APPARATUS FOR STERILIZING TOOTHPICKS OR THE LIKE

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The use of non-sterilized toothpicks for removing particles of food from the teeth is always liable to cause serious inflammations owing to injuring the gums. The toothpicks found on the market and in commerce, whether they consist of pointed wood rods or of quills cut to shape, of a quill connected with a metal handle or of some other material and shapes, do not respond to the requirements of perfect sterility. By the use of such toothpicks, very pernicious effects may be caused.

It has heretofore been proposed to obviate the foregoing inconvenience, by the provision of a tube for carrying the toothpick and in which the point of the toothpick comes into contact with a pad saturated with disinfecting media, but such a device was not satisfactory. The pad which substantially consisted only of cotton could not be observed as regards cleanliness, so that the arrangement caused more damage than it was useful.

The present invention relates to an apparatus for sterilizing toothpicks or the like in a case equipped with a lid and a disinfecting pad for the point of the toothpick, by which the existing inconveniences are avoided. The novelty consists, according to the invention, in that a pad in the lid comes to bear against a similar pad in the case when the lid is folded on the case, these pads being saturated, by means of a wick, with disinfecting liquid contained in a compartment of the case and which sterilizes the end of the toothpick from two sides. Upon lifting the lid of the case the disinfecting arrangement of the pads saturated by a wick and the liquid containing compartment of the case can be observed and controlled and that, with the lid closed, the head part of the toothpick is pressed between the two pads which maintain this head part moistened by the disinfecting media, so that sterilization is ensured which thoroughly fulfills hygienic requirements and by which any possibility of causing diseases by the use of a contaminated toothpick is avoided.

Two embodiments of the invention are illustrated, by way of example, in the accompanying drawing in the scale 2:1.

Fig. 1 shows in top plan view a case for toothpicks with a liquid containing compartment, the lid being opened.

Fig. 2 is a vertical section through Fig. 1, the toothpicks being omitted.

Fig. 3 shows in elevation a modified construction of the toothpick case with liquid compartment, the lid of the case being opened.

Fig. 4 is a vertical section through Fig. 3, the toothpick being omitted.

a designates the oblong metal case provided with a lid b that is hinged on the upper end of the case c, and c is a rubber packing surrounding the edge of the case at the open side thereof, this rubber packing being firmly held in position by the lid b when a lug d on the free end of the lid is engaged with a pin e on the lower end of the case.

In the upper end of the case c, a small flat compartment f is formed which is closed by a screw stopper and contains disinfecting liquid which consists for instance of boric glycerine alcohol. In the case a vertical partition is fixed at a distance below the compartment f and destined to hold the toothpicks. A pad h is arranged in the compartment formed between the compartment f and this vertical partition, said pad consisting preferably of wadding and linen. A pad k of elastic material, for instance of rubber, is arranged in the lid, and this pad k presses against the pad h when the lid is closed, so that the lower end of a wick i, extending from the liquid compartment f through a hole in the bottom wall of this compartment under or into the pad h is compressed. This pad h will therefore be saturated with disinfecting liquid and, when the lid is closed, the pad k in the lid contacting the pad h in the case will be saturated.

In the form of invention shown in Figs. 3 and 4, the case c is provided with a horizontal partition q which cooperates with the bottom wall of the case a to form the front plate of a compartment t for the disinfecting liquid. The liquid is filled into this compartment through a hole in the wall of the case, preferably closed by a screw plug r. The liquid is fed to the pad h through a hole s in the partition q.

As shown in Fig. 1, a rest q' for a second toothpick is provided at the side of the oval rest q for the handle part m of a toothpick which has a book-shaped flat upper end n. The end of the second toothpick forms a scraper o.

As shown in Fig. 3, a rest q' for a third toothpick is provided, which toothpick has a quill p designed to serve as toothpick proper.

I claim:
1. An apparatus for holding and sterilizing toothpicks, comprising in combination a flat rectangular case, a lid hingedly mounted at the upper end of said case, a pad of absorbing material in a chamber formed in the upper portion of said case, a pad of absorbent material in said lid located so that, when the lid is folded over the case the lid pad presses on said pad in said case,
a chamber formed in said case above said pad and filled with disinfecting liquid, a wick extending from said liquid chamber through a hole in the bottom of this chamber into said pad in said case, so that when the lid is folded down both pads are saturated with disinfecting liquid, and a compartment in the lower end of said case for accommodating toothpicks, the upper end of the toothpicks projecting through the bottom of the pad compartment over said pad, so that, when the lid is folded down, the upper ends of said toothpicks are disinfected by the disinfecting liquid.

2. An apparatus for holding and sterilizing toothpicks, comprising in combination a flat rectangular case having a hole in its wall near the upper end, a lid hingedly mounted on the upper end of said case, a horizontal partition in said case forming with the case wall a compartment for disinfecting liquid and having a hole near the upper end, a vertical partition on said horizontal partition at some distance from the upper end of said case, a pad of absorbing material in the compartment formed by said horizontal and vertical partitions, a wick under said pad and extending through said hole in the horizontal partition into the compartment formed by said horizontal partition and the case wall, a pad of absorbing material in the lid near its hinged end so that, when the lid is closed this lid pad is pressed against the pad in the case, said vertical partition serving as holder for toothpicks placed in the lower end of said case so that the operative end of the toothpicks projects over said pad, and a screw stopper screwed into the hole in the case wall.

3. An apparatus for holding and sterilizing toothpicks, comprising in combination a flat rectangular case, a lid hingedly mounted at the upper end of said case, a pad of absorbing material in said lid, a second pad in said case located so that when the lid is closed the two pads press one against the other, a disinfectant chamber formed in said case and having a hole establishing communication with the pad in said case, a wick extending through the hole in said chamber and embedded in said pad, so that when the lid is closed the two pads are saturated with disinfectant, and a compartment at the lower end of said case for accommodating toothpicks, so that their upper ends rest on the pad in said case and are pressed between the two pads when the lid is closed.

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