Oct. 8, 1963 H. K. HITCHCOCK 3,106,312

FEEDING APPARATUS FOR INFANTS

Filed Nov. 25, 1960

FIG. 1

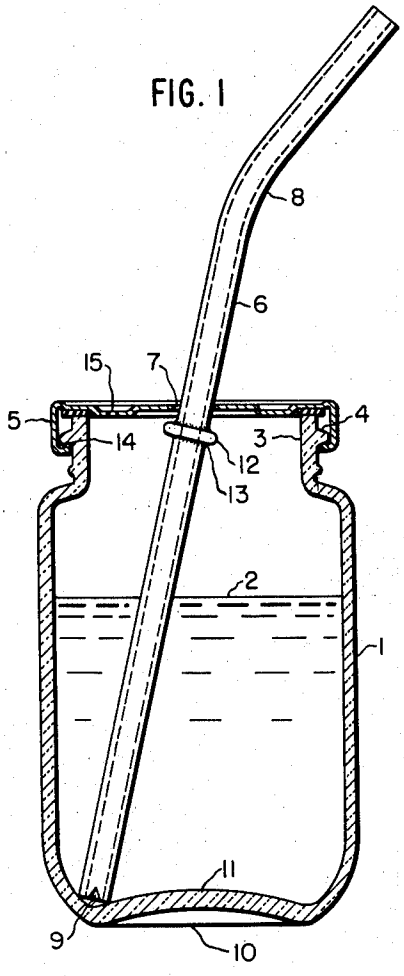


FIG. 2

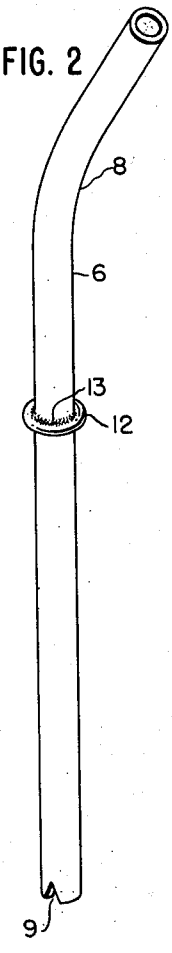
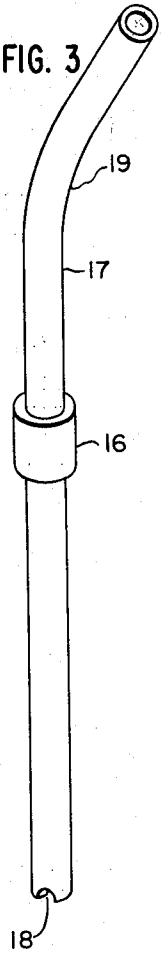


FIG. 3



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FEEDING APPARATUS FOR INFANTS

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This invention relates to feeding apparatus for infants. It is the primary object of the invention to provide an improved liquid feeding apparatus especially adapted for use during a period of transition of infants from the use of a nursing bottle to a glass. Further objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent as the following description proceeds.

I have found that the training of an infant to drink from a glass rather than a nursing bottle is facilitated greatly by feeding liquids from an enclosed jar by means of a straw inserted through an opening in a removable lid of the jar. Between the ages of about one and three years, the instinctive sucking habit of the child renders him readily receptive to instruction in the use of a straw, which in turn eases the transition to the use of a drinking glass.

The tendency of the child to spill the contents from the jar may be partially guarded against by applying a screw lid to the jar and extending the straw through an opening in the lid. However, the inquisitive nature of the child motivates him to attempt to spill the contents through the opening in the lid. According to my invention, I provide a straw with a surface projection between the ends thereof and extend the straw through a suitable opening in a jar lid with the projection disposed interiorly of the jar. This arrangement of elements affords a feeding apparatus which is not easily subject to disassembly by an infant, or to spilling of the contents when tipped.

I may also extend the projection circumferentially about the straw with a diameter greater than that of the lid opening, so that the projection tends to sealingly engage the opening in the event the apparatus is inverted, and thus reduces the possibility of leakage through the opening. To still further minimize spillage, I may position the projection such a distance from the end of the straw which extends into the jar that the opening in the straw remains in close proximity to the bottom of the jar when it is inverted. This arrangement prevents leakage of liquid through the straw itself. The apparatus is functionally similar to a nursing bottle except that the soft nipple is replaced by a straw, which accustoms the child to drinking from a hard surface and thus prepares him to learn to drink from a glass.

While the specification concludes with claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which I regard as my invention, it is believed that the invention will be more clearly understood from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments thereof, referring to the accompanying drawing, in which:

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view in elevation of an infant feeding apparatus according to a first embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a pictorial view of a straw forming a portion of the apparatus; and

FIG. 3 is a pictorial view of a straw incorporating a modification of the apparatus.

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, a first embodiment of the invention includes a jar 1 for containing a supply of

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liquid food 2. The jar is preferably made of an unbreakable non-toxic plastic, but may be formed of glass or any other suitable material. The jar is provided with a mouth 3 about which are formed screw threads 4 for receiving a lid 5 in threaded engagement thereon to seal the contents. A drinking straw 6 is inserted into the jar through a suitable opening 7 formed in the lid, and in the embodiment shown, is formed with a slight bend at 8 to improve its accessibility to an infant. The straw is also preferably formed of an unbreakable non-toxic plastic, but may be made of any other suitable material.

At an end thereof extending into the jar, I prefer to form a notch 9 in the straw to prevent accidental sealing engagement to be established between the tip of the straw and a bottom 10 of the jar. I also prefer to form the bottom of the jar with an upwardly convex surface 11, so that the probability of accidentally establishing sealing engagement of the end of the straw with the bottom when the straw is manipulated by an infant is further reduced.

To prevent the user from withdrawing the straw through the opening 7, I provide a projection 12 upon the outer surface of the straw, located interiorly of the jar. In the embodiment of FIGS. 1 and 2, this projection comprises a plastic or rubber O-ring 12, which is cemented upon the straw at 13 by means of plastic cement or other suitable material.

In the embodiment shown, means for restraining an infant from unscrewing the lid from the jar are provided, comprising a tongue 14 struck up from the lid for engagement with a mating recess in the neck 3. However, these means are not necessary to the practice of the invention.

In the embodiment of FIG. 3, a cylindrical collar 16, which may conveniently be cut from a length of tubing, is slid upon a straw 17 from an end thereof. The tubing from which the collar 14 is cut may be of such an inside diameter that the collar may be of a diameter to slide easily over the straw, in which instance it is secured in place by a suitable cement. The straw 17 is provided with a notch 18 at the lower end thereof and with a bend at 17, for the same purposes as the notch 9 and the bend 8 in the straw of the first embodiment.

Referring again to FIG. 1, the opening 7 in the lid is of a smaller diameter than the cylindrical projection 12. As a result, the projection abuts upon the edges of the opening when the apparatus is inverted, and the projection tends to seal the opening against leakage. The projection is so positioned that the straw extends to the bottom even though the jar is inverted, and therefore does not communicate with the liquid. These means afford protection against accidental spillage.

My improved feeding apparatus takes advantage of the natural sucking instinct of infants, and of the liking of young children for drinking through a straw. The mother is relieved of the duty of personally administering liquids to the child, since she may supply him with a full jar of liquid and may then depart without fear that the liquid will be spilled. I have found that it is possible to wean infants from nursing bottles at an earlier age by the use of my improved apparatus.

Various changes and modifications will readily occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention. For example, the projection may be formed integrally in a straw made of thermo-plastic material simply by heating the straw in a

desired location and compressing it from the ends to produce a circumferential bulge.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States is:

An infant feeding apparatus, comprising a jar, a lid removably received in sealing engagement upon said jar for enclosing a liquid therein, said lid formed with an opening, a straw selected to sink in said liquid and extending through said opening and interiorly of said jar toward a bottom surface thereof, and a projection of a circular form extending circumferentially about said straw, said projection being of greater diameter than said opening to sealingly engage said lid about said opening upon inversion of said feeding apparatus, said projection spaced along said straw a distance to engage said lid about said opening to position an end of said straw in close proximity to the bottom surface of said jar and to restrain said straw against substantial movement away from said bottom surface.

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