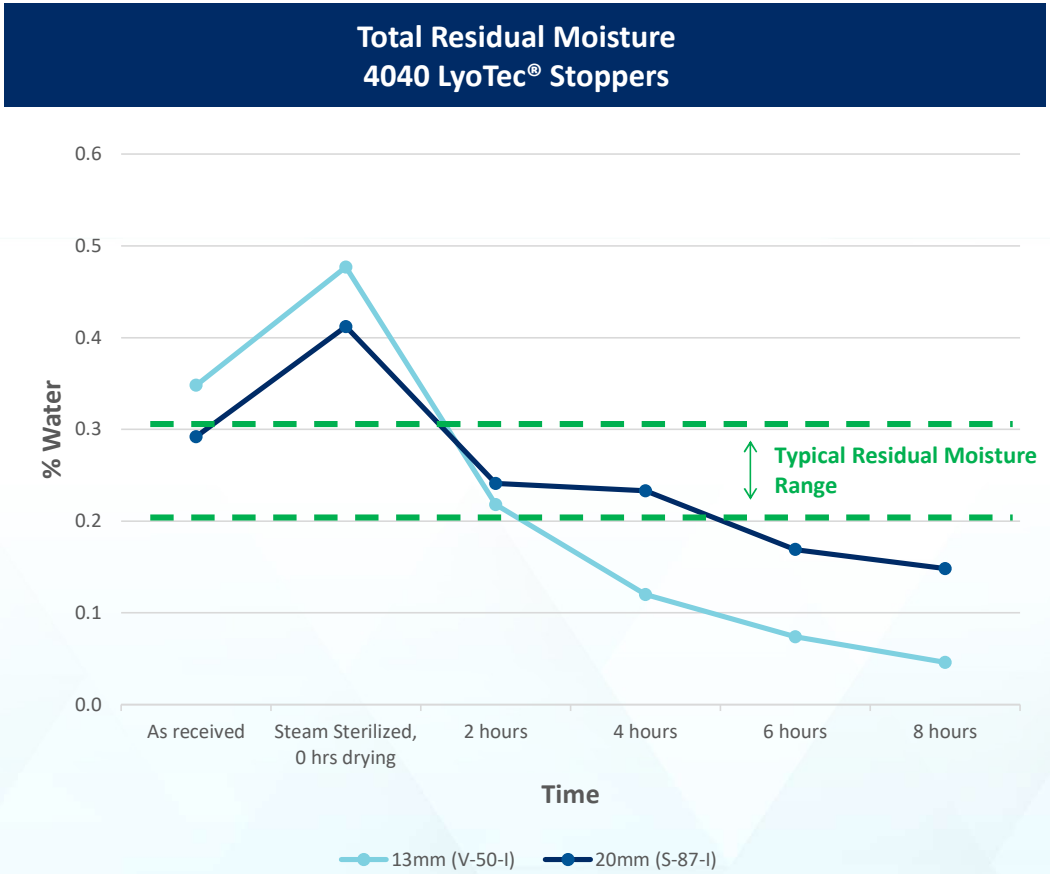
West Stability Report 741-SSR, Mar21

4040/40 Optimized Properties: Low Moisture Content



Sterilization of Stoppers

- Ready-to-sterilize product
- Steam sterilized @ 121°C for 1 hr
- Oven-dried @105°C
- Improve steam sterilization throughput with optimized drying properties
- Total Residual Moisture ≤ 0.2% H_2O for Lyophilization Stoppers



West Technical Report 2021/236: Evaluation of Ready-to-Sterilize 4040/40 Gray Lyo Stopper Water Content vs Comparators Post-Steam Sterilization and Drying

4040/40 Optimized Properties: Compatible Across ISO Glass Vial Blowback Types

TESTING PROGRAM

ISO standard tested	13mm (V-50-I)	20mm (S-87-I)
European blowback (EBB)	Compatible	Compatible
No blowback (NBB)	Compatible	Compatible
American blowback (ABB)	Compatible	Compatible

Simplify global supply chain management with stopper designs compatible with various glass blowback geometries

West Technical Report 2019/211: Evaluation of Container Closure Integrity for 4040/40 Lyophilization Stoppers

Thank you!

This presentation is for informational purposes only. West's products and solutions are sold on the basis that it is the customer's responsibility to evaluate and test the West product or solution to determine its compatibility with other materials and fitness for any end use. WEST MAKES NO WARRANTIES, WHETHER EXPRESS, IMPLIED OR STATUTORY, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR PARTICULAR PURPOSE, RELATING TO THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT/PRESENTATION.