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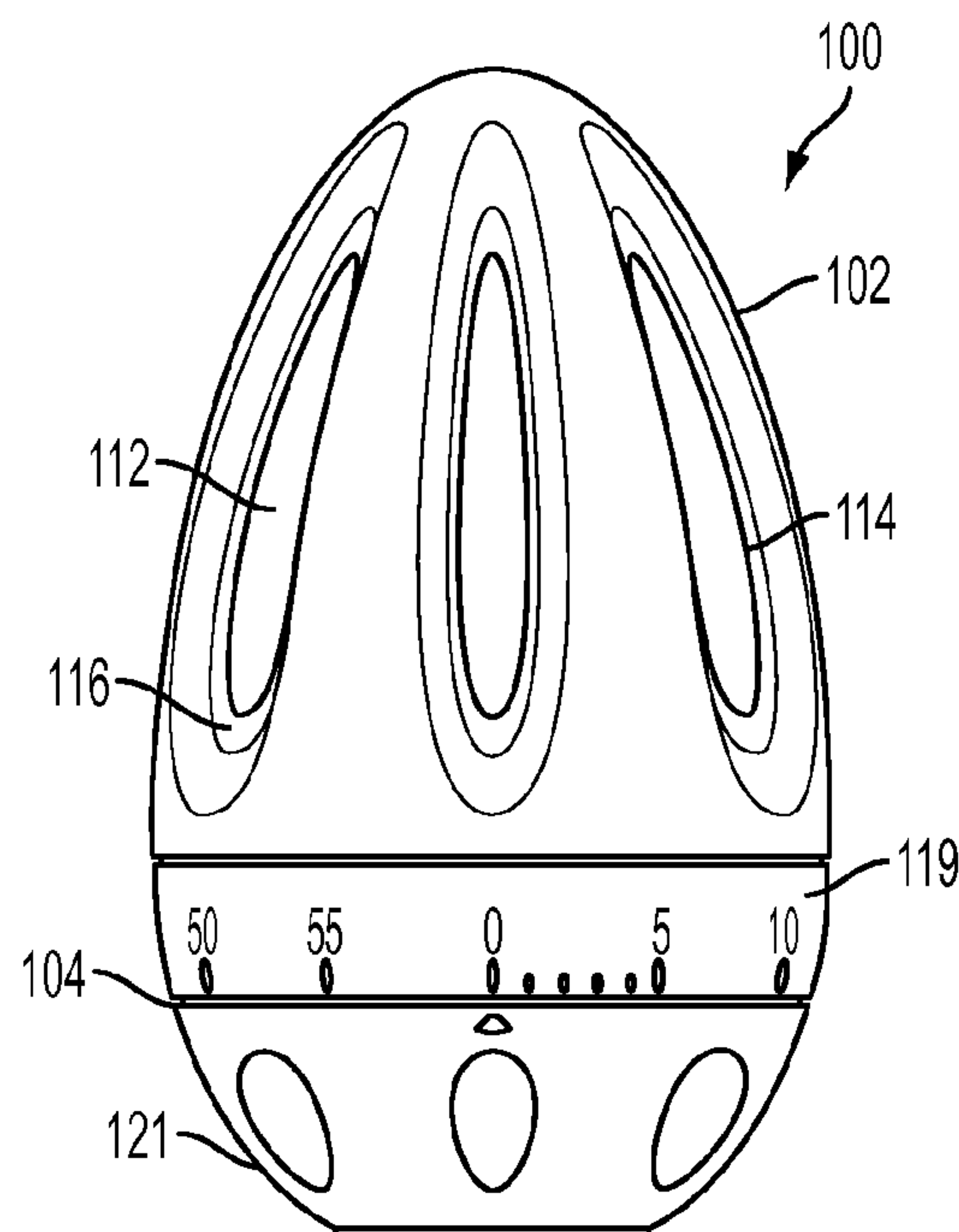
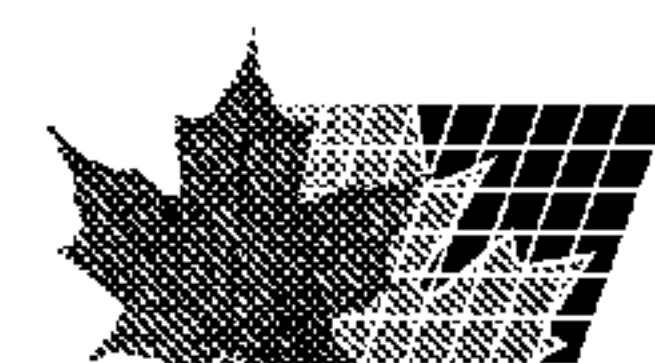


FIG. 1A

(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A chewable pet-entertainment device. The chewable pet-entertainment device includes a first body portion and a second body portion operatively coupled to the first body portion. At least one of the first body portion and the second body portion define an internal cavity. The chewable pet-entertainment device includes a timer mechanism disposed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion. Responsive to the timer mechanism measuring a set period of time, the first body portion opens relative to the second body portion allowing access to the internal cavity.



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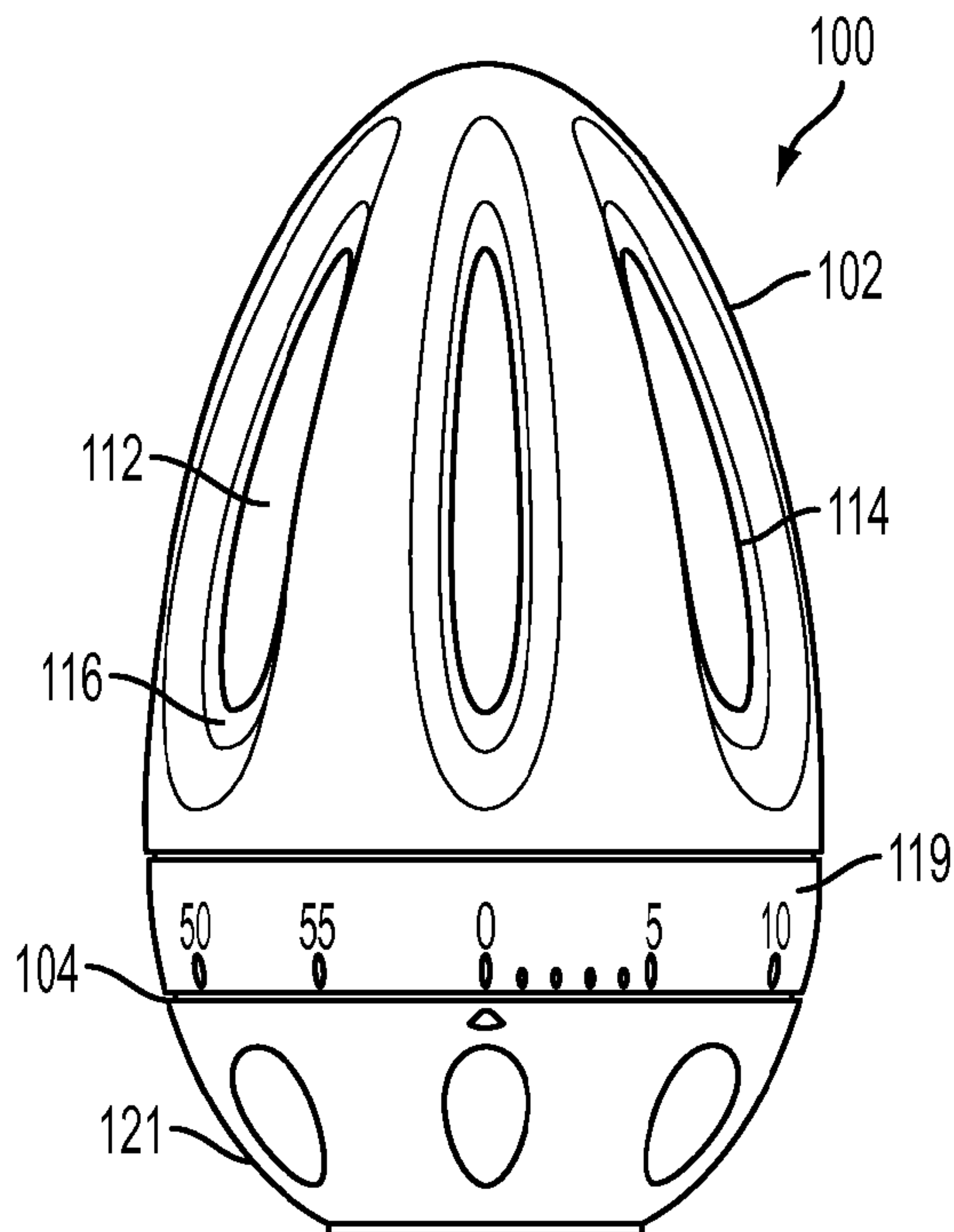
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TIMED PET ENTERTAINMENT

**FIG. 1A**

(57) Abstract: A chewable pet-entertainment device. The chewable pet-entertainment device includes a first body portion and a second body portion operatively coupled to the first body portion. At least one of the first body portion and the second body portion define an internal cavity. The chewable pet-entertainment device includes a timer mechanism disposed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion. Responsive to the timer mechanism measuring a set period of time, the first body portion opens relative to the second body portion allowing access to the internal cavity.

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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TIMED PET ENTERTAINMENT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to, and incorporates by reference the entire disclosure of, U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/831,709, filed June 6, 2014.

BACKGROUND

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates generally to pet toys and more particularly, but not by way of limitation, to chewable pet toys having an integrated timer that distributes an edible treat after a set period of time.

History of the Related Art

[0003] Pet toys are extremely popular items amongst pet owner and retailers alike. Most chewable pet toys are constructed from a durable material such as, for example, high-density rubber. Some Pet toys allow for insertion of an edible treat. In such pet toys, the edible treat is often held in place by friction. A pet is enticed by the smell of the edible treat to play with the chewable toy. Over time, the pet works the edible treat loose and consumes it. Such pet toys typically occupy a pet for only a short time and, once the treat is consumed, the pet often loses interest.

SUMMARY

[0004] The present invention relates generally to pet toys and more particularly, but not by way of limitation, to chewable pet toys having an integrated timer that distributes an edible treat after a set period of time. In one aspect, the present invention relates to a chewable pet-entertainment device. The chewable pet-entertainment device includes a first body portion and a second body portion that is operatively coupled to the first body portion. At least one of the first body portion and the second body portion defines an internal cavity. A latch removably secures the first body portion to the second body portion. Responsive to expiration of a set period of time, the latch allows the first body portion to open relative to the second body portion allowing access to the internal cavity.

[0005] In another aspect, the present invention relates to a chewable pet-entertainment device. The chewable pet-entertainment device comprises a first body portion and a second body portion that is operatively coupled to the first body portion. A timer mechanism is disposed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion. A door is disposed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion. The door, when in an open position, allows access to an internal cavity defined by at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion. Responsive to the timer mechanism measuring a set period of time, the door moves to the open position allowing access to the internal cavity.

[0006] In another aspect, the present invention relates to a method of pet entertainment. The method includes charging a chewable pet-entertainment device with at least one edible treat, closing a first body portion relative to a second body portion to conceal the edible treat, and setting a timer mechanism to measure a set period of time. Responsive to the set period of time being measured, the first body portion opens relative to the second body portion to allow access to the edible treat.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] For a more complete understanding of the present invention and for further objects and advantages thereof, reference may now be had to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0008] FIGURE 1A is a front view of a chewable pet-entertainment device in a closed position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[0009] FIGURE 1B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 1A according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00010] FIGURE 1C is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 1A in the closed position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00011] FIGURE 1D is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 1A in an open position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00012] FIGURE 1E is a flow diagram of a process for using the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURES 1A-1E according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00013] FIGURE 2A is a front view of a chewable pet-entertainment device with a door in a closed position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00014] FIGURE 2B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 2A with the door in the closed position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00015] FIGURE 2C is a front view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 2A with the door in a half-open position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00016] FIGURE 2D is a front view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 2A with the door in an open position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00017] FIGURE 2E is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 2A with the door 206 in the open position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00018] FIGURE 2F is a side view of the chewable pet entertainment device of FIGURE 2A with the door in the open position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00019] FIGURE 2G is a flow diagram of a process for using the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 2A according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00020] FIGURE 3A is a front view of a chewable pet-entertainment device with a telescoping opening according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00021] FIGURE 3B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 3A according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00022] FIGURE 3C is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 3A in a closed position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00023] FIGURE 3D is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 3A in an open position according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00024] FIGURE 3E is a flow diagram of a process for using the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 3A according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00025] FIGURE 4A is a top view of a chewable pet-entertainment device with a top-mounted dial according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00026] FIGURE 4B is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 4A according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00027] FIGURE 4C is a cross-sectional view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 4A according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00028] FIGURE 5A is a side view of a chewable pet-entertainment device including a receiver according to an exemplary embodiment;

[00029] FIGURE 5B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 5A according to an exemplary embodiment; and

[00030] FIGURE 5C is a side view of a pet-entertainment system, including the chewable pet-entertainment device of FIGURE 5A according to an exemplary embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[00031] Various embodiments of the present invention will now be described more fully with reference to the accompanying drawings. The invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein.

[00032] FIGURE 1A is a front view of a chewable pet-entertainment device 100 in a closed position. FIGURE 1B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 100. FIGURE 1C is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device in a closed position. FIGURE 1D is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 100 in an open position. Referring to FIGURES 1A-1D, the chewable pet-entertainment device 100 includes a first body portion 102 that is pivotably connected to a second body portion 104 at a hinge 106. A latch (not

shown) is disposed on a lower face 118 of the first body portion 102 approximately 180 degrees from the hinge 106. In a typical embodiment, the latch is received into a lock (not shown) that is disposed on an upper face 120 of the second body portion 104. In various embodiments, a spring may be utilized to bias the first body portion 102 to pivot at the hinge 106 and open in a “clam-shell” like manner relative to the second body portion 104. A treat cage 114 is formed in the first body portion 102 and is defined by an inner surface 116 of the first body portion 102 and the upper face 120 of the second body portion 104. When the first body portion 102 is in an open position, the treat cage 114 is accessible to a pet such as, for example, a dog. When the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 are in a closed position, access to the treat cage 114 is prevented. A plurality of openings 112 are formed through a thickness of the first body portion 102. By way of example, the treat cage 114 is shown in FIGURES 1A-1D as being disposed in the first body portion 102; however, in other embodiments, pet entertainment devices utilizing principles of the invention may include treat cages disposed in the second body portion 104. In a typical embodiment, the pet-entertainment device 100 is sized so as to be played with and chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00033] In a typical embodiment, the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 are constructed of a durable material such as, for example, high-density rubber, or other similar material. In some embodiments, the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 include a geometric pattern of raised surfaces (not shown). Such raised surfaces facilitate dental and periodontal hygiene when the chewable pet-entertainment device 100 is chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog. The raised surfaces may be applied to the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 through a process such as, for example, molding, stamping, embossing, or other appropriate process.

[00034] A timer mechanism 113 is disposed in at least one of the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104. In a typical embodiment, the timer mechanism 113 is set by rotating a first region 121 of at least one of the second body portion 104 and the first body portion 102 relative to a second region 119. The second body portion 104 is illustrated by way of example in FIGURES 1A-1D as including the first region 121 and the second region 119. In other embodiments, the first body portion 102 may include the first region 121 and the second region 119. In various embodiments, the first region 121 may be a recessed dial located on one

of a bottom face of the second body portion 104 and a top face of first body portion 102.

[00035] The timer mechanism 113, in a typical embodiment, establishes a set period of time that the latch remains secured in the lock thereby holding the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 in the closed position. Upon expiration of the set period of time, the latch becomes disengaged from the lock allowing the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 to pivot at the hinge 106 to the open position. In other embodiments, the timer mechanism 113 may be coupled to a receiver. In such embodiments, the timer mechanism 113 may be set via a transmitting device such as, for example, a cellular telephone or other similar device.

[00036] FIGURE 1E is a flow diagram of a process 150 for using the chewable pet-entertainment device 100. The process 150 starts at step 151. At step 152, a pet treat is placed into the treat cage 114 of the first body portion 102. At step 154, the first body portion 102 is pivoted relative to the second body portion 104 until the latch is received into the lock. At step 156, the first region 121 of the second body portion 104 is twisted relative to the second region 119. Responsive to such twisting, the timer mechanism 113 establishes the set period of time. In some embodiments, steps 154 and 156 occur simultaneously. During the set period of time, the latch remains secured in the lock causing the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 to remain in the closed position. The plurality of openings 112, allow the pet treat to be detectable via smell, but not accessible, by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00037] At step 158, the set period of time expires and the latch becomes disengaged from the lock thereby allowing the first body portion 102 and the second body portion 104 to pivot at the hinge 106 to the open position. At step 160, the pet treat becomes accessible to the pet upon expiration of the set period of time. The process 150 ends at step 162.

[00038] FIGURE 2A is a front view of a chewable pet-entertainment device 200 with a door 206 in a closed position. FIGURE 2B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 200 with the door 206 in the closed position. FIGURE 2C is a front view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 200 with the door 206 in a half-open position. FIGURE 2D is a front view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 200 with the door 206 in an open position. FIGURE 2E is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 200 with the door 206 in the

open position. FIGURE 2F is a side view of the pet entertainment device 200 with the door 206 in the open position. Referring to FIGURES 2A-2F, the chewable pet-entertainment device 200 includes a first body portion 202 that is coupled to a second body portion 204. In a typical embodiment, the first body portion 202 and the second body portion 204 are constructed of a durable material such as, for example, high-density rubber, or other similar material. In some embodiments, the first body portion 202 and the second body portion 204 include a geometric pattern of raised surfaces (not shown). Such raised surfaces facilitate dental and periodontal hygiene when the chewable pet-entertainment device 200 is chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog. The raised surfaces may be applied to the first body portion 202 and the second body portion 204 through a process such as, for example, molding, stamping, embossing, or other appropriate process. A plurality of openings 212 are formed through a thickness of the first body portion 202. In a typical embodiment, the pet-entertainment device 200 is sized so as to be played with and chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00039] At least one opening 210 is formed in the first body portion 202. The at least one opening 210 provides access to a treat cage 214 disposed within the first body portion 202. When in a closed position, a door 206 covers the at least one opening 210 and prevents access to the treat cage 214. When in an open position, the door 206 does not cover the at least one opening 210 and the treat cage 214 is accessible to a pet such as, for example, a dog. By way of example, the treat cage 214 is shown in FIGURES 2A-2F as being disposed in the first body portion 202; however, in other embodiments, pet entertainment devices utilizing principles of the invention may include treat cages disposed in the second body portion 204. In various embodiments, at least one small opening may be formed in the door 206. When the at least one small opening is aligned with one of the at least one opening 210 and the plurality of openings 212, smaller sized treats may fall out of the treat cage 214 thereby maintaining the interest of the pet.

[00040] A timer mechanism 213 is disposed in at least one of the first body portion 202 and the second body portion 204. In a typical embodiment, the timer mechanism 213 is set by rotating a first region 221 of at least one of the second body portion 204 and the first body portion 202 relative to a second region 219. The second body portion 204 is illustrated by way of example in FIGURES 2A-2F as including the first region 221 and the second region 219. In

other embodiments, the first body portion 202 may include the first region 221 and the second region 219. In various embodiments, the first region 221 may be a recessed dial located on one of a bottom face of the second body portion 204 and a top face of first body portion 202.

[00041] The timer mechanism 213, in a typical embodiment, establishes a set period of time that the door 206 will remain in the closed position. As the set period of time expires, the door 206 rotates relative to the first body portion 202 to an open position. In other embodiments, the timer mechanism 213 may be coupled to a receiver. In such embodiments, the timer mechanism 213 may be set via a transmitting device such as, for example, a cellular telephone or other similar device.

[00042] FIGURE 2G is a flow diagram of a process 250 for using the chewable pet-entertainment device 200. The process 250 starts at step 251. At step 252, a pet treat is placed into the treat cage 214 of the first body portion 202. At step 254, the door 206 is rotated to the closed position. At step 256, the first region 221 is twisted relative to the second region 219. In some embodiments, step 254 and 256 may occur simultaneously. Responsive to such twisting, the timer mechanism establishes the set period of time. During the set period of time, the door 206 remains in the closed position. When the door 206 is in the closed position, the plurality of openings 212, allow the pet treat to be detectable via smell, but not accessible, by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00043] At step 258, the door 206 begins to rotate to the open position as the set period of time approaches expiration. At step 260, the pet treat becomes accessible to the pet upon expiration of the set period of time. The process 250 ends at step 262. In various embodiments, as the door 206 rotates the at least one small opening passes the at least one opening 210 and each opening of the plurality of openings 212. Such action causes the small opening to open and close thereby allowing smaller treats to fall out of the treat cage 214 before expiration of the set period of time.

[00044] FIGURE 3A is a front view of a chewable pet-entertainment device 300 with a telescoping opening. FIGURE 3B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 300. FIGURE 3C is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 300 in a closed position. FIGURE 3D is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 300 in an open position.

Referring to FIGURES 3A-3D, the chewable pet-entertainment device 300 includes a first body portion 302 that is telescopically coupled to a second body portion 304. In a typical embodiment, the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304 are constructed of a durable material such as, for example, high-density rubber, or other similar material. In some embodiments, the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304 include a geometric pattern of raised surfaces (not shown). Such raised surfaces facilitate dental and periodontal hygiene when the chewable pet-entertainment device 300 is chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog. The raised surfaces may be applied to the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304 through a process such as, for example, molding, stamping, embossing, or other appropriate process. In a typical embodiment, the pet-entertainment device 300 is sized so as to be played with and chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00045] In a typical embodiment, the first body portion 302 is biased in an axial direction, away from the second body portion 304, by a spring (not shown). An annular cavity 314 is formed in the first body portion 304. When the first body portion 302 is in an open position, the annular cavity 314 is accessible to a pet such as, for example, a dog. When the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304 are in a closed position, access to the annular cavity 314 is prevented. A latch 308 is disposed on a lower face of the first body portion 302. In a typical embodiment, the latch 308 is received into a lock (not shown) that is disposed on an upper face 320 of the second body portion 304. Engagement of the latch 308 and the lock secures the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304 in the closed position. A plurality of openings 312 are formed through a thickness of the first body portion 302. By way of example, the annular cavity 314 is shown in FIGURES 3A-3D as being disposed in the first body portion 302; however, in other embodiments, pet entertainment devices utilizing principles of the invention may include annular cavities disposed in the second body portion 304.

[00046] A timer mechanism 313 is disposed in at least one of the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304. In a typical embodiment, the timer mechanism 313 is set by rotating a first region 321 of the second body portion 304 relative to a second region 319. The second body portion 304 is illustrated by way of example in FIGURES 3A-3D as including the first region 321 and the second region 319. In other embodiments, the first body portion 302 may include the first region 321 and the second region 319. In various embodiments, the first

region 321 may be a recessed dial located on one of a bottom face of the second body portion 304 and a top face of first body portion 302.

[00047] The timer mechanism 313, in a typical embodiment, establishes a set period of time that the latch 308 remains secured in the lock thereby holding the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304 in the closed position. Upon expiration of the set period of time, the latch 308 becomes disengaged from the lock allowing the first body portion 302 to move in an axial direction, relative to the second body portion 304, to the open position. In other embodiments, the timer mechanism 313 may be coupled to a receiver. In such embodiments, the timer mechanism 313 may be set via a transmitting device such as, for example, a cellular telephone or other similar device.

[00048] FIGURE 3E is a flow diagram of a process 350 for using the chewable pet-entertainment device 300. The process 350 starts at step 351. At step 352, a pet treat is placed into the annular cavity 314 of the first body portion 302. At step 354, the first body portion 302 is moved in an axial direction towards the second body portion 304 until the latch 308 is received into the lock. At step 356, the first region 321 is twisted relative to the second region 319. Responsive to such twisting, the timer mechanism 313 establishes the set period of time. In some embodiments, steps 354 and 356 occur simultaneously. During the set period of time, the latch 308 remains secured in the lock causing the first body portion 302 and the second body portion 304 to remain in the closed position. The plurality of openings 312, allow the pet treat to be detectable via smell, but not accessible, by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00049] At step 358, the set period of time expires and the latch 308 becomes disengaged from the lock thereby allowing the first body portion 302 to move in an axial direction, away from the second body portion 304, to the open position. At step 360, the pet treat becomes accessible to the pet upon expiration of the set period of time. The process 350 ends at step 362.

[00050] FIGURE 4A is a top view of a chewable pet-entertainment device 400. FIGURE 4B is a side view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 400. FIGURE 4C is a cross-sectional view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 400. Referring to FIGURES 4A-4C, the chewable pet-entertainment device 400 includes a first body portion 402 that is coupled

to a second body portion 404. In a typical embodiment, the first body portion 402 and the second body portion 404 are constructed of a durable material such as, for example, high-density rubber, or other similar material. In some embodiments, the first body portion 402 and the second body portion 404 include a geometric pattern of raised surfaces (not shown). Such raised surfaces facilitate dental and periodontal hygiene when the chewable pet-entertainment device 400 is chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog. The raised surfaces may be applied to the first body portion 402 and the second body portion 404 through a process such as, for example, molding, stamping, embossing, or other appropriate process. In a typical embodiment, the pet-entertainment device 400 is sized so as to be played with and chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00051] At least one opening 410 is formed in the first body portion 402. The at least one opening 410 provides access to a treat cage 414 disposed within the first body portion 402. A door 406 is arranged within and generally concentric with the first body portion 402. The door 406 includes a secondary opening 411 formed therein. When the door 406 is in an open position, the at least one opening 410 and the secondary opening 411 align and allow access to the treat cage 414 by a pet such as, for example, a dog. When in a closed position, the door 406 covers the at least one opening 410 and prevents access to the treat cage 414. By way of example, the treat cage 414 and the door 406 are shown in FIGURES 4A-4C as being disposed in the first body portion 402; however, in other embodiments, pet entertainment devices utilizing principles of the invention may include treat cages and doors disposed in the second body portion 404. A plurality of openings are formed through a thickness of the first body portion 402 and the door 406. In a typical embodiment, the plurality of openings, allow a pet treat disposed in the treat cage 414 to be detectable via smell, but not accessible, by a pet such as, for example, a dog. In various embodiments, at least one small opening may be formed in the door 406. When the at least one small opening is aligned with one of the at least one opening 410 and the plurality of openings, smaller sized treats may fall out of the treat cage 414 thereby maintaining the interest of the pet.

[00052] A timer mechanism 413 is disposed in at least one of the first body portion 402 and the second body portion 404. In a typical embodiment, the timer mechanism 413 is set by rotating a dial 421 relative to the first body portion 402. In a typical embodiment, the dial

421 is operatively coupled to the door 406. The door 406 is operatively coupled to the timer mechanism 413. Thus, rotation of the dial 421 sets the timer mechanism 413 to measure a set period of time. Rotation of the dial 421 also moves the door 406 from the open position to a closed position, in which closed position the at least one opening 410 and the secondary opening 411 do not align. The timer mechanism 413 is illustrated by way of example in FIGURES 4A-4C as being disposed in the second body portion 404; however, in other embodiments, the timer mechanism 413 may be disposed in the first body portion 402. In such other embodiments, the timer mechanism 413 is set by rotating the dial 421 relative to the second body portion 404.

[00053] A process for using the chewable pet-entertainment device 400 is similar to the process 200 described above in FIGURE 2G. During operation, as the timer mechanism 413 measures the set period of time, the door 406 rotates from the closed position towards the open position. As the door 406 rotates, the at least one opening 410 gradually comes into alignment with the secondary opening 411. Upon expiration of the set period of time, the at least one opening 410 and the secondary opening 411 align thereby allowing access to the treat cage 414. In various embodiments, as the door 406 rotates the at least one small opening passes the at least one opening 410 and each opening of the plurality of openings. Such action causes the small opening to open and close thereby allowing smaller treats to fall out of the treat cage 414 before expiration of the set period of time.

[00054] FIGURE 5A is a side view of a chewable pet-entertainment device 500. FIGURE 5B is a top view of the chewable pet-entertainment device 500. FIGURE 5C is a side view of a pet-entertainment system 550 including the chewable pet-entertainment device 500. Referring to FIGURES 5A-5C, the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 includes a first body portion 502 that is telescopically coupled to a second body portion 504. In a typical embodiment, the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504 are constructed of a durable material such as, for example, high-density rubber, or other similar material. In some embodiments, the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504 include a geometric pattern of raised surfaces (not shown). Such raised surfaces facilitate dental and periodontal hygiene when the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 is chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog. The raised surfaces may be applied to the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504 through a process such as, for example, molding, stamping, embossing, or

other appropriate process. In a typical embodiment, the pet-entertainment device 500 is sized so as to be played with and chewed on by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00055] In a typical embodiment, the first body portion 502 is biased in an axial direction, away from the second body portion 504, by a spring (not shown). An annular cavity 514 is formed in the first body portion 504. When the first body portion 502 is in an open position, the annular cavity 514 is accessible to a pet such as, for example, a dog. When the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504 are in a closed position, access to the annular cavity 514 is prevented. A latch 508 is disposed on a lower face of the first body portion 502. In a typical embodiment, the latch 508 is received into a lock (not shown) that is disposed on an upper face 520 of the second body portion 504. Engagement of the latch 508 and the lock secures the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504 in the closed position. A plurality of openings 512 are formed through a thickness of the first body portion 502. By way of example, the annular cavity 514 is shown in FIGURES 5A-5C as being disposed in the first body portion 502; however, in other embodiments, pet entertainment devices utilizing principles of the invention may include annular cavities disposed in the second body portion 504. The plurality of openings 512, allow an edible treat 513 disposed in the annular cavity 514 to be detectable via smell, but not accessible, by a pet such as, for example, a dog.

[00056] A timer mechanism 517 is disposed in at least one of the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504. In a typical embodiment, the timer mechanism 517 establishes a set period of time that the latch 508 remains secured in the lock thereby holding the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504 in the closed position. Upon expiration of the set period of time, the latch 508 becomes disengaged from the lock allowing the first body portion 502 to move in an axial direction, relative to the second body portion 504, to the open position allowing access to, for example, the edible treat 513 contained in the annular cavity 514.

[00057] In a typical embodiments, the timer mechanism 517 is coupled to a receiver (not shown) disposed in at least one of the first body portion 502 and the second body portion 504. The timer mechanism 517 is set via a transmitting device 501 such as, for example, a cellular telephone or other similar device. An indicator 519 is disposed on the second body portion 504. The indicator 519 visually displays via, for example, a plurality of lights, a time

remaining of the set period of time. An audio speaker 503 is disposed on the second body portion 502. During operation, the audio speaker 503 emits sounds. In a typical embodiment, the sounds emitted from the audio speaker 503 facilitate locating the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 by at least one of a pet and a pet owner. In other embodiments, the sounds emitted by the audio speaker 503 facilitate holding the attention of the pet during the set period of time. In various embodiments, the chewable pet-entertainment device may vibrate or shake thereby making the chewable pet-entertainment device more interesting to the pet. A battery (not shown) is disposed in at least one of the first body portion 504 and the second body portion 502. In a typical embodiment, the battery provides electrical power to the timer mechanism 517 and the audio speaker 503.

[00058] As shown in FIGURE 5C, the pet-entertainment system 550 includes the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 and a charging base 552. In a typical embodiment, the charging base 552 receives at least part of the second body portion 504. In a typical embodiment, an electrical connection is established between the charging base 552 and the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 to facilitate charging of the battery. In other embodiments, the charging base 552 utilizes induction charging.

[00059] In other embodiments, the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 is capable of electronic pairing, such as, for example, Bluetooth[®] pairing, with, for example, a collar (not shown). During operation, if a first pet approaches the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 while wearing a first collar that is paired with the chewable pet-entertainment device 500, no action will be taken and the first pet will be allowed to play with the chewable pet-entertainment device 500. If, however, a second pet approaches the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 while wearing a second collar that is paired with a device other than the chewable pet-entertainment device 500, the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 emits a signal causing the second collar to vibrate thereby driving the second pet away from the chewable pet-entertainment device 500. In other embodiments, the chewable pet-entertainment device emits a sound that is unpleasant to the second pet thereby driving the second pet away from the chewable pet-entertainment device 500. Such an arrangement is advantageous in situations where two or more pets are in close proximity to each other.

[00060] In various embodiments, when the first body portion 502 opens relative to the second body portion 502 the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 provides alert messages to the transmitting device 501 thereby alerting a pet owner that the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 has opened. The alert messages may be sent via a messaging protocol such as, for example, SMS, MMS, or any other messaging protocol. In various embodiments, the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 records an amount of time, via an activity log, that a pet is engaged with the chewable pet-entertainment device 500. The activity log may, in some embodiments, be transmitted by the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 to the transmitting device 501 for review by a pet owner. In still other embodiments, the transmitting device 501 provides a signal to the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 directing the first body portion 502 to open relative to the second body portion 504 without regard to the timer mechanism 513. Such an arrangement is useful in situations, for example, where a pet becomes frustrated by the chewable pet-entertainment device 500 by providing an instant reward to the pet.

[00061] The advantages of the chewable pet-entertainment device (100, 200, 300, 400, 500) will be apparent to those skilled in the art. First, incorporation of the timer mechanism allows a pet owner to determine the set period of time the pet is to remain engaged and entertained. In a typical embodiment, the timer mechanism is set for as long as, for example, approximately 60 minutes or more, or as short as, for example, 1 minute. In other embodiments, the timer mechanism randomly selects the set period of time or randomly selects the set period of time within a user-defined range of times. Further, the timer mechanism allows a different set period of time to be utilized with each use of the chewable pet-entertainment device (0, 200, 300, 400, 500). Thus, by randomly selecting different periods of time, the pet cannot anticipate when the treat will be made accessible thereby keeping the pet interested and entertained. Finally, the pet can chew on or play with the chewable pet-entertainment device (0, 200, 300, 400, 500) during the pre-determined set period of time measured by the timer mechanism.

[00062] Although various embodiments of the method and system of the present invention have been illustrated in the accompanying Drawings and described in the foregoing Specification, it will be understood that the invention is not limited to the embodiments disclosed, but is capable of numerous rearrangements, modifications, and substitutions without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth herein. It is intended that the

Specification and examples be considered as illustrative only.

What is claimed is:

1. A chewable pet-entertainment device comprising:
a first body portion;
a second body portion operatively coupled to the first body portion, at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion defining an internal cavity;
a latch that removably secures the first body portion to the second body portion, wherein, responsive to expiration of a set period of time, the latch allows the first body portion to open relative to the second body portion allowing access to the internal cavity.
2. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 1, wherein the first body portion is hingedly connected to the second body portion.
3. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 2, wherein the first body portion opens in a clam-shell-like manner relative to the second body portion.
4. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 1, where in the first body portion is slidably connected to the second body portion.
5. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 4, wherein the first body portion opens telescopically relative to the second body portion.
6. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 1, comprising a plurality of openings formed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion.
7. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 1, wherein at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion comprises a first region rotatably coupled to a second region.
8. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 7, wherein rotation of the first region relative to the second region sets the timer mechanism to measure the set period of time.

9. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 1, wherein the internal cavity contains an edible treat.

10. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 9, wherein opening of the first body portion relative to the second body portion allows access to the edible treat.

11. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 1, comprising a timer mechanism disposed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion, wherein the timer mechanism measures the set period of time.

12. A chewable pet-entertainment device comprising:
a first body portion;
a second body portion operatively coupled to the first body portion;
a timer mechanism disposed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion;
a door disposed in at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion, the door, when in an open position, allowing access to an internal cavity defined by at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion; and
wherein, responsive to the timer mechanism measuring a set period of time, the door moves to the open position allowing access to the internal cavity.

13. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 12, wherein rotation of the second body portion relative to the first body portion determines the set period of time to be measured by the timer mechanism.

14. The chewable pet-entertainment device of claim 12, wherein the door rotates to the open position responsive to the timer mechanism measuring the set period of time.

15. A method of pet entertainment, the method comprising:
charging a chewable pet-entertainment device with at least one edible treat;

closing a first body portion relative to a second body portion to conceal the edible treat;
setting a timer mechanism to measure a set period of time; and
responsive to the set period of time being measured, opening the first body portion
relative to the second body portion to allow access to the edible treat.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the setting comprises rotating a portion of at least one of the first body portion and the second body portion.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the closing comprises closing the first body portion relative to the second body portion in a clam-shell-like manner.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the closing comprises closing the first body portion relative to the second body portion in a telescopic manner.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the charging comprises inserting the edible treat into an internal cavity.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the opening comprises rotatably aligning at least one opening formed in the first body portion with a second opening formed in the second body portion to allow access to the at least one edible treat.

1/8

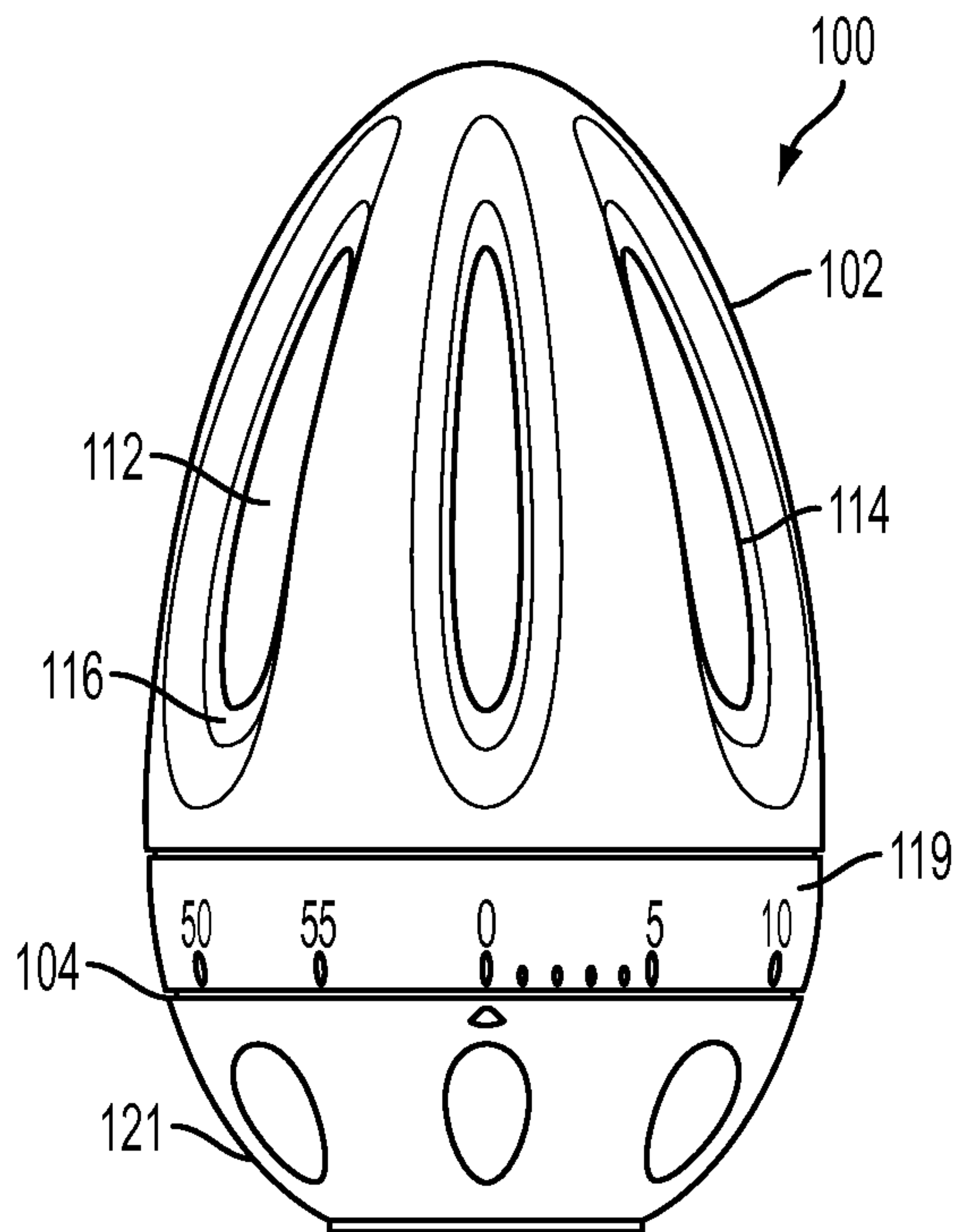


FIG. 1A

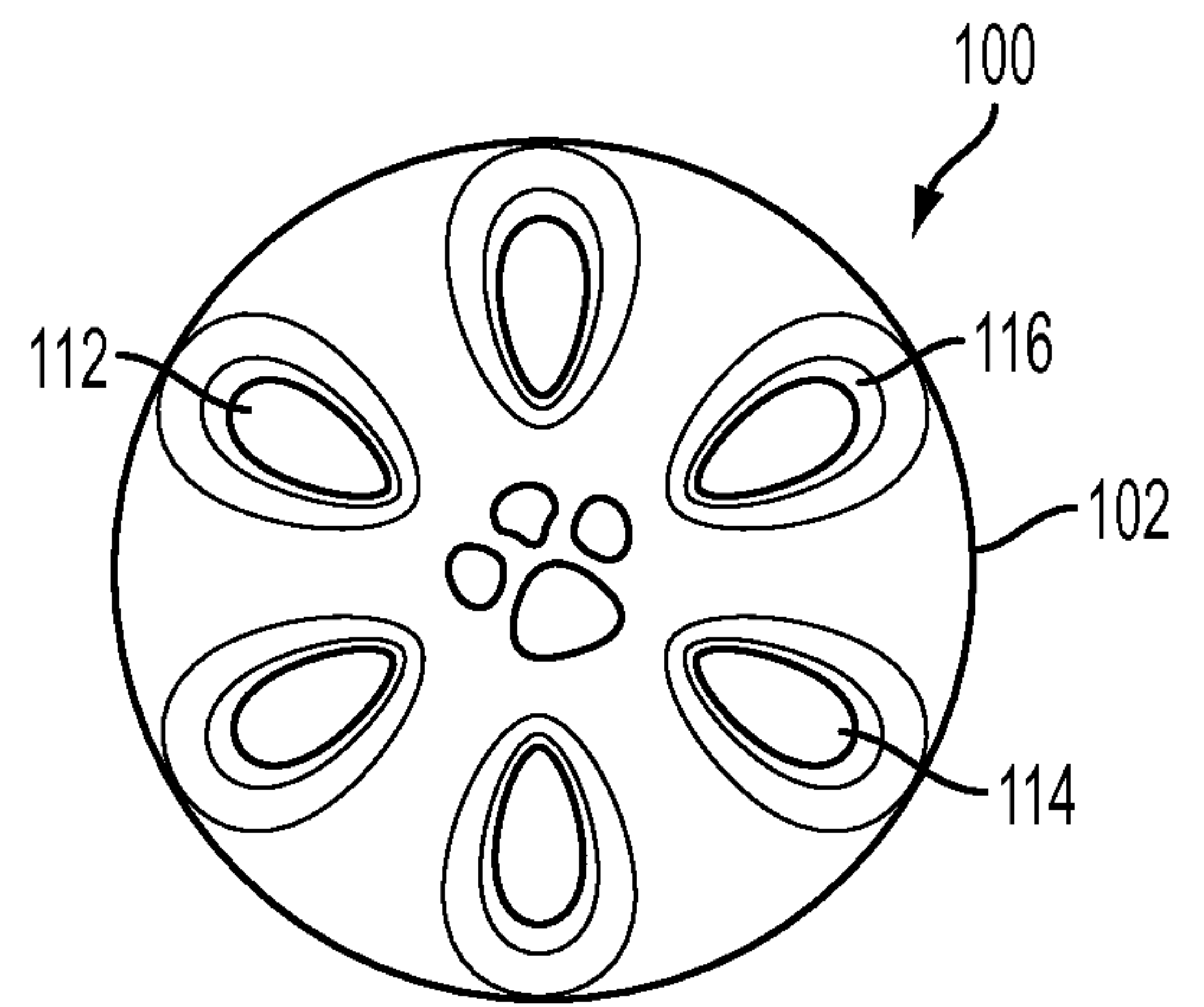


FIG. 1B

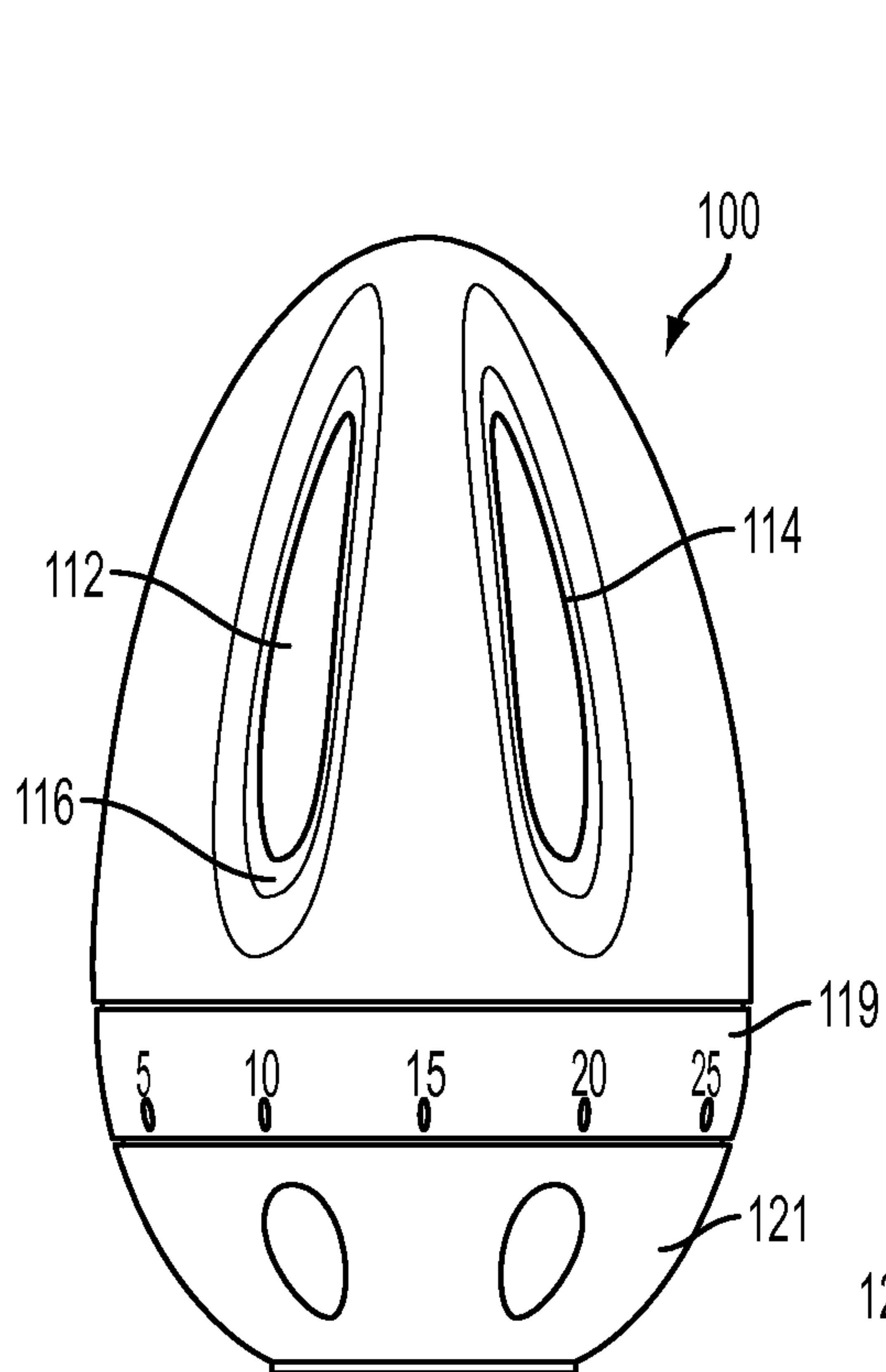


FIG. 1C

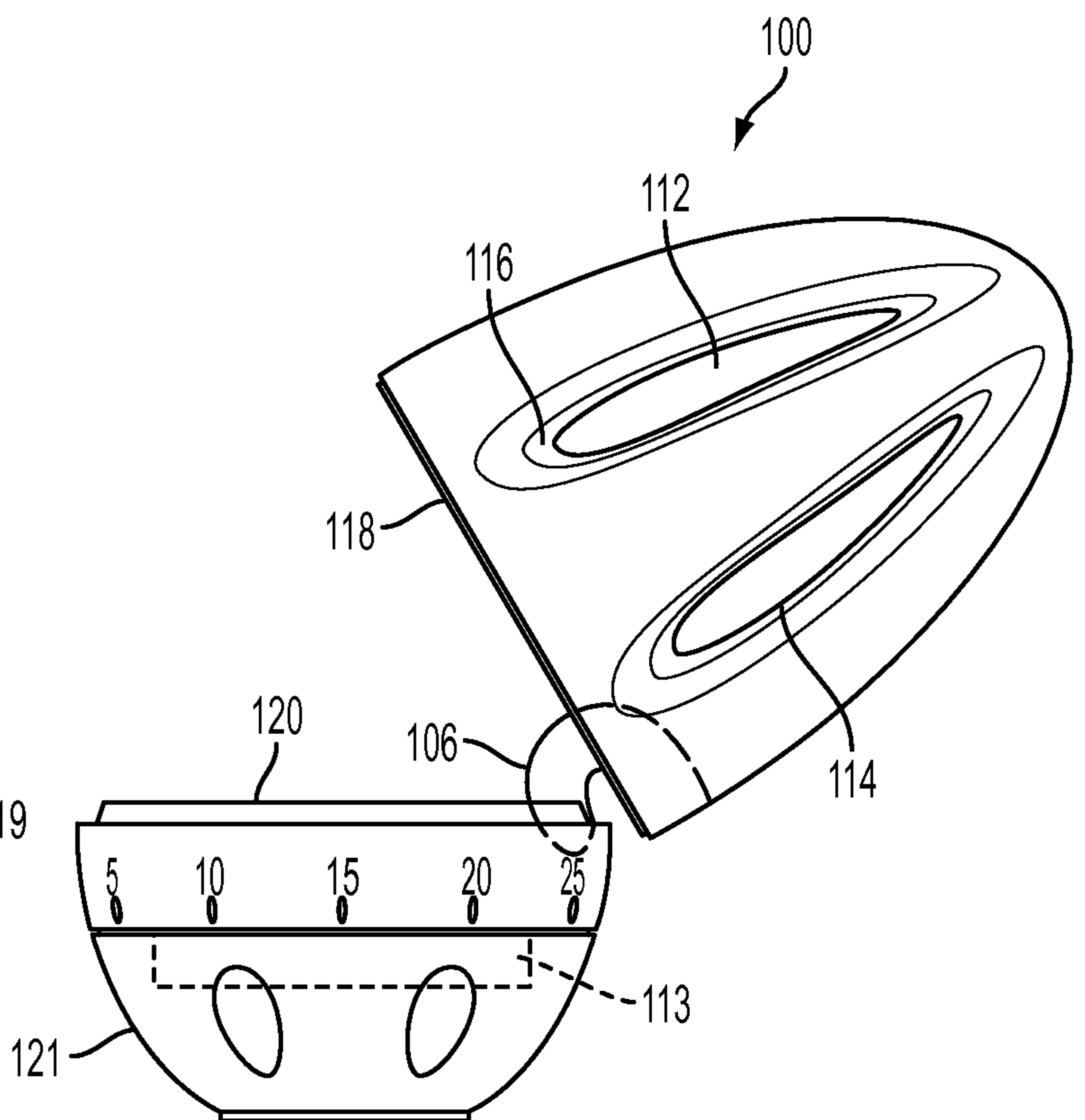


FIG. 1D

2/8

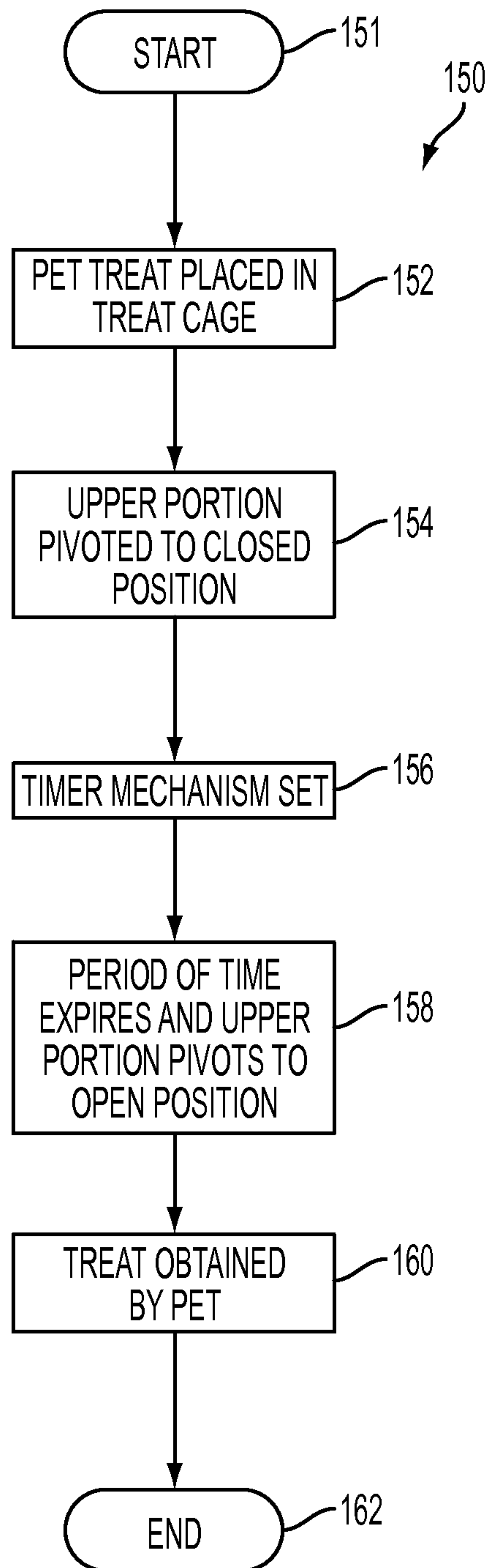


FIG. 1E

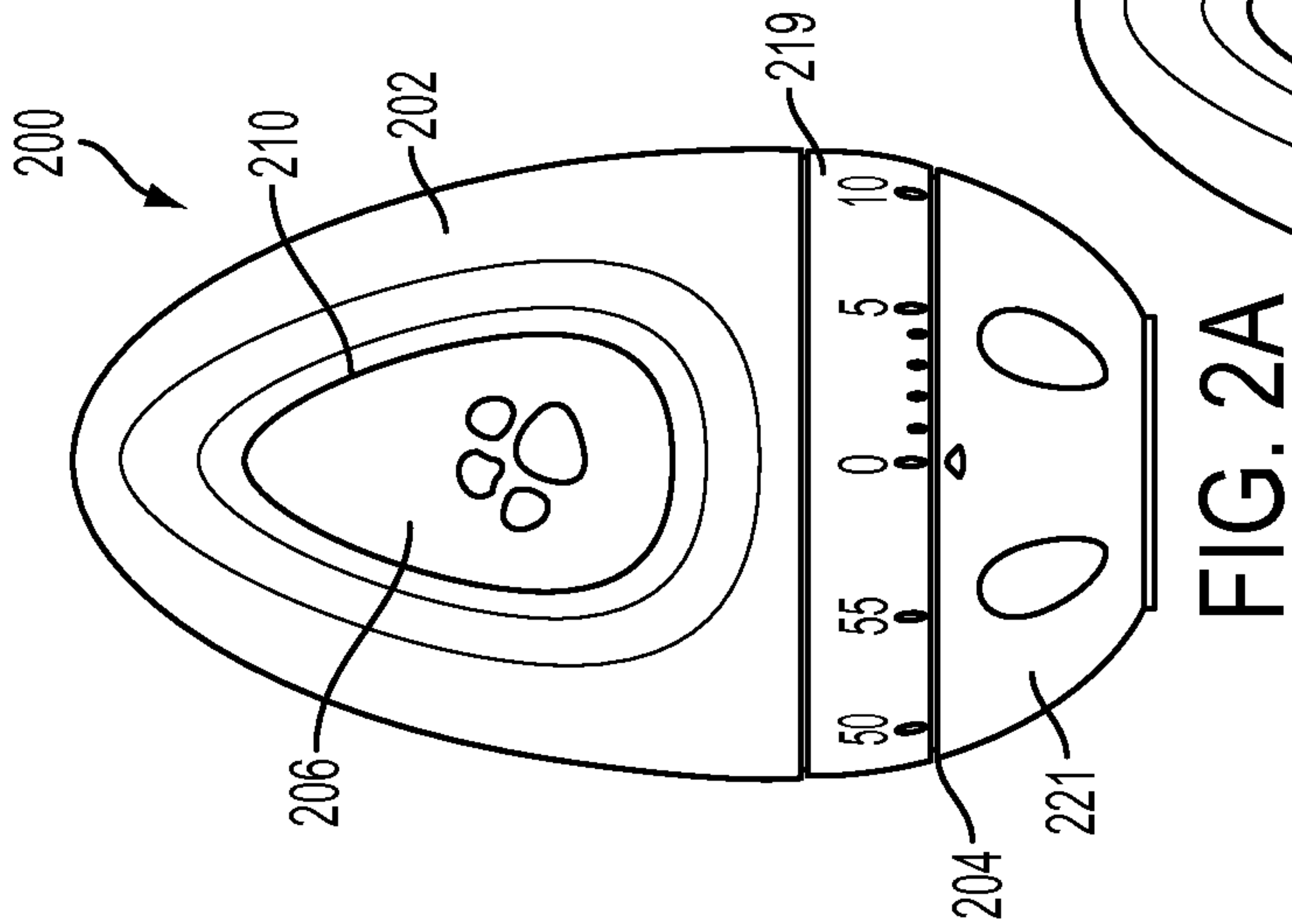


FIG. 2A

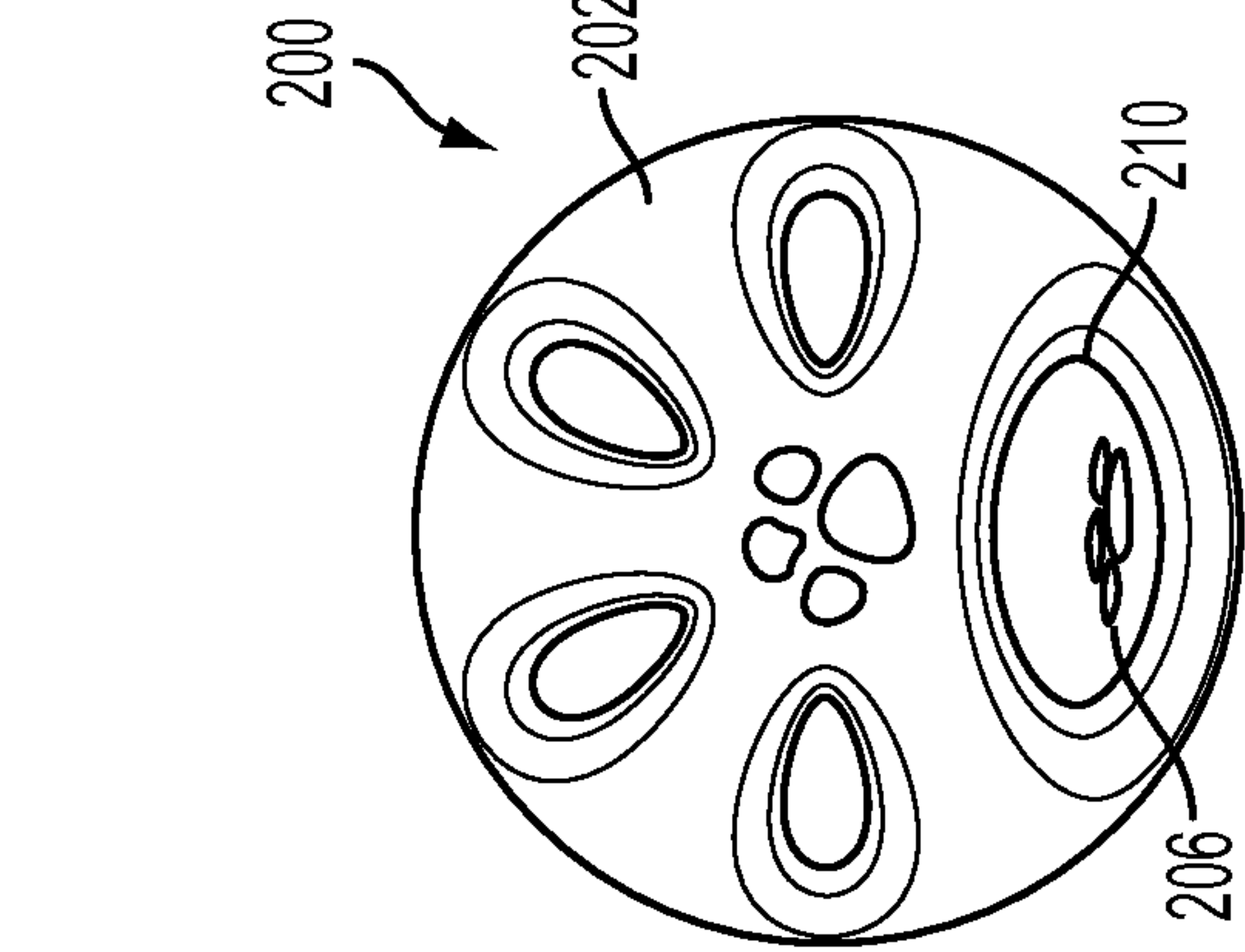


FIG. 2B

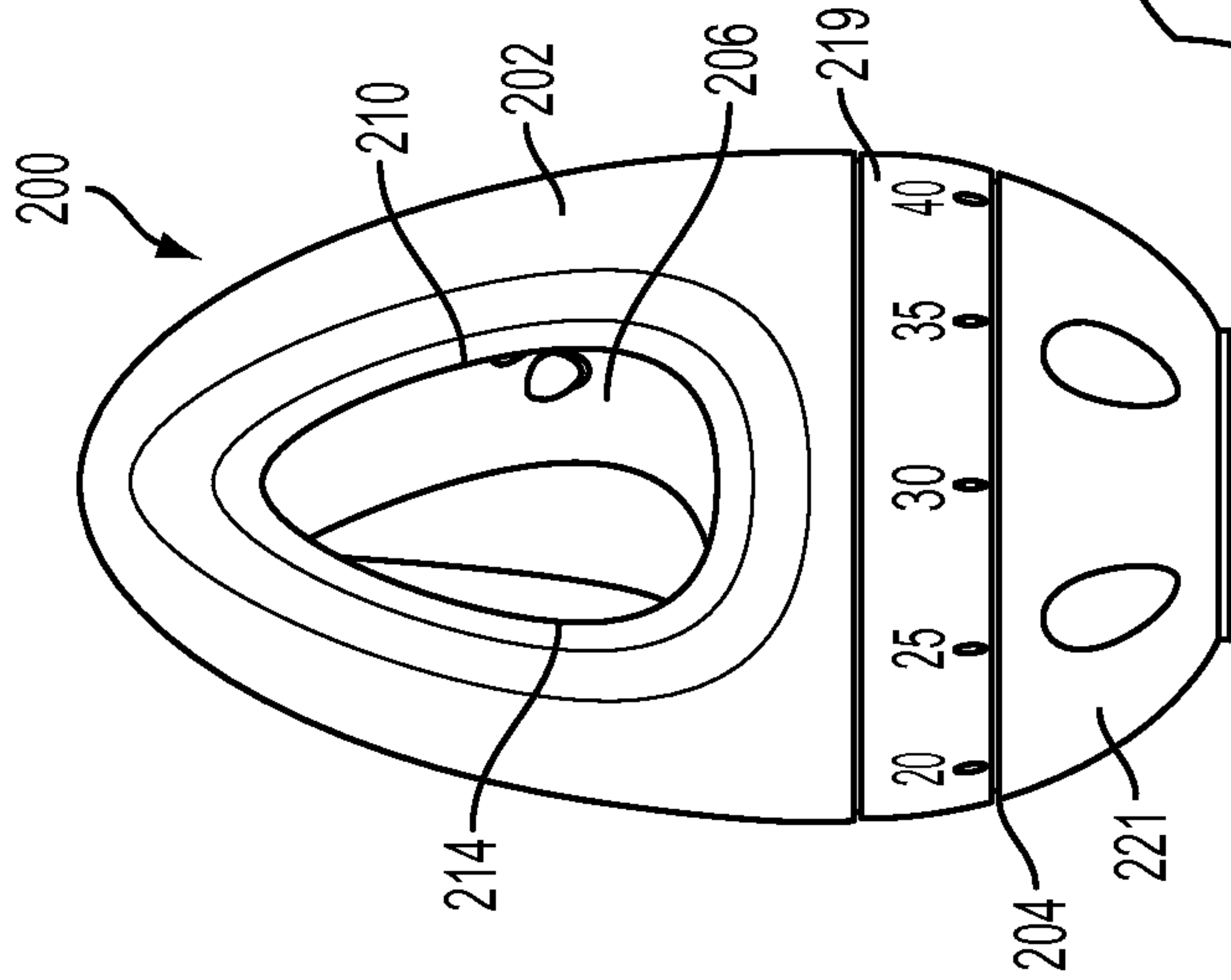


FIG. 2C

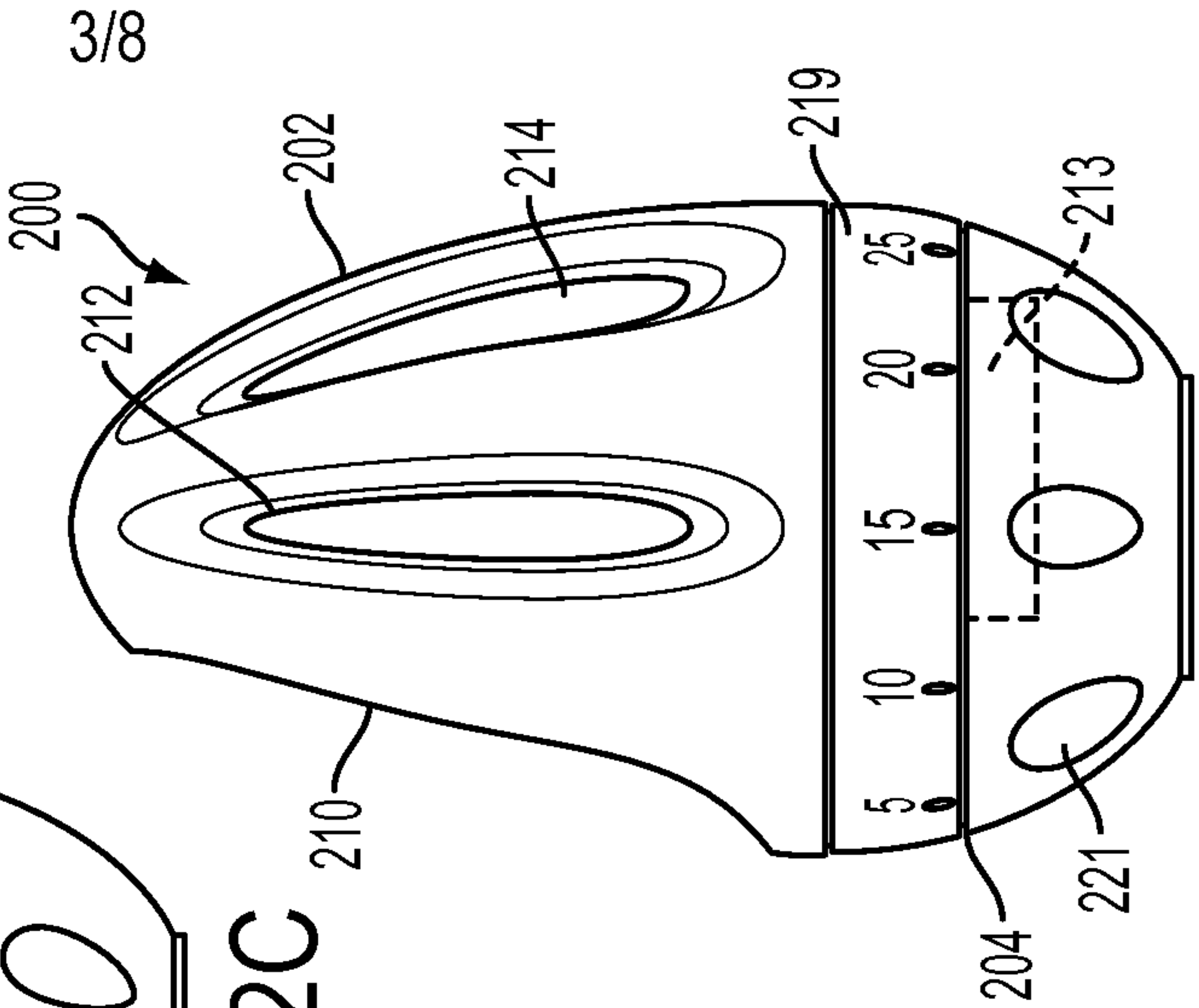


FIG. 2D

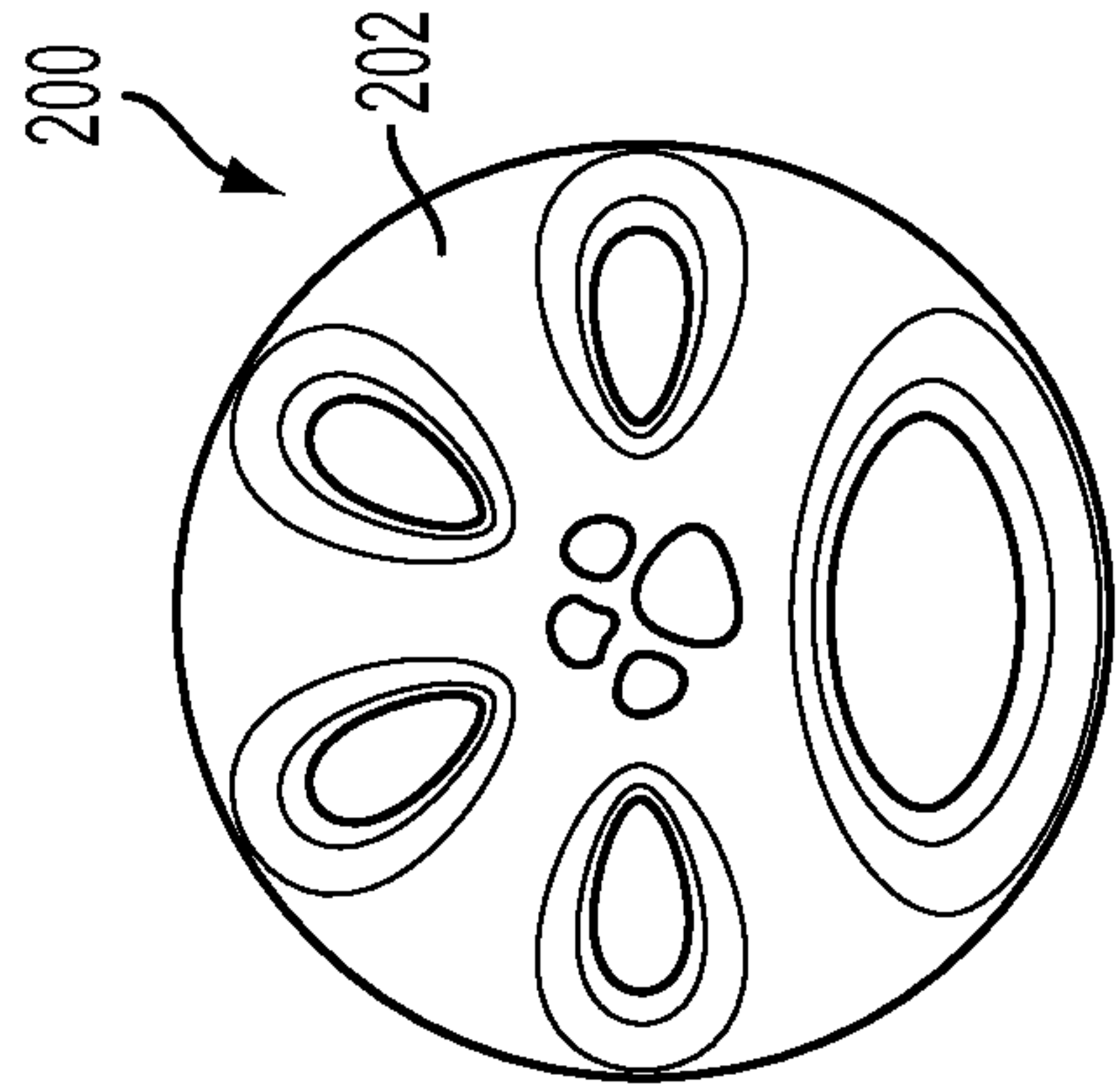


FIG. 2E

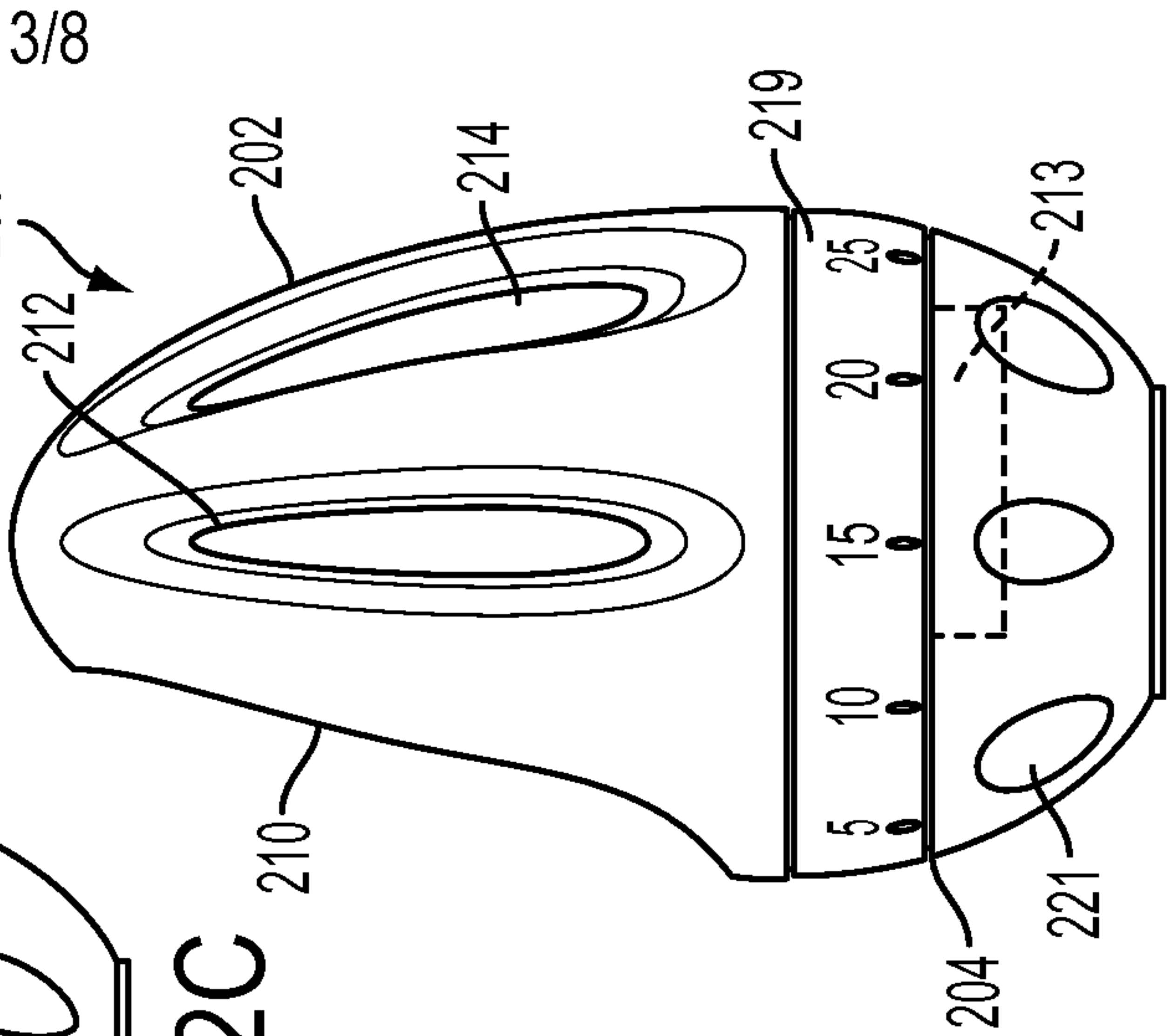


FIG. 2F

4/8

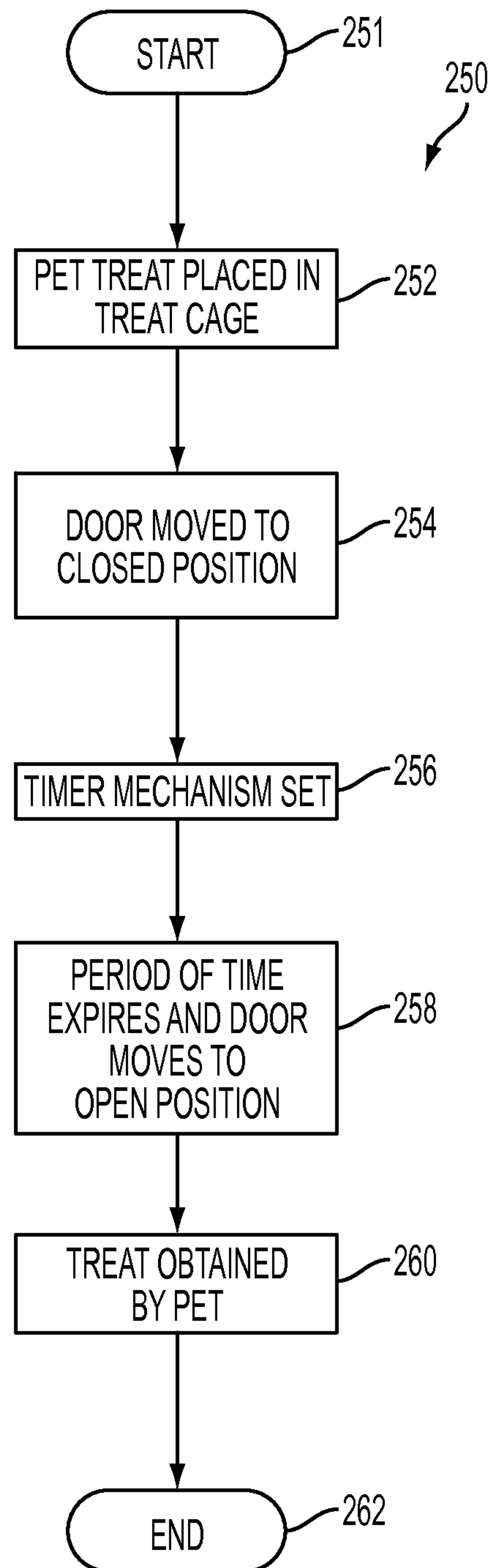


FIG. 2G

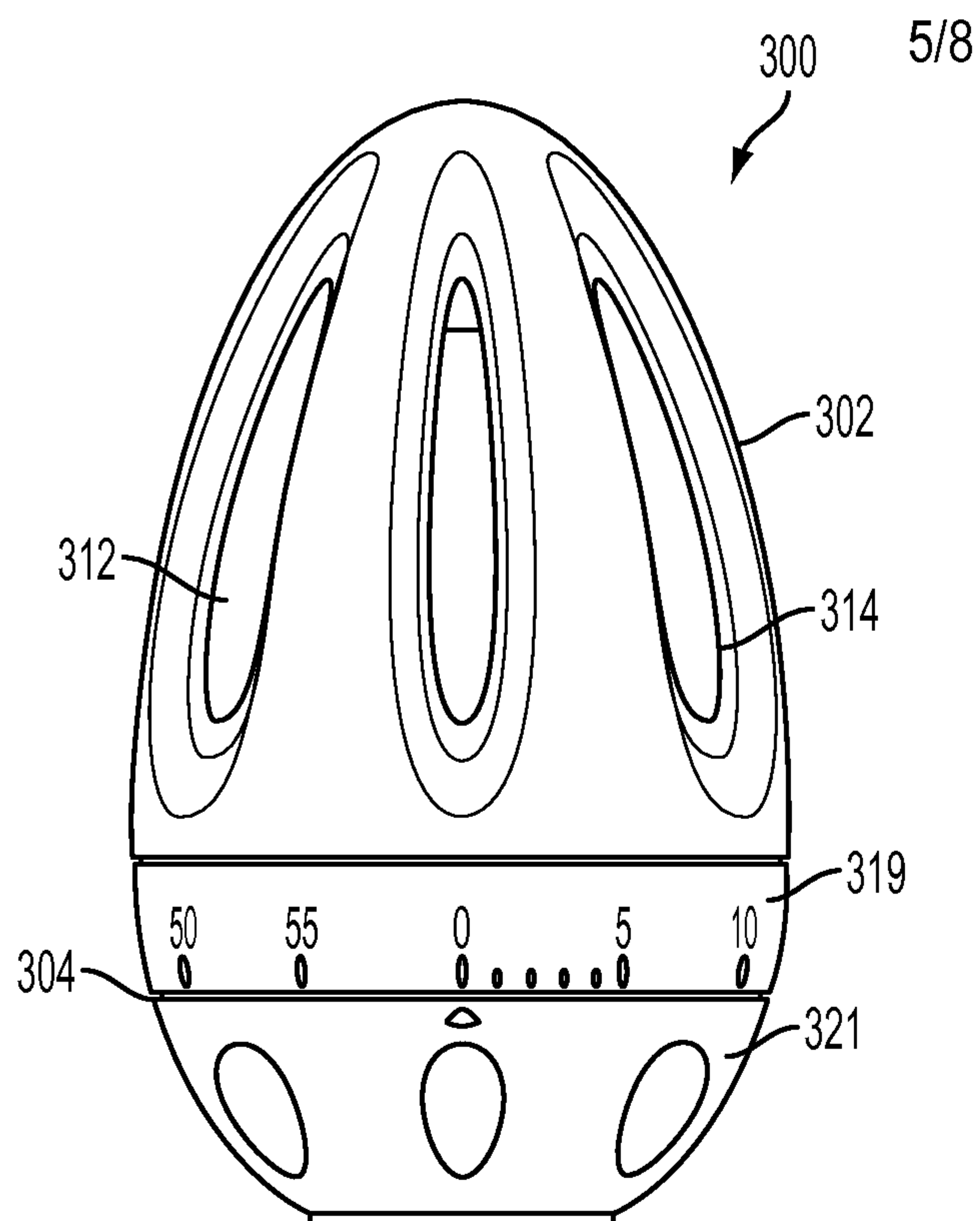


FIG. 3A

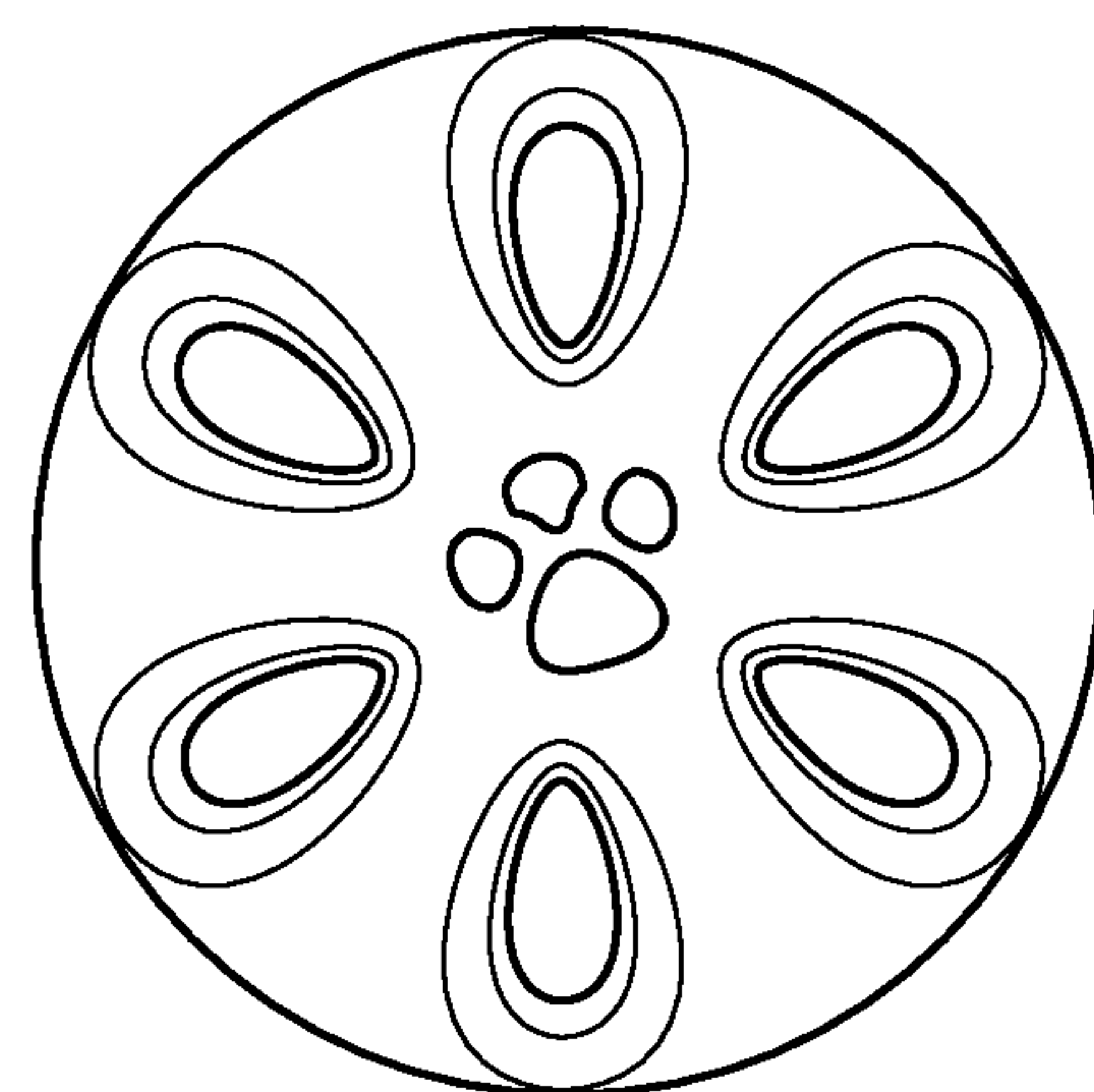


FIG. 3B

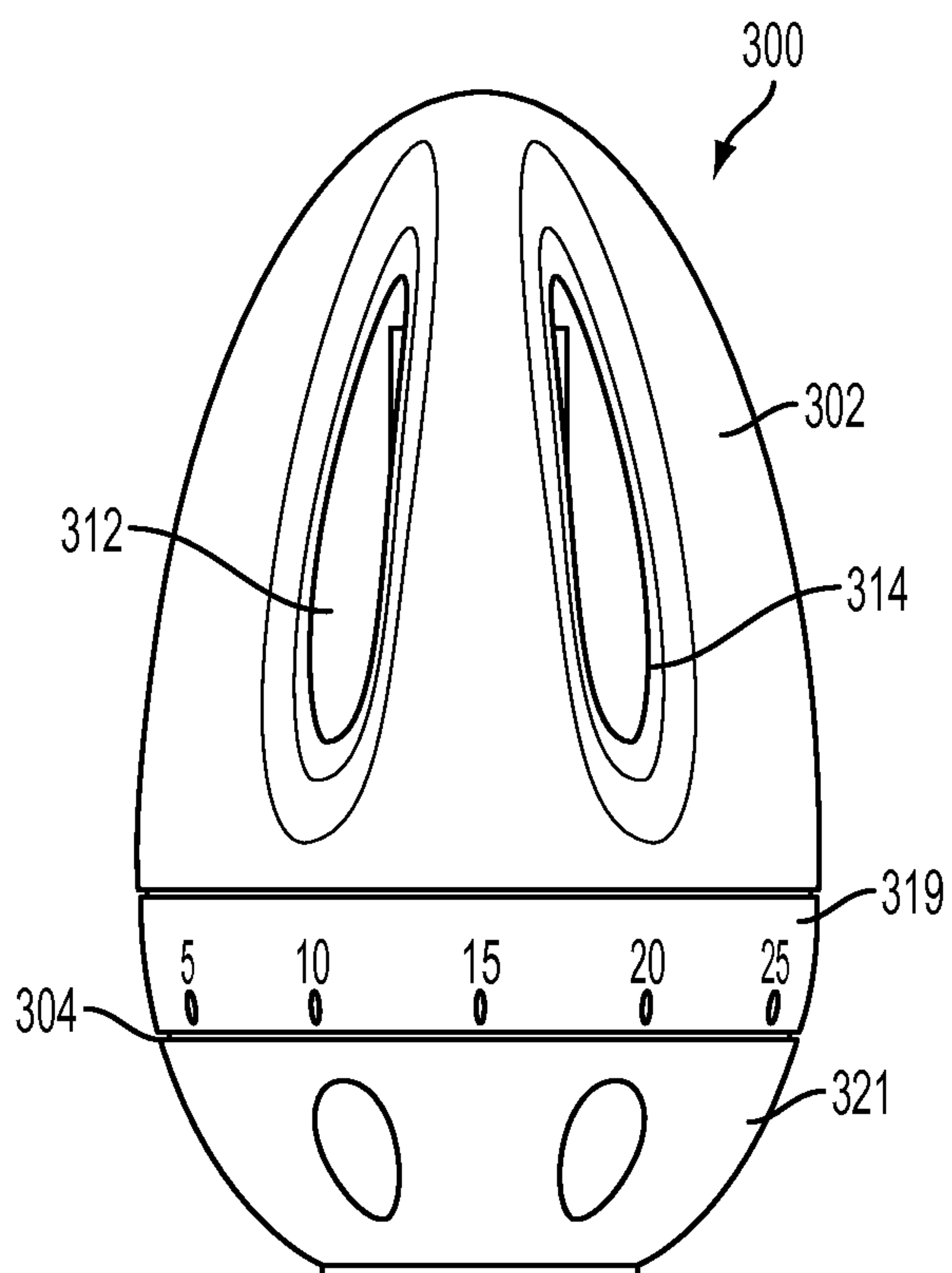


FIG. 3C

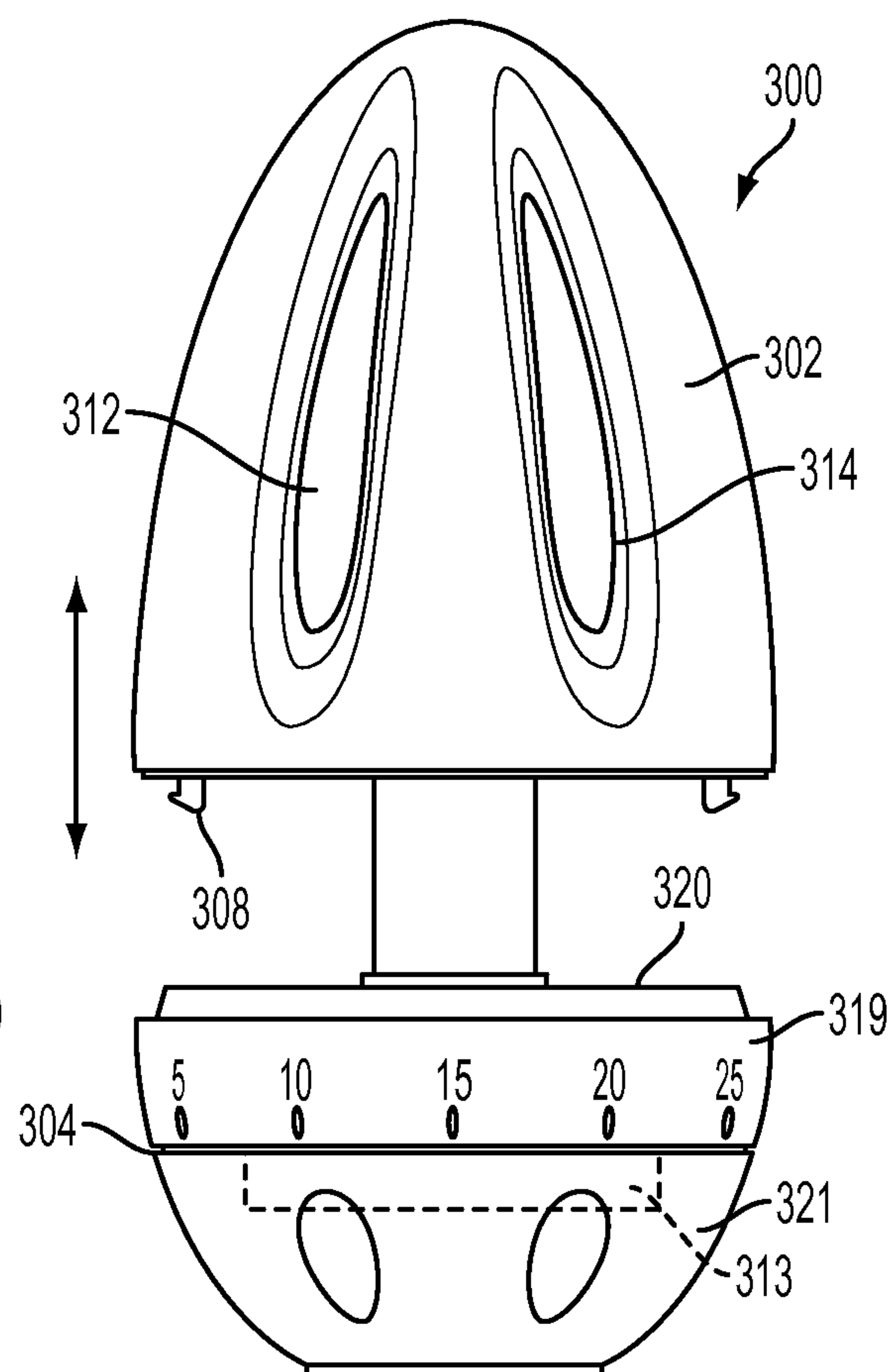


FIG. 3D

6/8

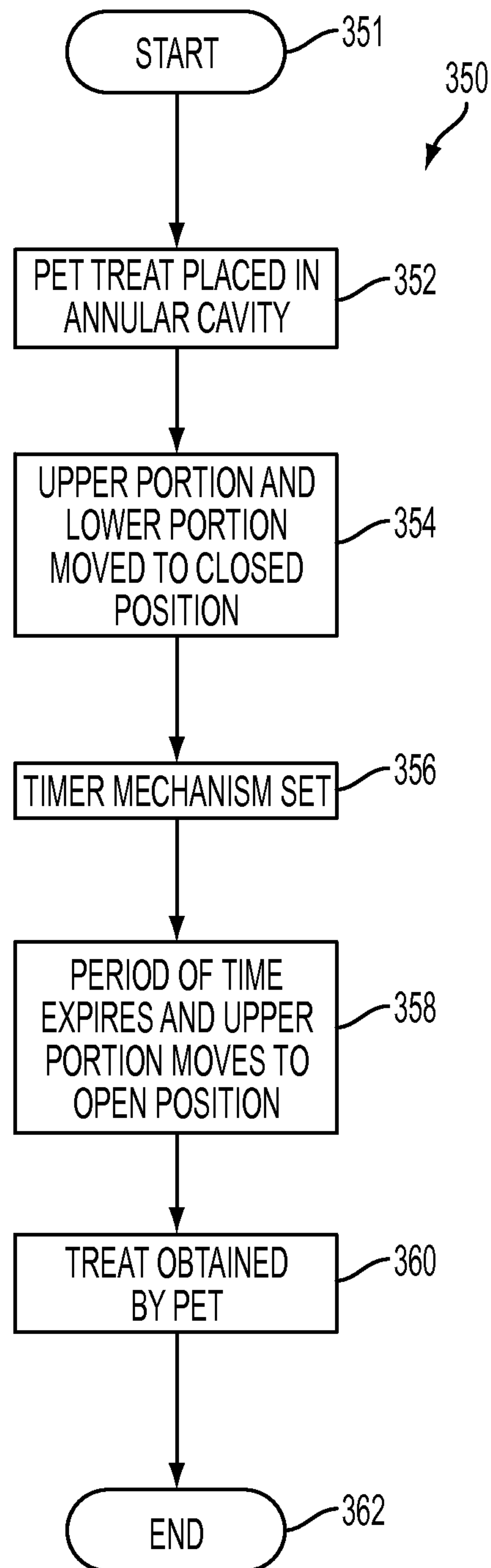


FIG. 3E

7/8

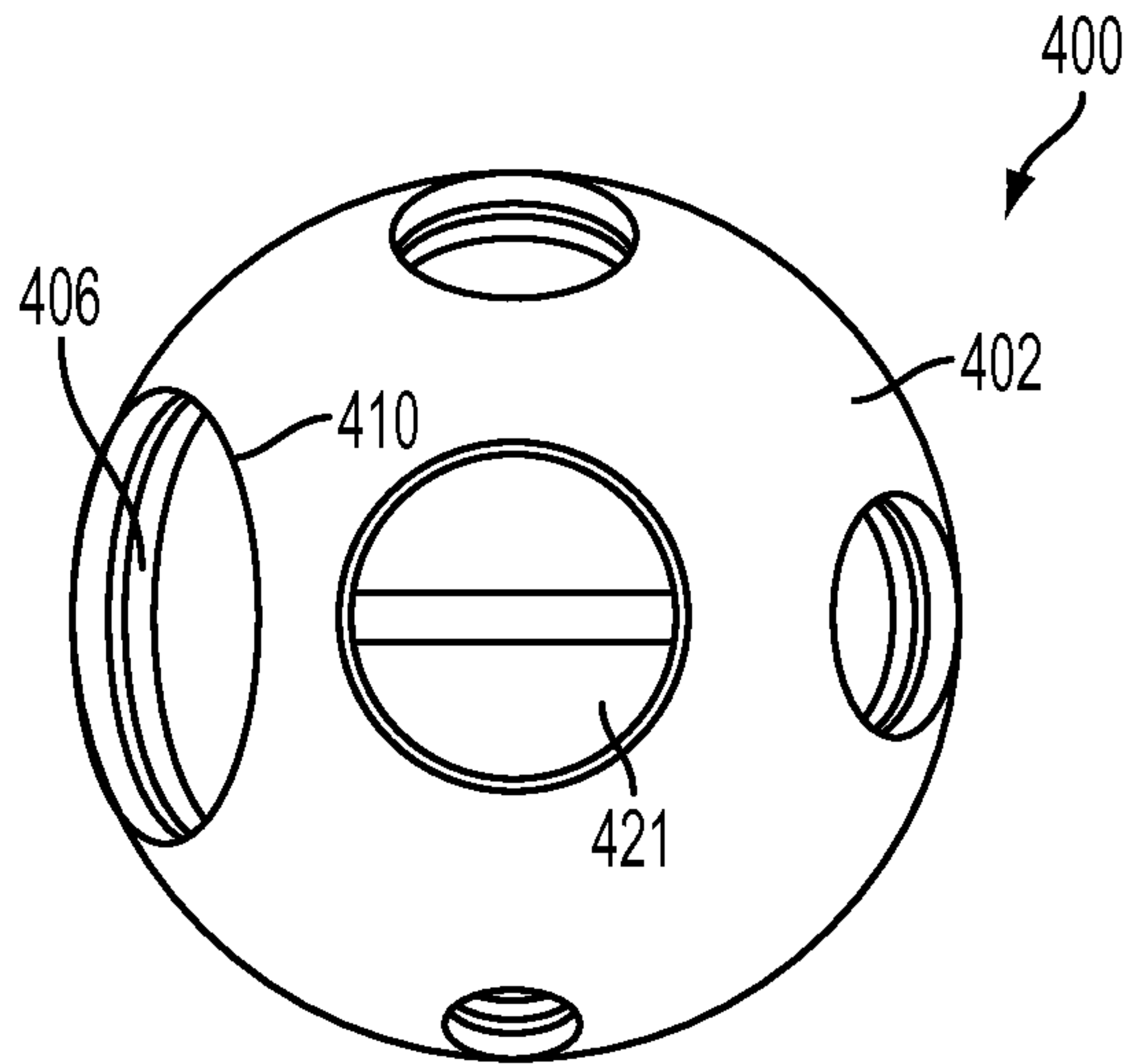


FIG. 4A

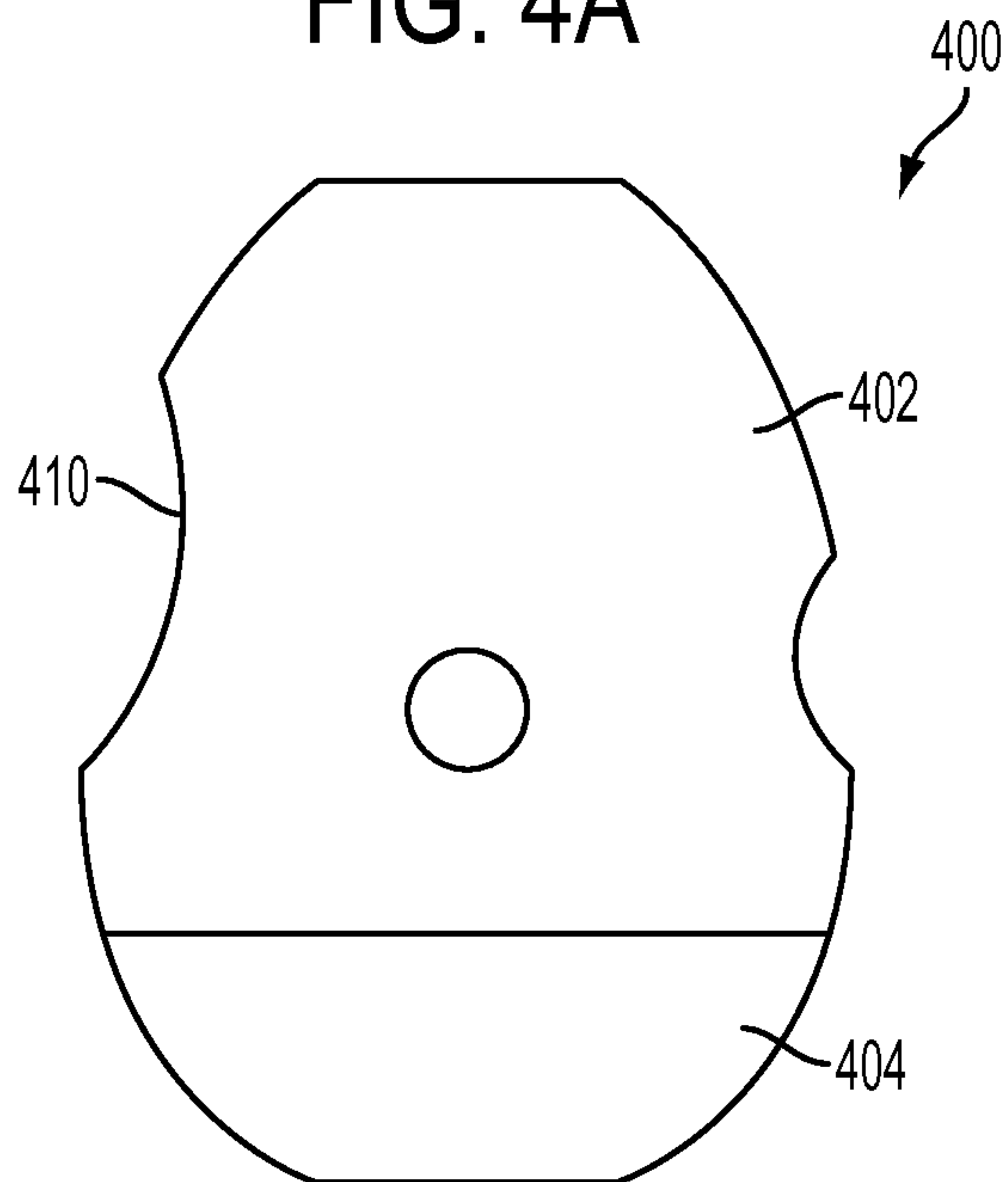


FIG. 4B

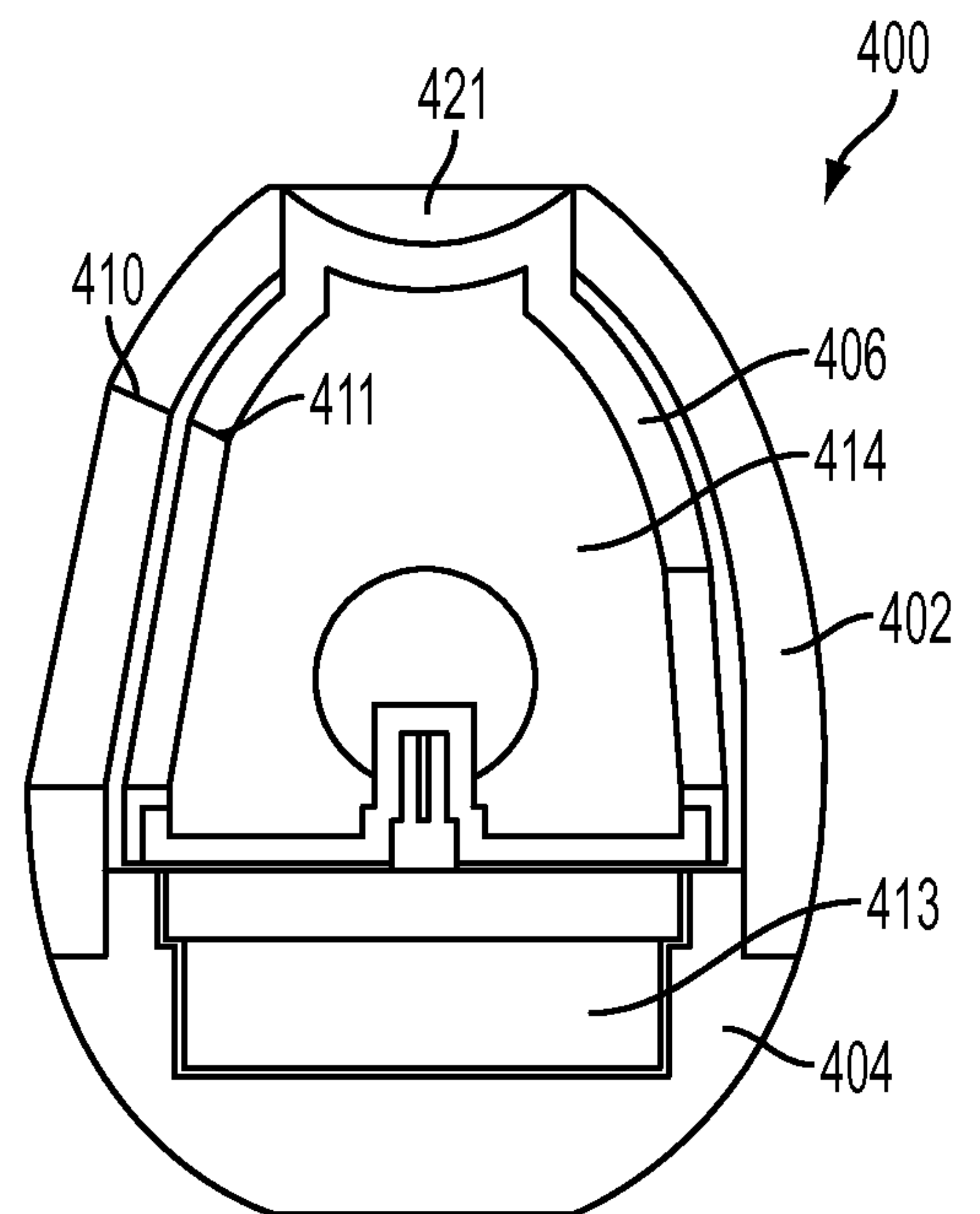


FIG. 4C

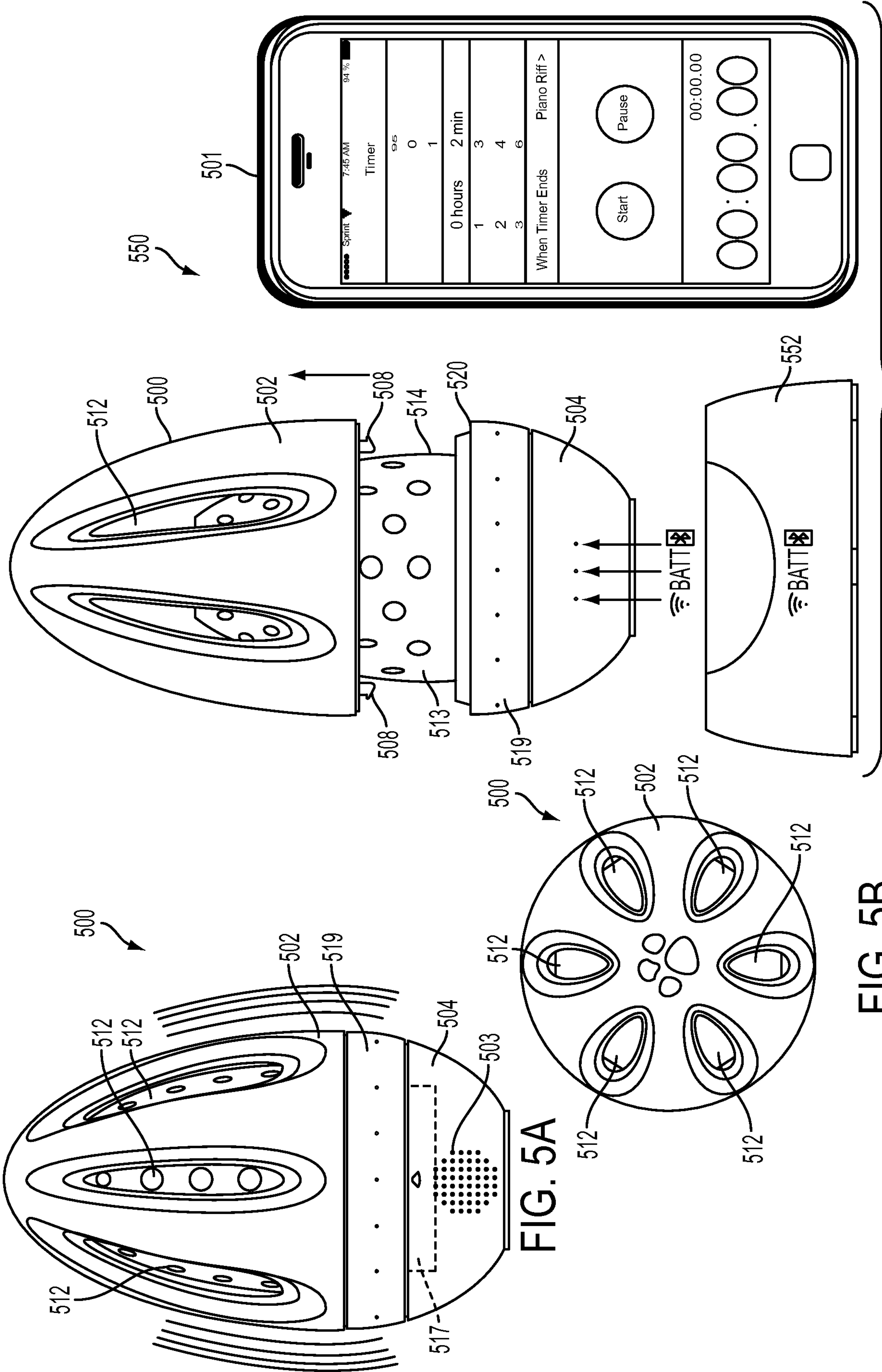


FIG. 5B

FIG. 5C

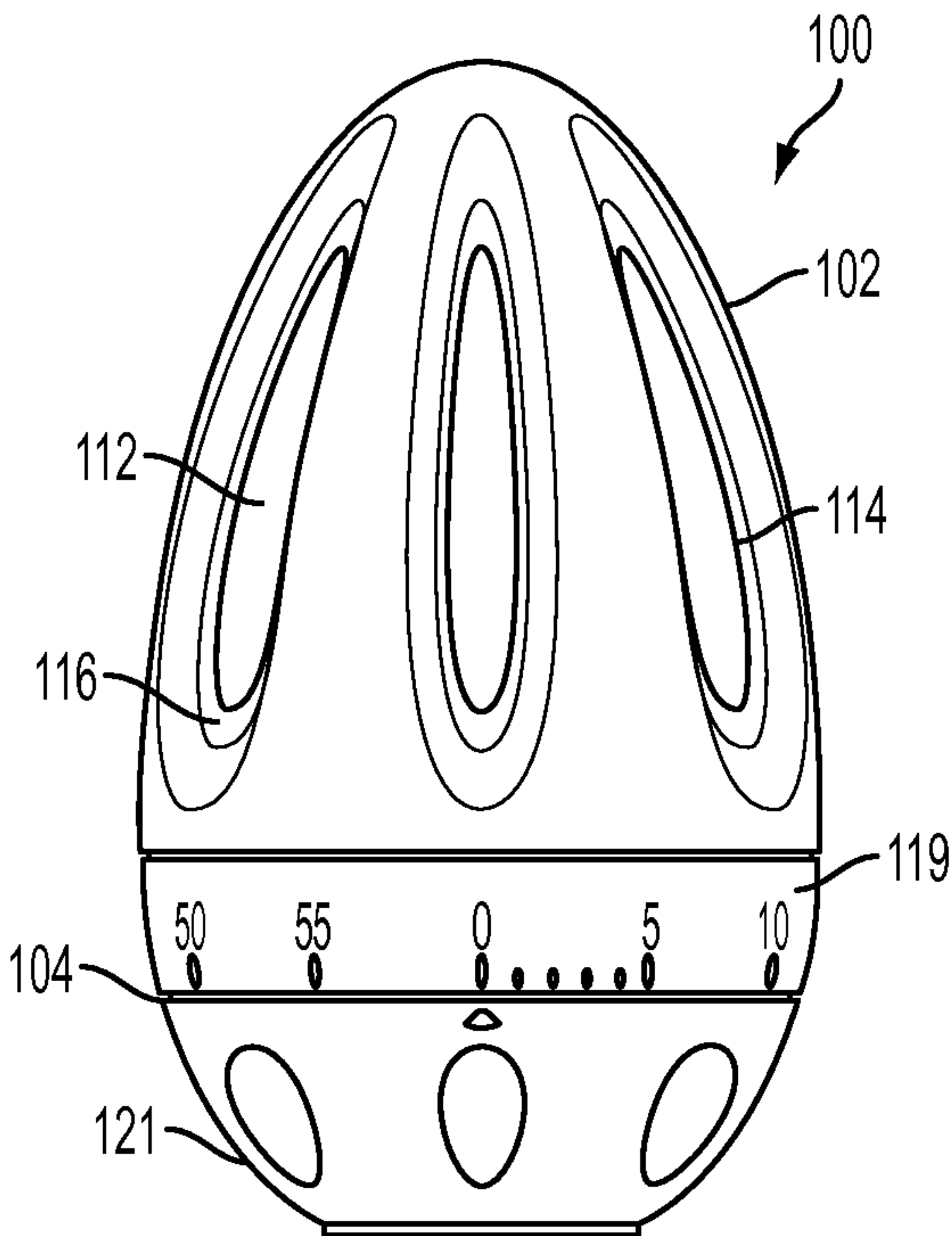


FIG. 1A