

embryo

Also contains definitions of: critical embryo, homogeneous nucleus

An aggregate of a small number of atoms, molecules or ions. An embryo of such a size that the Gibbs energy at constant pressure and temperature is a maximum is called a critical embryo. An embryo larger than a critical embryo is called a homogeneous nucleus. Colloidal sols may be formed by condensation methods. When a condensation method is applied, molecules (or ions) are deposited on nuclei which may be of the same chemical species as the colloid (homogeneous nucleation) or different (heterogeneous nucleation).

Source:

PAC, 1972, 31, 577 (*Manual of Symbols and Terminology for Physicochemical Quantities and Units, Appendix II: Definitions, Terminology and Symbols in Colloid and Surface Chemistry*) on page 608