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(54) **SHOWER-ADAPTED POSTOPERATIVE
SURGICAL DRAIN POCKET**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

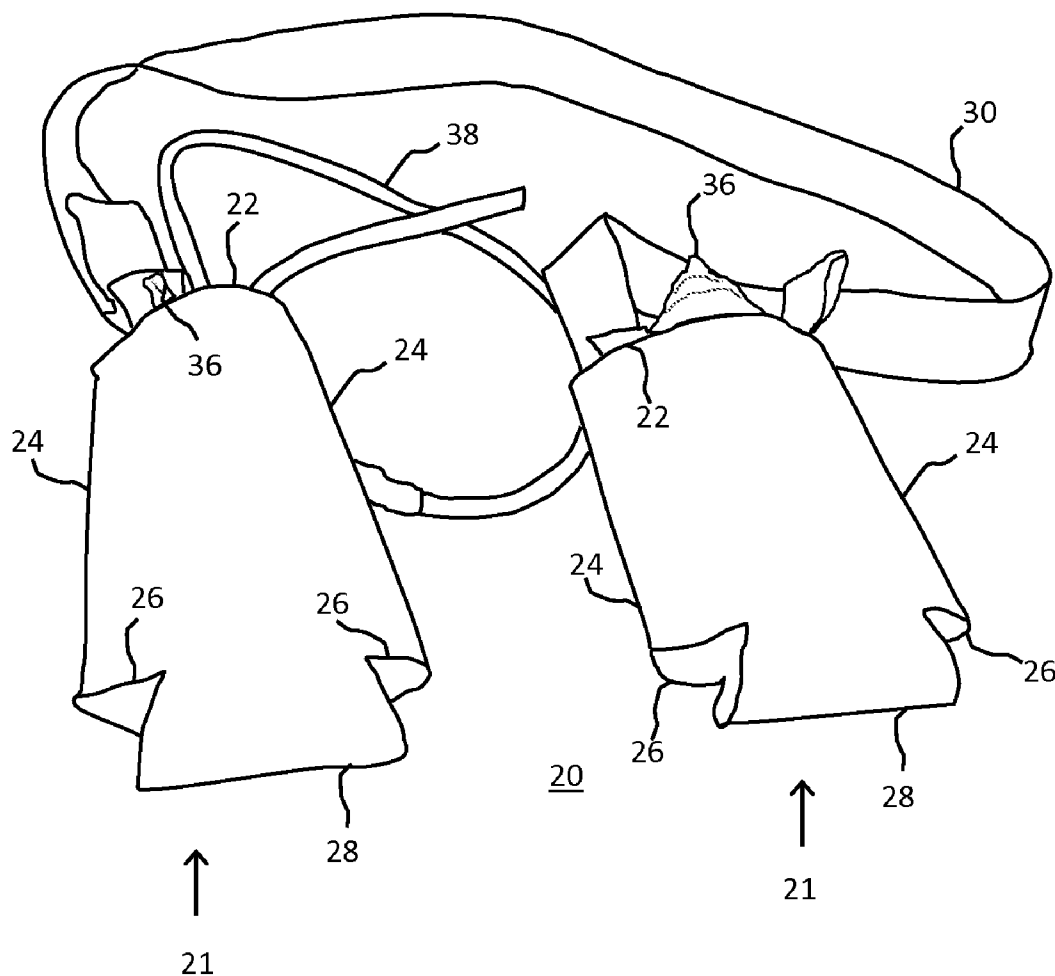
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(57)

ABSTRACT

A shower-adapted postoperative surgical drain pocket includes at least one bucket having an open top and a vented supportive bottom. The bucket is suspendable from a long strap draped over a person's neck or shoulders or from a short strap attachable to a surgery bra worn by the person.



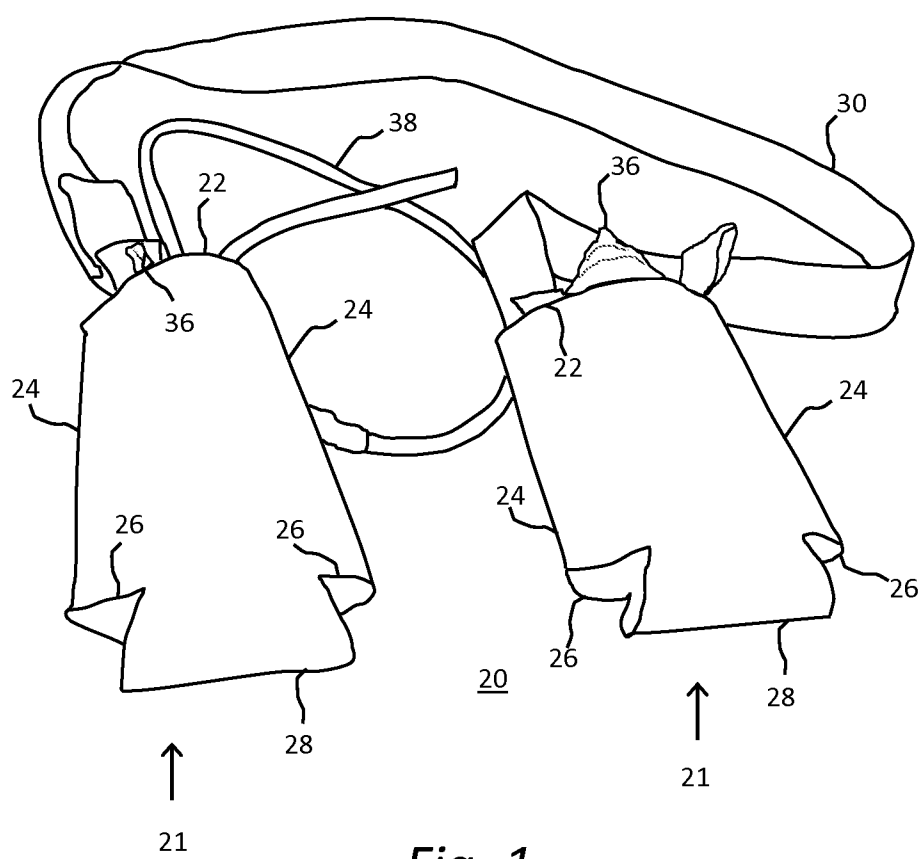


Fig. 1

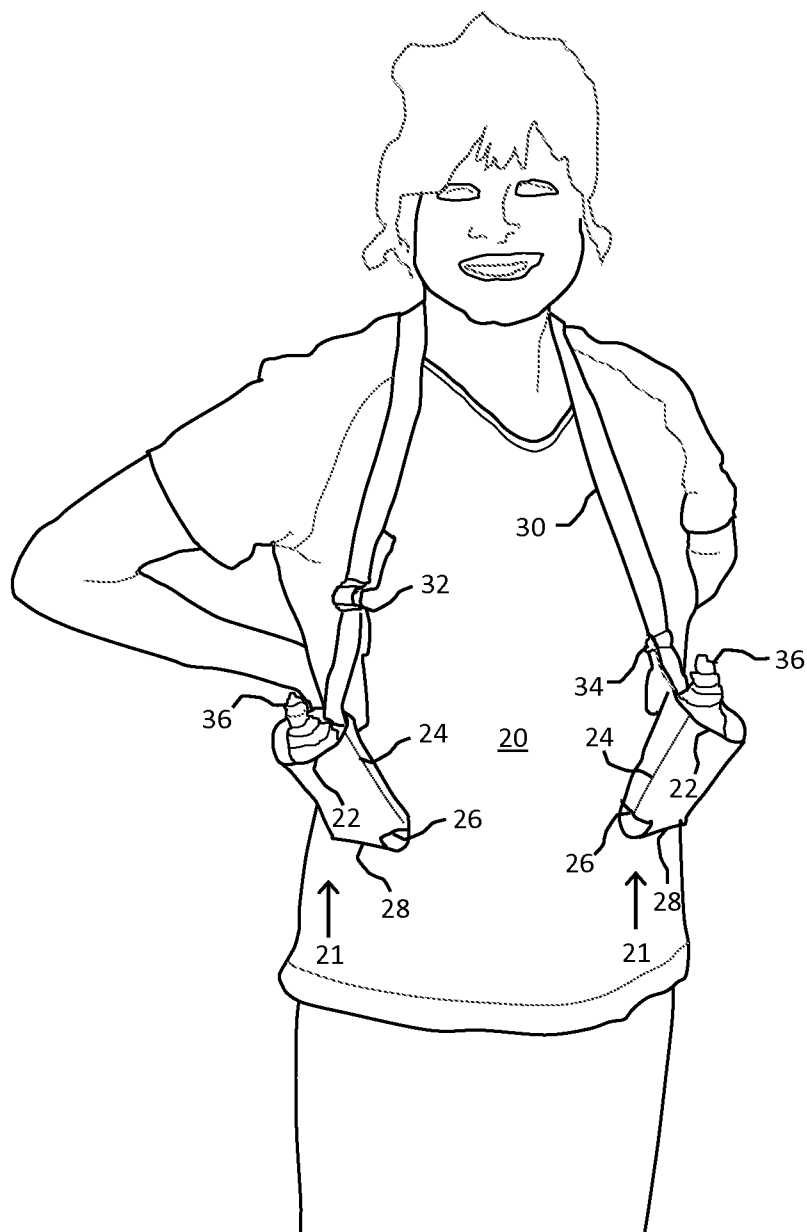


Fig. 2

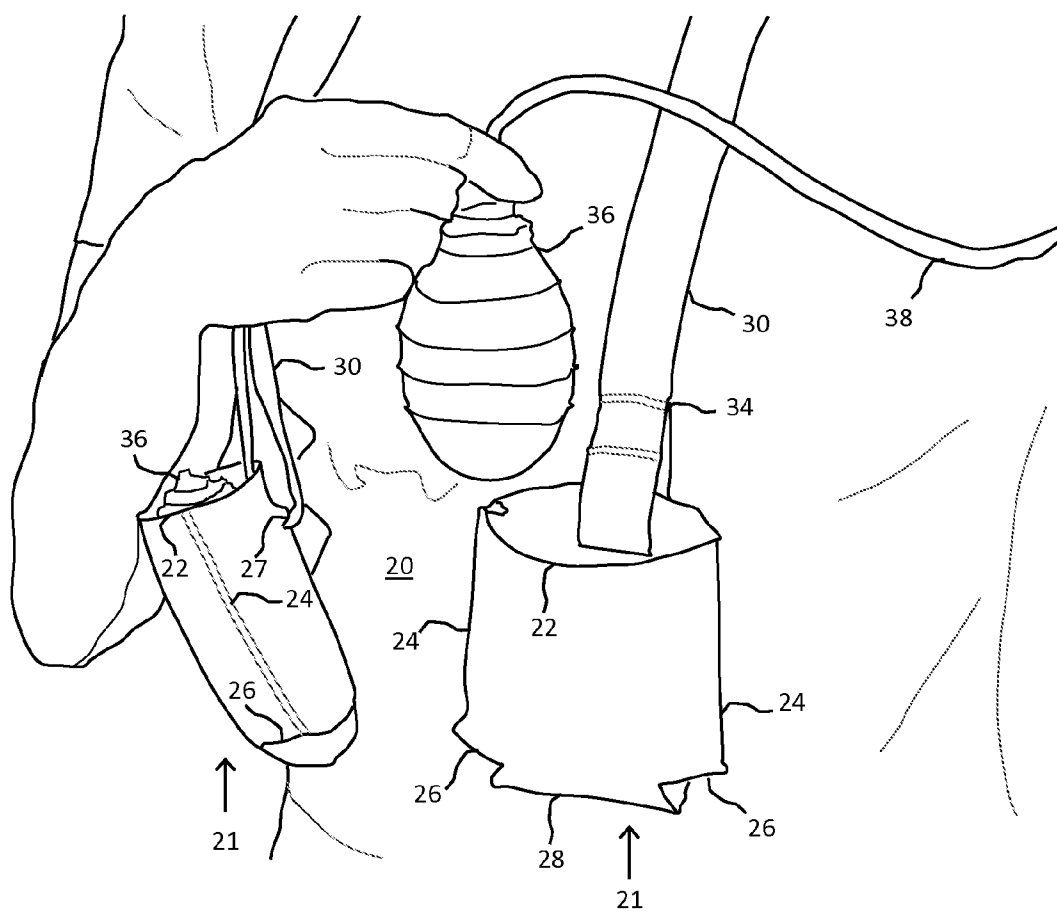


Fig. 3

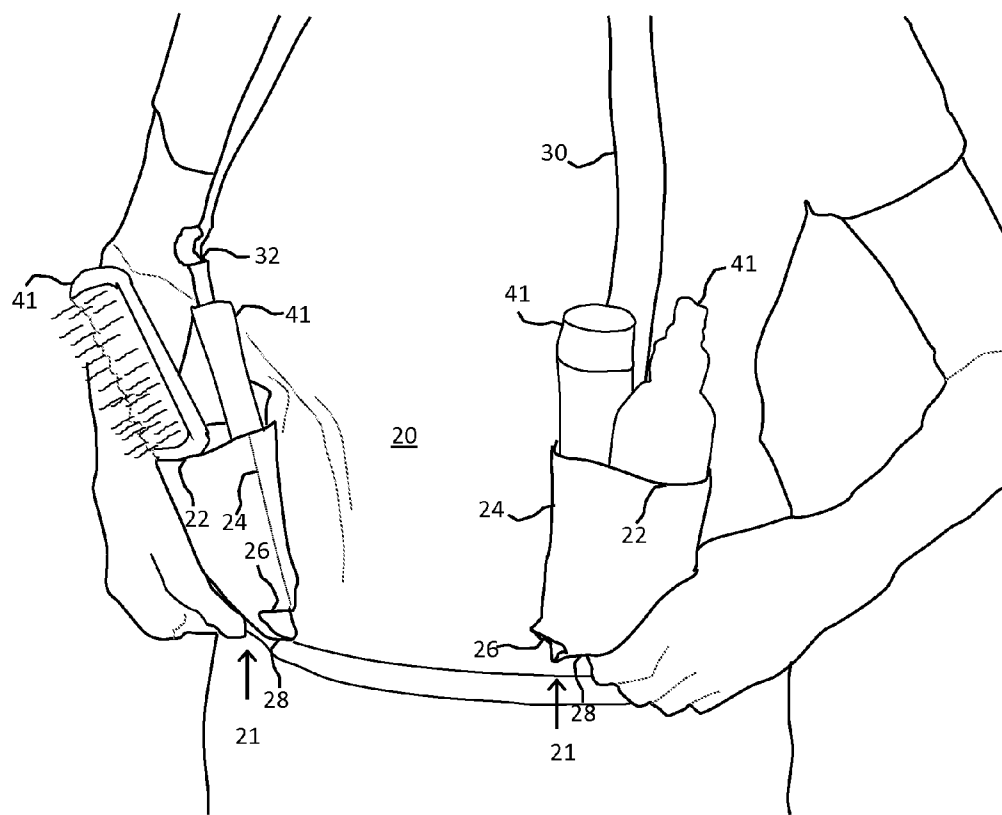


Fig. 4

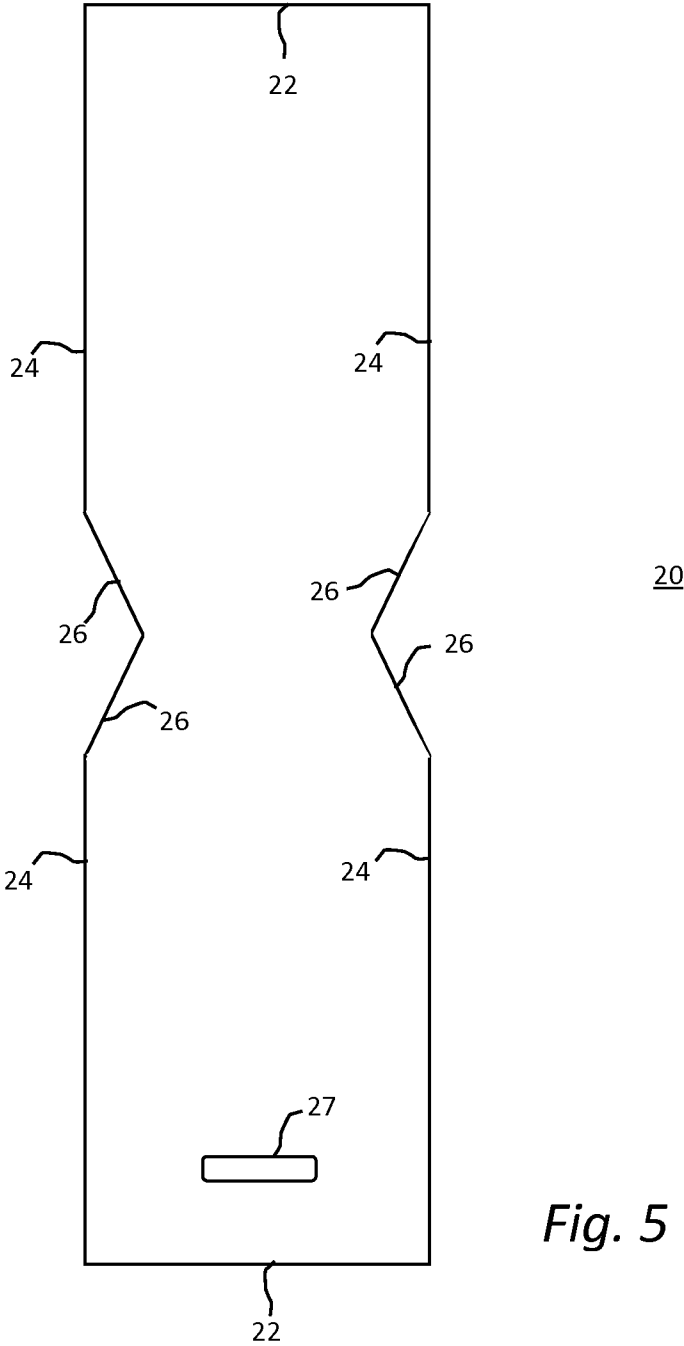
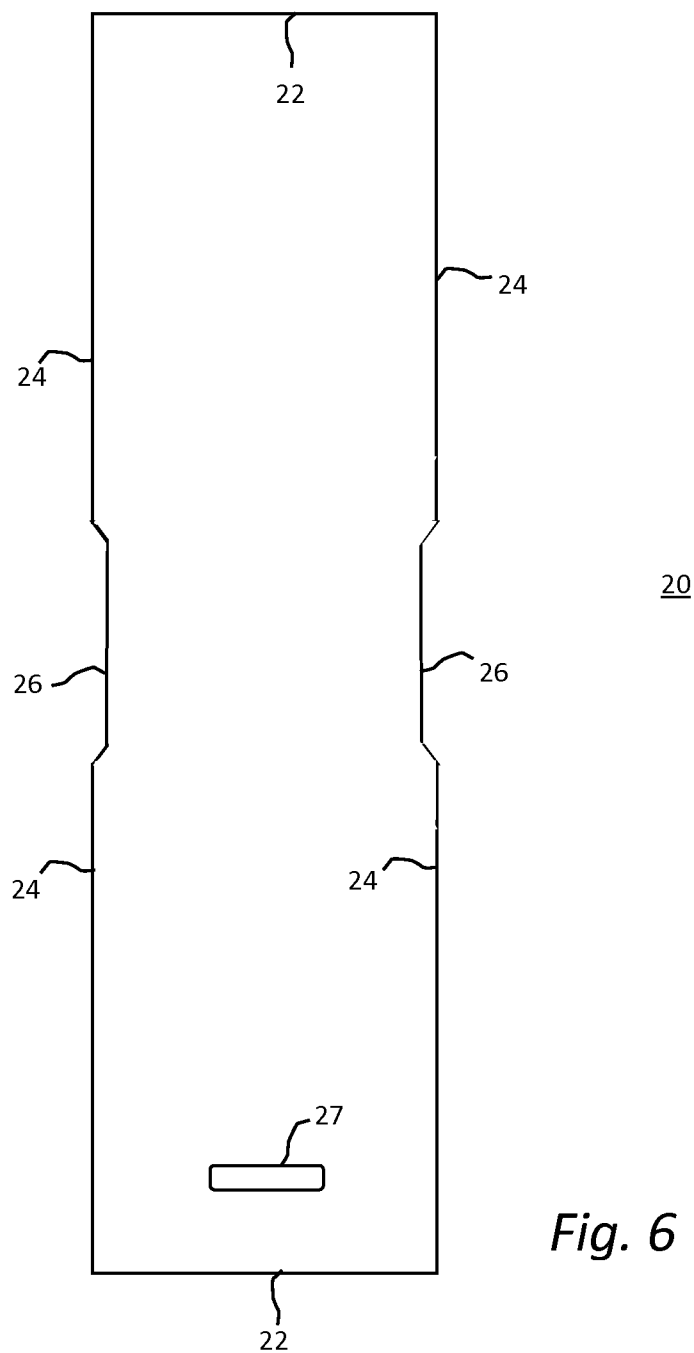


Fig. 5



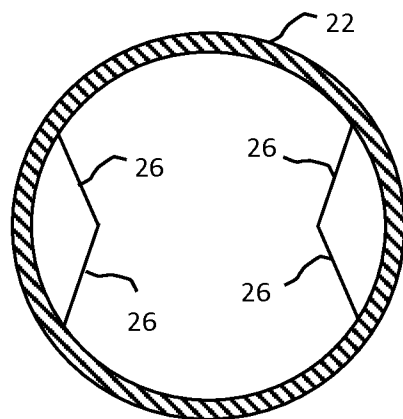


Fig. 7

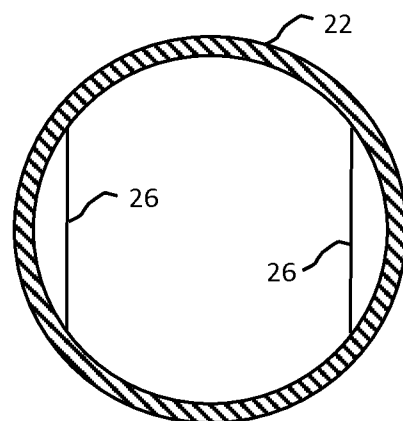


Fig. 8

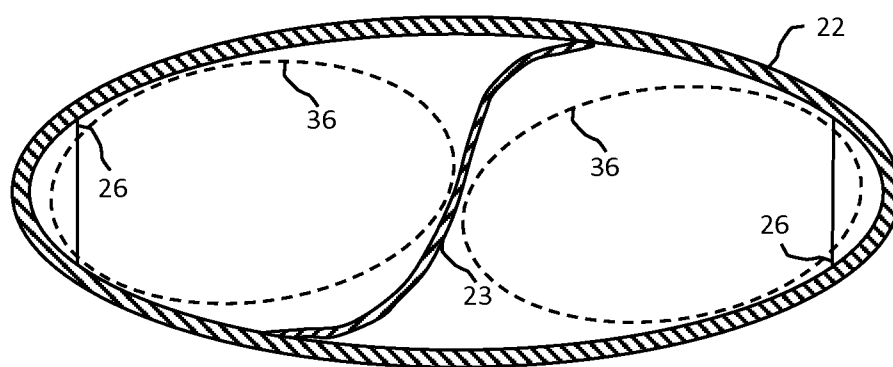


Fig. 9

Fig. 10

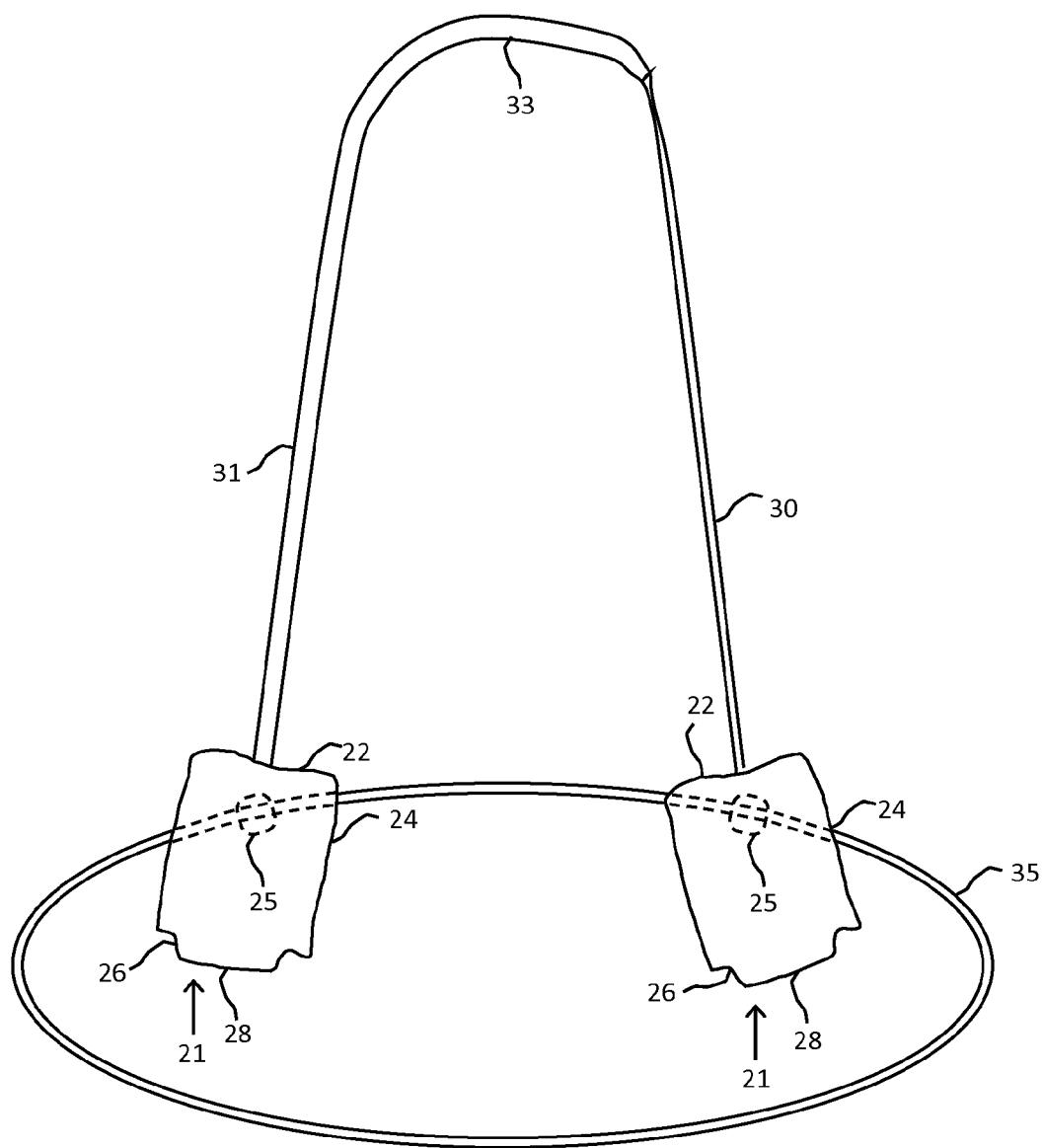


Fig. 11

SHOWER-ADAPTED POSTOPERATIVE SURGICAL DRAIN POCKET

[0001] This application claims the benefit of earlier-filed U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/854,431, filed Apr. 23, 2013, "Shower Pockets Drain System," inventor Jeff T. Anderson.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to the field of personal care and bathing, more particularly for carrying items while showering, especially for use by a person who has a postoperative mastectomy drain inserted or whose shoulder mobility is impaired.

[0004] 2. General Background and State of the Art

[0005] This invention relates primarily to blood and fluid drainage for a patient who has a closed wound drain system implanted following major surgery such as mastectomy or liposuction.

INVENTION SUMMARY

[0006] It is an object of the present invention to provide convenient, clean, water-compatible, easily used support and containment of postoperative surgical drainage systems and other articles proximate the body of a person, either clothed or unclothed and, if clothed, either outside or inside the person's clothing. It is also an object to provide such support and containment either by direct coupling to the person's body or indirectly by suspension from a surgery bra worn by the person.

[0007] In accordance with these objects and with others which will be described and which will become apparent, an exemplary embodiment of a wearable suspended shower pocket in accordance with the present invention comprises at least one generally tubular bucket, said bucket being open upwardly and being partially closed to form a vented supportive bottom, and also includes a suspensory structure, operatively coupled to said bucket, capable of holding said bucket proximate a body of a person. In another exemplary embodiment, the pocket includes a plurality of said buckets and said suspensory structure is adjustable in length. In another exemplary embodiment, said suspensory structure includes a strap and said strap is adjustable in length. In another exemplary embodiment, said length is adjustable by means chosen from among a buckle, a hook-and-loop fastener, and a hook linkable to any of a plurality of hook-retaining features. In another exemplary embodiment, said suspensory structure includes a secondary strap, said secondary strap is capable of encircling a person's neck, shoulders, or neck and shoulders horizontally or diagonally, and said secondary strap is entrained on or attached to at least one bucket.

[0008] Also in accordance with the present invention, in an exemplary embodiment of a shower pocket, said suspensory structure includes a rigid hanger, said hanger has a hook portion sized to partially encircle a person's neck, and said hanger has a long portion reaching toward at least one of said buckets when said suspensory structure is attached to said buckets. In a variation of this embodiment, said suspensory structure includes a strap and said hanger is located substantially within said strap.

[0009] Also in accordance with the present invention, in an exemplary embodiment of a shower pocket, said suspensory structure is linked to a surgery bra wearable by a person.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] For a further understanding of the objects and advantages of the present invention, reference should be had to the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which like parts are given like reference numbers and wherein:

[0011] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a first exemplary embodiment of a shower pocket in accordance with the present invention;

[0012] FIGS. 2-4 are perspective views thereof being used by a person;

[0013] FIGS. 5 and 6 are plan views of two embodiments of the bucket portion thereof unassembled; and

[0014] FIGS. 7 and 8 are top views of two embodiments of the bucket portion thereof partially assembled; and

[0015] FIG. 9 is a top view of a second exemplary embodiment of a shower pocket in accordance with the present invention having a bucket-subdividing septum.

[0016] FIG. 10 is a perspective view of a third exemplary embodiment of a shower pocket in accordance with the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 11 is a perspective view of a fourth exemplary embodiment of a shower pocket in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0018] The invention will now be described with reference to FIG. 1, which illustrates in perspective view a FIRST EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT of the shower-adapted postoperative surgical drain pocket, abbreviated "shower pocket," in accordance with the present invention, shown generally at 20, having top edges 22, seam edges 24, vent edges 26, and strap 30. Seam edges 24 are joined together to form an upwardly opening bucket 21 with a supportive bottom 28. A conventional drain suction bulb 36, equipped with a drain tube 38, is shown being carried in the bucket 21. The strap 30 is linked to each bucket 21 near a top edge 22 and is usable to carry the buckets 21, usually by draping the strap over a user's neck or shoulder.

[0019] FIG. 2, a perspective view of the shower pocket as worn by a user, shows the top edges 22, joined seam edges 24, vent edges 26, supportive bottom 28, and strap 30 looped through the buckets 21 and draped over the neck of a user. A buckle 32 near one end of the strap 30 permits adjustment of the length of the strap 30 looped through one bucket 21. A generic linkage 34, which may be another buckle (see 32), links the opposite end of the strap 30 to the other bucket 21. A conventional drain suction bulb 36 is shown being carried in each bucket 21. In use, a drain tube 38 fluidly connects each bulb 36 to a postoperative surgical drain which has been implanted in the user to facilitate healing of a surgical wound. The reader will appreciate that such a wound may be sensitive. Thus, with the strap 30 properly adjusted, the shower pocket carries the weight of the bulbs 36 at an appropriate height, thereby helping the user avoid painful pulling of the drain tube 38.

[0020] FIG. 3, another perspective view of the shower pocket as worn by a user, shows the top edges 22, joined seam edges 24, vent edges 26, and supportive bottom 28. Also shown is cut-out 27, through which strap 30 is looped in order to carry the buckets 21. Buckle 32 and generic linkage 34 are also shown, as are bulbs 36 and one drain tube 38.

[0021] FIG. 4, another perspective view of the shower pocket as worn by a user, shows the top edges 22, joined seam edges 24, vent edges 26, and supportive bottom 28. Also shown are strap 30 and buckle 32. Assorted ordinary personal care items 41 are shown being carried in the buckets 21. Thus, the shower pocket in accordance with the present invention is usable to carry such items as a brush, shampoo, soap or the like when showering.

[0022] FIGS. 5 and 6, plan views of two embodiments of the shower pocket unassembled, shows the top edges 22, seam edges 24, vent edges 26, and cut-out 27, all of which are formed by cutting a soft, flexible, strong, water-tolerant sheet material. Appropriate folding in the vicinity of the vent edges 26 brings the seam edges 24 into mutual contact. The seam edges are then joined together with adhesive, welding, snaps, hook-and-loop (VELCRO®) fastening, stitching, or the like. The resulting bucket 21 has a supportive bottom 28 which, see FIGS. 1-4, is broad enough to support the surgical drain suction bulbs 36 and most ordinary personal care items 41. Additionally, the vent edges 26 are cut such that shower water entering the bucket 21 will quickly leak out past the supportive bottom 28 instead of filling up the bucket 21.

[0023] FIGS. 7 and 8, top views of the embodiments of FIGS. 5 and 6 partly assembled, show the top edges 22 and the vent edges 26 as seen from above after seam edges (not shown in FIGS. 7 and 8) have been joined to form the buckets 21.

[0024] FIG. 9, a top view of a portion of a SECOND EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT of the shower pocket in accordance with the present invention, shows the top edge 22 and vent edge 26. Also shown is a septum 23 which spans the bucket 21 in a diagonally offset manner allowing two partially evacuated drain bulbs 36 (the outlines of which are drawn in dotted line) to occupy a single bucket 21 in an angularly offset mutual relation so that the two bulbs 36 together have a somewhat flattened profile, making them less obvious and less obtrusive. In this embodiment, the vent edge 26 is shorter, relative to the top edge 22, than in the first exemplary embodiment, so that the bucket 21 is somewhat ovoid-shaped as viewed from above.

[0025] FIG. 10 is a perspective view a THIRD EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT of the shower pocket in accordance with the present invention, shown generally at 40, having top edges 22, seam edges 24, vent edges 26, supportive bottom 28, and drain suction bulb 36. Suspenders 37 are shown attaching each bucket 21 to a lower portion of a conventional surgical bra 39 being worn postoperatively. Suspenders 37 are looped through the cut-out (see 27 in FIGS. 3 and 5) of each bucket 21 and are removably fastenable to the bra 39 by hook-and-loop (VELCRO®), snap, hook-and-eyelet, or other economical and convenient fastener. A drain suction bulb 36 is shown being carried in each bucket 21.

[0026] FIG. 11 is a perspective view of a FOURTH EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT of the shower pocket in accordance with the present invention, showing buckets 21 each having top edge 22, seam edge 24, vent edge 26 and supportive bottom 28. One bucket 21 is shown suspended by strap 30. One bucket 21 is shown suspended by hanger 31. Hanger 31 is formed of a lightweight, rigid tubular material having the form of a hook reaching upward and around the back of the neck of a person. A patient whose shoulder mobility is limited due to shoulder surgery or radical mastectomy surgery may find it painful or impossible to raise a hand high enough to drape a strap over his/her neck. Such a patient may, however, grasp the straight end of the hanger 31 and direct the hook end

33 thereof over his/her head to drape the buckets 21 in a manner similar to that shown in FIG. 2. Hanger 31 is formed of polyethylene or other inexpensive rigid polymeric material and can be incorporated into strap 30 in various ways. For example, strap 30 may be sewn to provide an internal channel through which hanger 31 is threaded. After hanger 31 is inside strap 30, strap 30 can be sewn to permanently retain hanger 31. Alternatively, an opening may be left, so that hanger 31 can be removed when strap 30 needs to be washed.

[0027] With reference to FIGS. 1-11, the shower pocket in accordance with the present invention is useful to patients who have had mastectomy, liposuction or tummy tuck surgery requiring drainage from one or several drainage locations. Embodiments of the shower pocket are equipped with one or more buckets 21 on each end of a strap—for example, two buckets 21 linked to each end of a two-ended strap which is slung over a user's neck, such that the buckets 21 are suspended at an appropriate height in front of the left and right sides of the user's thorax or abdomen. Embodiments of the shower pocket include easily interchanged buckets 21 linked by hooks to the strap. Embodiments of the shower pocket are wearable beneath or outside a user's clothing as well as without clothing when showering or bathing.

[0028] The shower pocket in accordance with the present invention generally takes a round or oval shape, depending on the proportions of its construction and on the size of what it is used to carry. The bucket 21 is formed of soft foam, fabric covered neoprene, soft cotton, or silk-like material. In some embodiments, as seen with reference to FIG. 9, one or more spanning members define multiple compartments within a bucket 21. In other embodiments, the number of buckets 21 attached to an end of a strap may be increased or decreased.

[0029] An advantage of the shower pocket in accordance with the present invention is that it helps a user conceal one or more drainage bulbs beneath his/her clothing if he/she so desires. Another advantage is a sense of security in that the bulbs, securely and discreetly tucked away inside or close to clothing, will not be subjected to disturbance during normal activities. A user is glad to know that painful disturbance and premature withdrawal of surgical drains, and consequent infection or need for emergency care, will be avoided.

[0030] In one embodiment of the shower pocket in accordance with the present invention, the bucket 21 is easily hung on a hook linked to a strap end and is easily lifted off the hook. Alternatively, the hook is firmly attached to the bucket 21 and is easily hung on the strap end or removed therefrom. Alternatively, a large ring or loop can be attached to the strap end and one or more buckets 21 having hooks or carabiners can be hung on or clipped to the ring or loop.

[0031] Also in accordance with the present invention, a person may wish to use the shower pocket for a non-medical purpose such as for carrying a beverage at a sporting event or picnic or when boating. To enhance usefulness for such a purpose, the bucket 21 is formed of an insulating material such as closed-cell polyethylene foam or a neoprene-LYCRA® composite.

[0032] Also in accordance with the present invention, a person may wish to further stabilize the buckets 21 relative to his/her body, in which case an embodiment of the shower pocket includes a secondary strap 35 which is attachable to at least two of a plurality of buckets 21 and encircles the person's body horizontally or diagonally. Alternatively the secondary strap 35 passes through a loop or eyelet formed in or attached to at least one bucket 21 or to a strap proximate at

least one bucket **21** as the secondary strap **35** encircles the person's body horizontally or diagonally. In an exemplary form of one such embodiment, the secondary strap **35** passes through a short retaining loop or patch **25** sewn on the bucket **21**.

[0033] As can be seen from the drawing figures and from the description, each embodiment of the shower-adapted postoperative surgical drain pocket in accordance with the present invention solves a problem by addressing the need for discreet, comfortable, structurally simple support of postoperative surgical drain systems close to a patient's body during everyday activity as well as when showering.

[0034] While the specification describes particular embodiments of the present invention, those of ordinary skill can devise variations of the present invention without departing from the inventive concept.

[0035] Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that any arrangement calculated to achieve same purposes can be substituted for the specific embodiments shown. This disclosure is intended to cover any and all adaptations or variations of various embodiments of the invention. It is to be understood that the above description has been made in an illustrative fashion, and not a restrictive one. Combinations of the above embodiments, and other embodiments not specifically described herein will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reviewing the above description. The scope of various embodiments of the invention includes any other applications in which the above structures and methods are used. Therefore, the scope of various embodiments of the invention should be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full range of equivalents to which such claims are entitled.

[0036] In the foregoing description, if various features are grouped together in a single embodiment for the purpose of streamlining the disclosure, this method of disclosure is not to be interpreted as reflecting an intention that the claimed embodiments of the invention require more features than are expressly recited in each claim. Rather, as the following claims reflect, inventive subject matter lies in less than all

features of a single disclosed embodiment. Thus the following claims, and such other claims as may later be added, are hereby incorporated into the description of the embodiments of the invention, with each claim standing on its own as a separate preferred embodiment.

I claim:

1. A wearable suspended pocket, comprising:
at least one generally tubular bucket, said bucket being open upwardly and being partially closed to form a vented supportive bottom; and
suspensory structure, operatively coupled to said bucket, capable of holding said bucket proximate a body of a person.
2. A pocket as set forth in claim 1, wherein said pocket includes a plurality of said buckets and said suspensory structure is adjustable in length.
3. A pocket as set forth in claim 2, wherein said suspensory structure includes a strap and said strap is adjustable in length.
4. A pocket as set forth in claim 3, wherein said length is adjustable by means chosen from among a buckle, a hook-and-loop fastener, and a hook linkable to any of a plurality of hook-retaining features.
5. A pocket as set forth in claim 1, wherein said suspensory structure includes a secondary strap, said secondary strap is capable of encircling a person's neck, shoulders, or neck and shoulders horizontally or diagonally, and said secondary strap is entrained on or attached to at least one bucket.
6. A pocket as set forth in claim 1, wherein said suspensory structure includes a rigid hanger, said hanger has a hook portion sized to partially encircle a person's neck, and said hanger has a long portion reaching toward at least one of said buckets when said suspensory structure is attached to said buckets.
7. A pocket as set forth in claim 6, wherein said suspensory structure includes a strap and said hanger is located substantially within said strap.
8. A pocket as set forth in claim 1, wherein said suspensory structure is linked to a surgery bra wearable by a person.

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