



US 20050210560A1

(19) **United States**
(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Coates

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0210560 A1**
(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 29, 2005**

(54) **PROTECTIVE UNDERGARMENTS HAVING ANCHORED POCKETED-SLING STRUCTURES AND MANUFACTURING METHODS THEREFOR**

09/512,085, filed on Feb. 24, 2000, now Pat. No. 6,926,705.

(60) Provisional application No. 60/121,960, filed on Feb. 25, 1999.

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Publication Classification

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(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **A41D 1/18; A61G 5/00**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **2/106**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A protective undergarment comprises an outer layer of fluid-resistant material shaped to conform to the buttock and leg region of a user, and an elongated sling of material connected to the outer layer. Opposite sides of the sling are bowed inward and joined together at a first end of the sling to form a first pocket part for retaining one end of a fluid absorbent pad. A cuff is connected between the first end of the sling and the outer layer. The second end of the sling is connected to the outer layer, and an intermediate portion of the sling between the first and second ends of the sling is folded longitudinally into an S-shape so as to provide three plies of the material establishing a second pocket part for retaining an opposite end of the fluid absorbent pad.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/127,265**

(22) Filed: **May 12, 2005**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Division of application No. 10/376,265, filed on Mar. 3, 2003, now Pat. No. 6,895,603, which is a division of application No. 09/791,773, filed on Feb. 26, 2001, which is a continuation-in-part of application No.

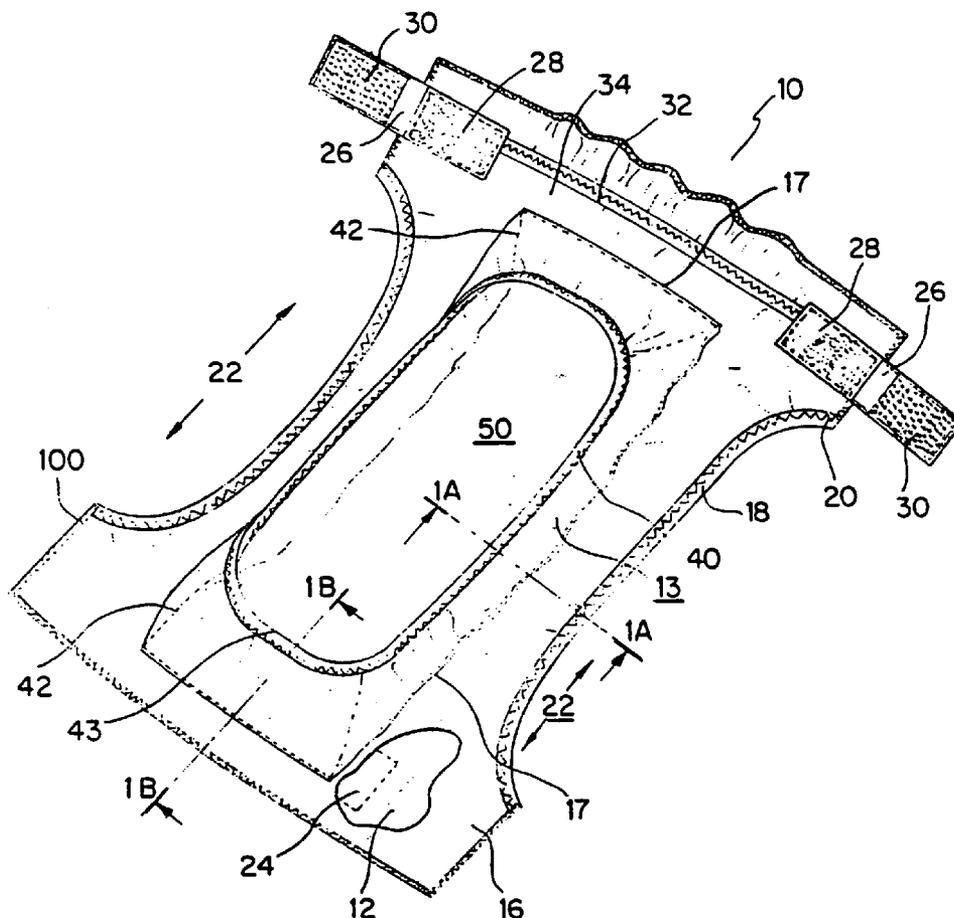


Figure 1C

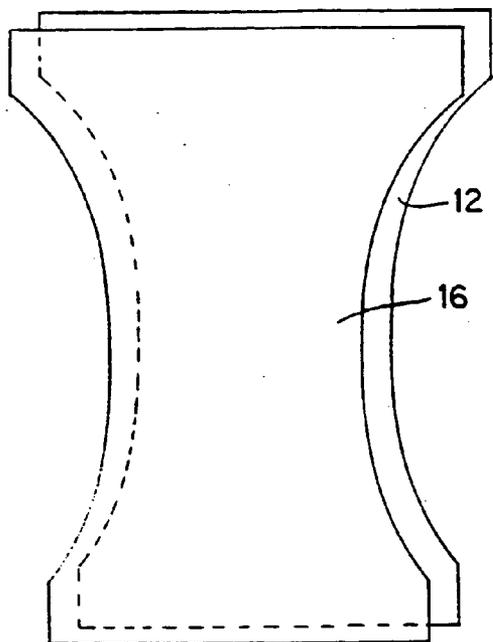


Figure 1D

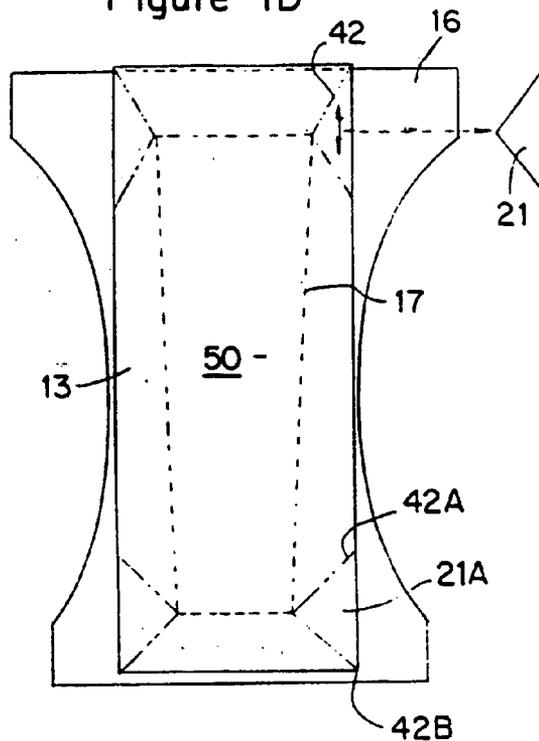


Figure 1E

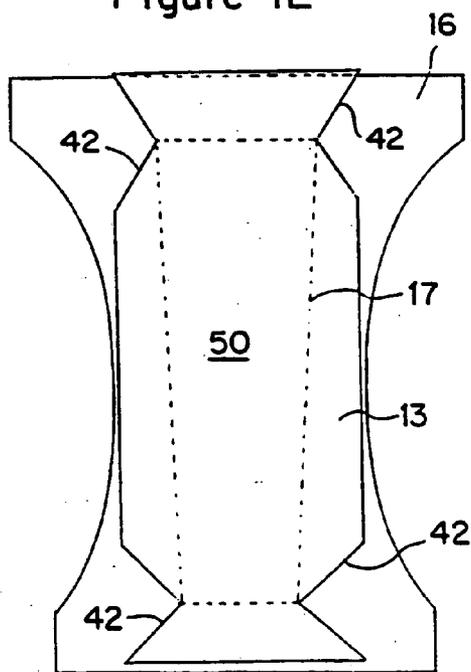


Figure 1F

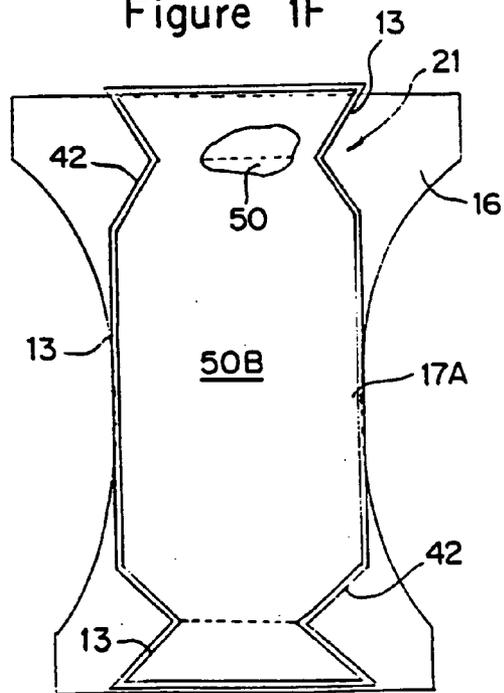


Figure 1H

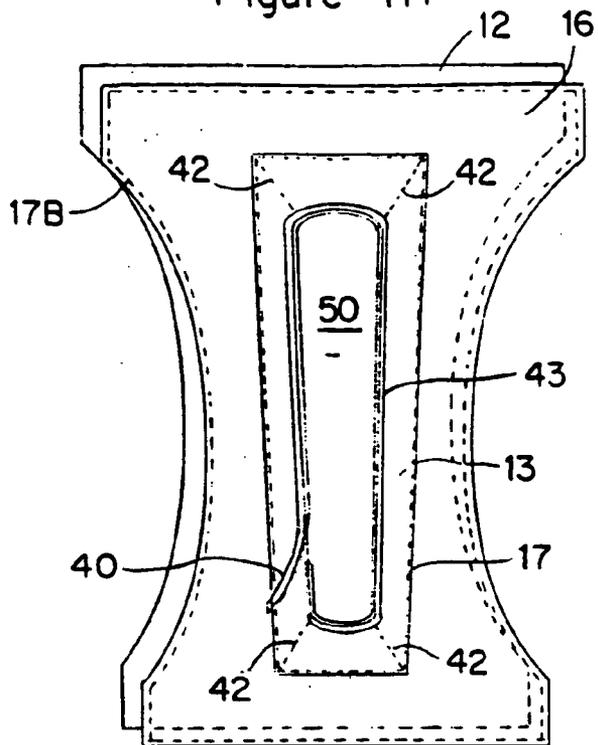
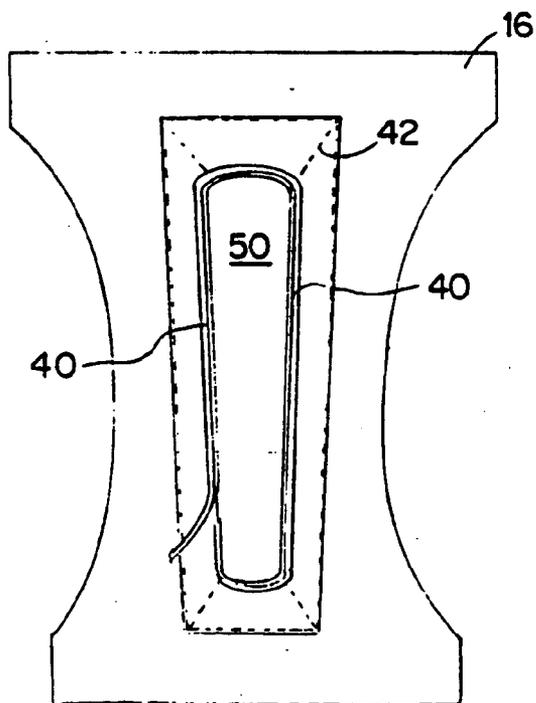


Figure 1G



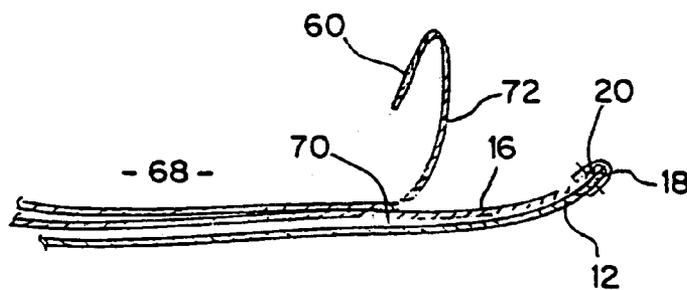
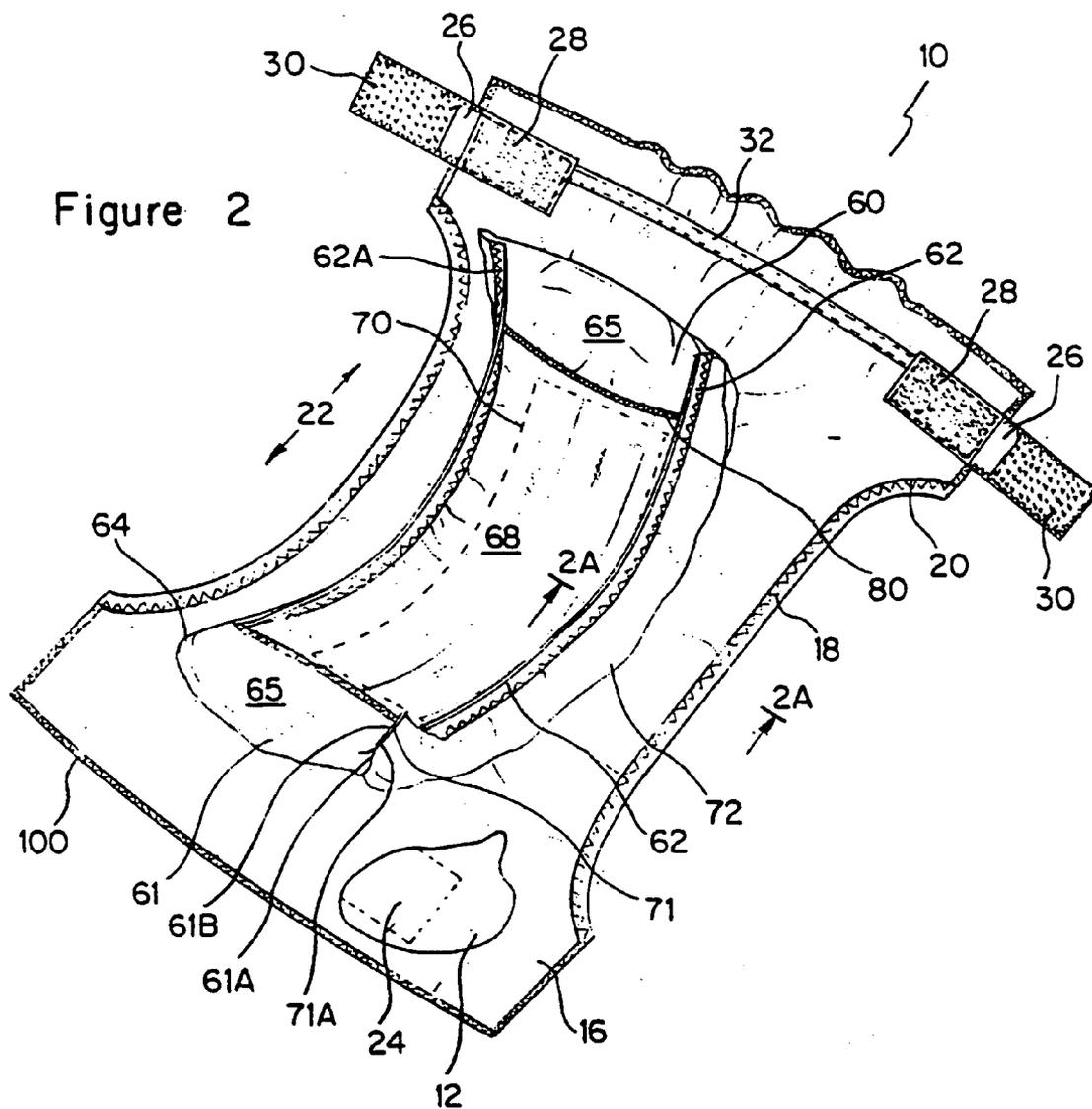


Figure 2A

Figure 2B

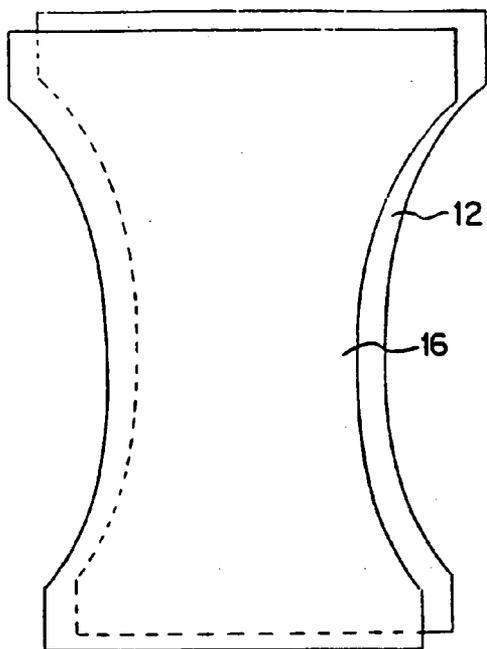


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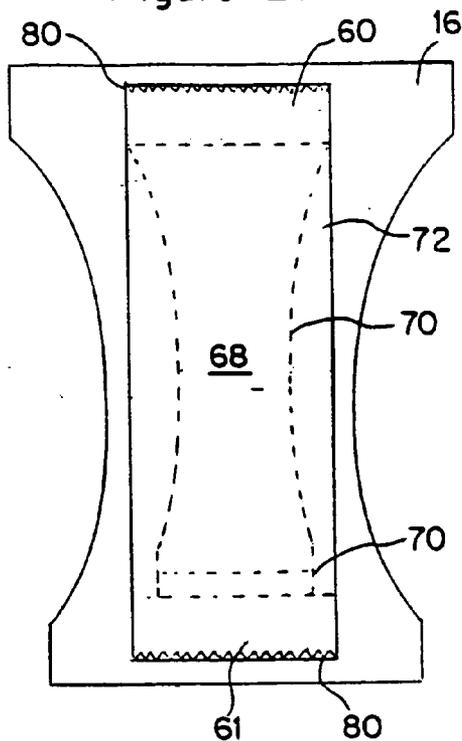


Figure 2D

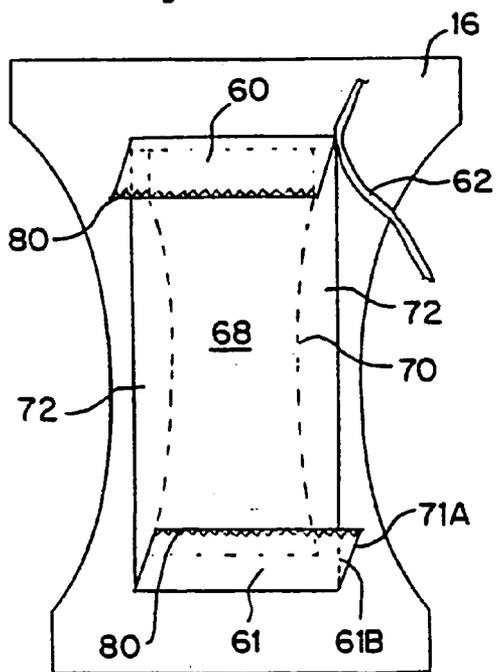
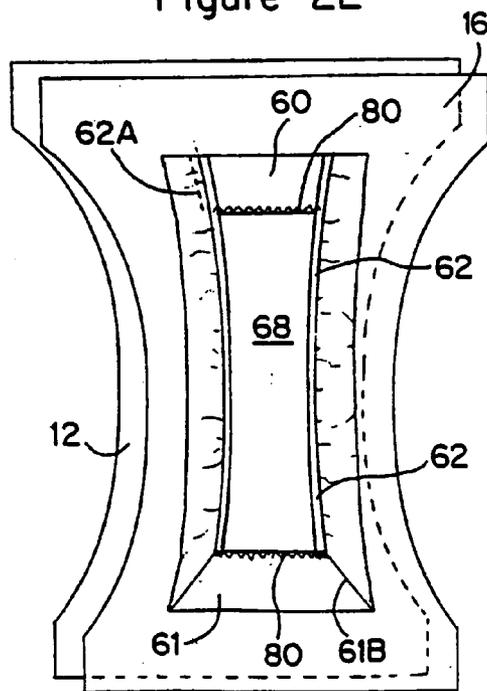


Figure 2E



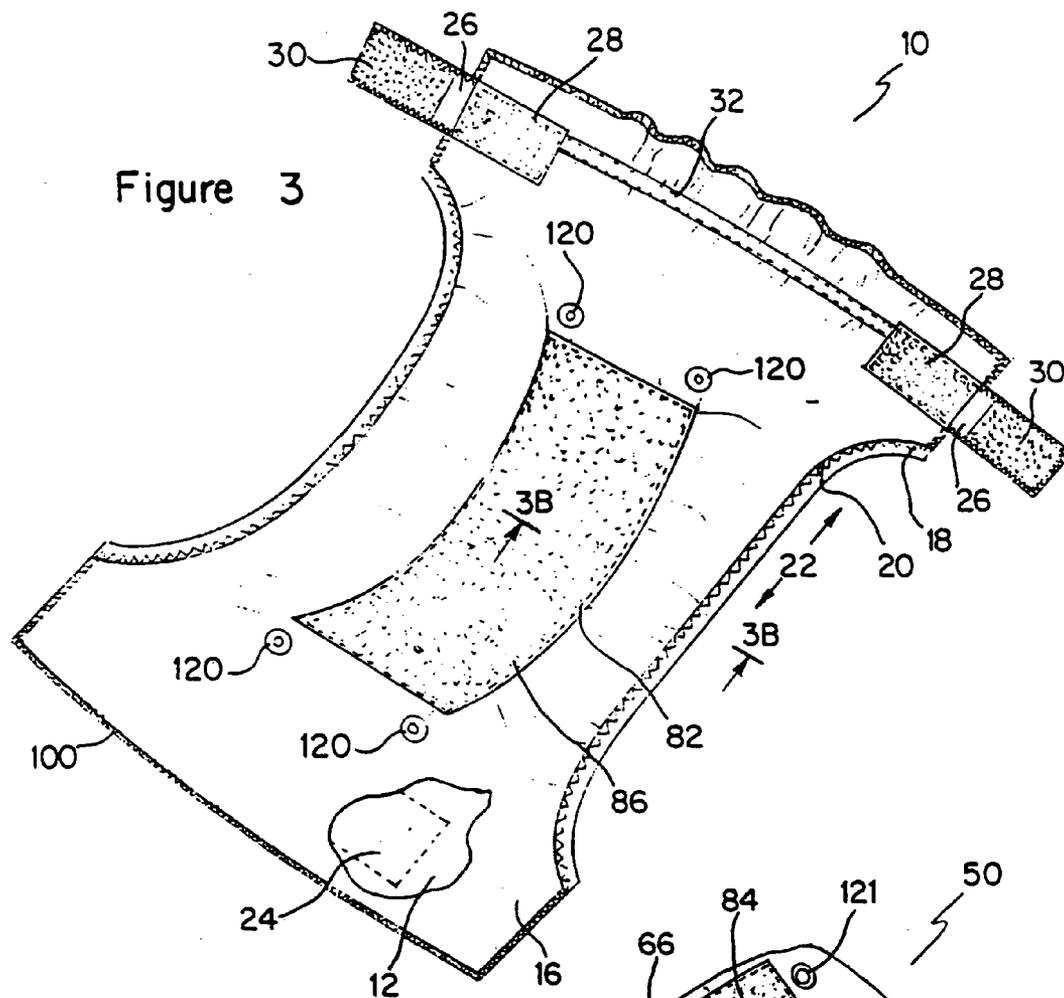


Figure 3

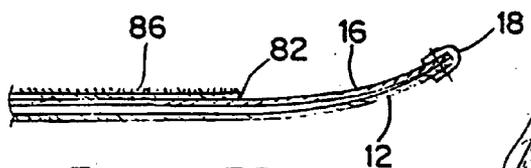


Figure 3B

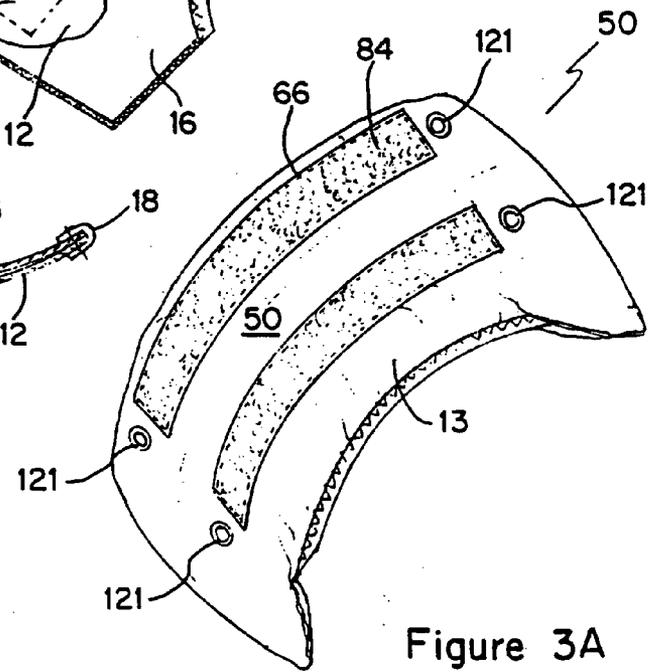


Figure 3A

Figure 3C

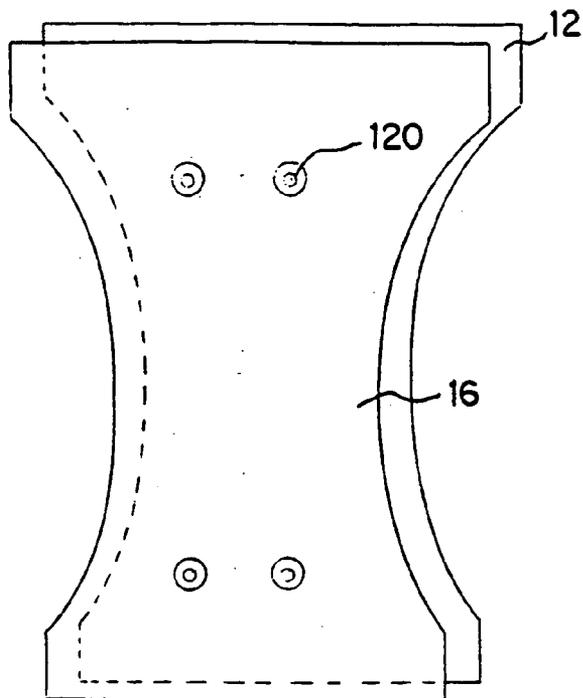


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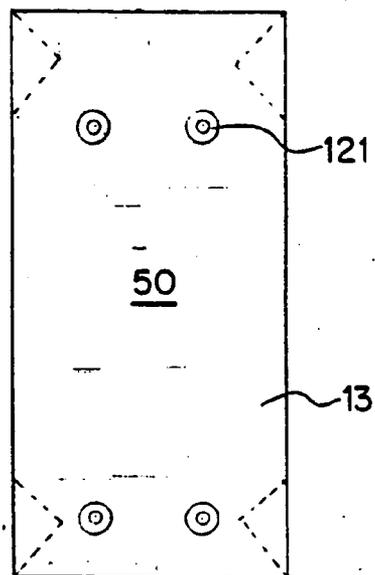


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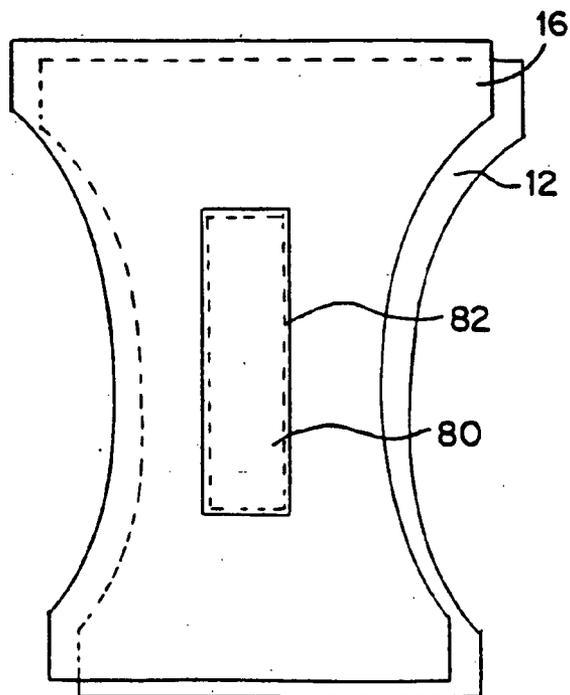
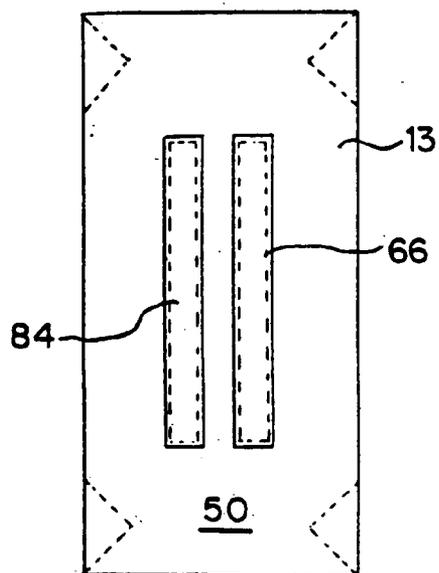


Figure 3F



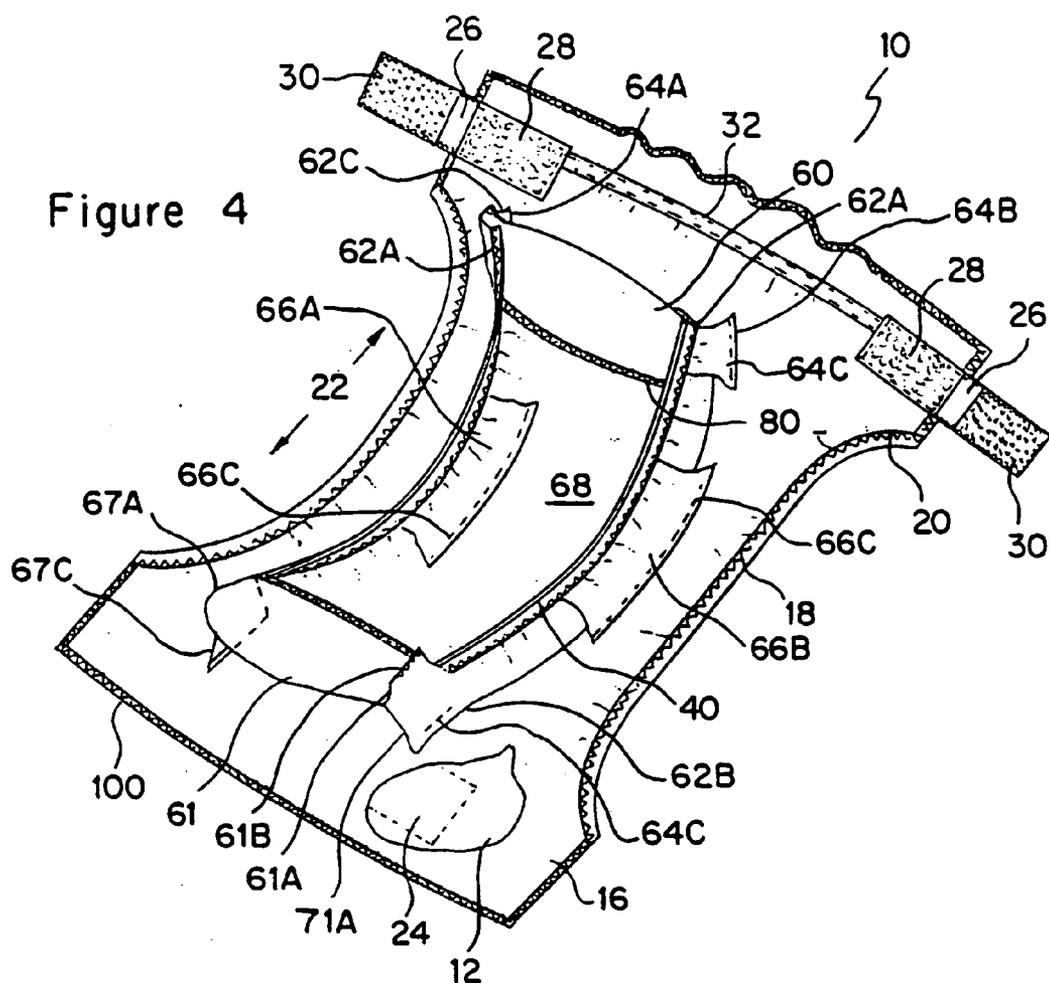


Figure 4A

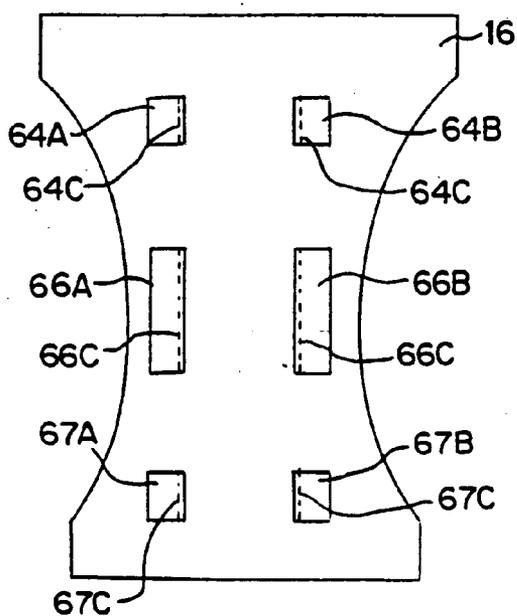


Figure 4B

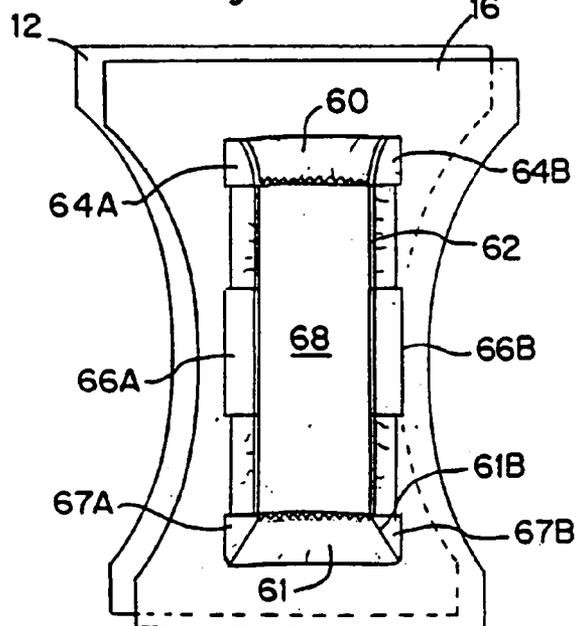


Figure 5

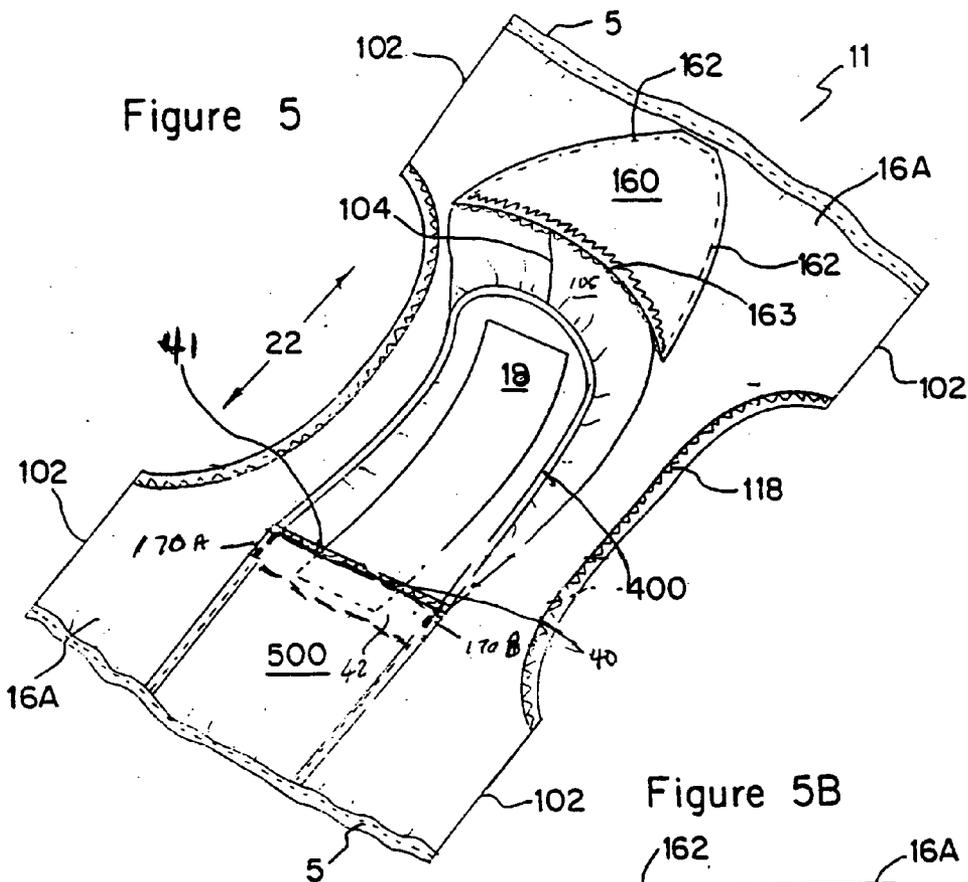


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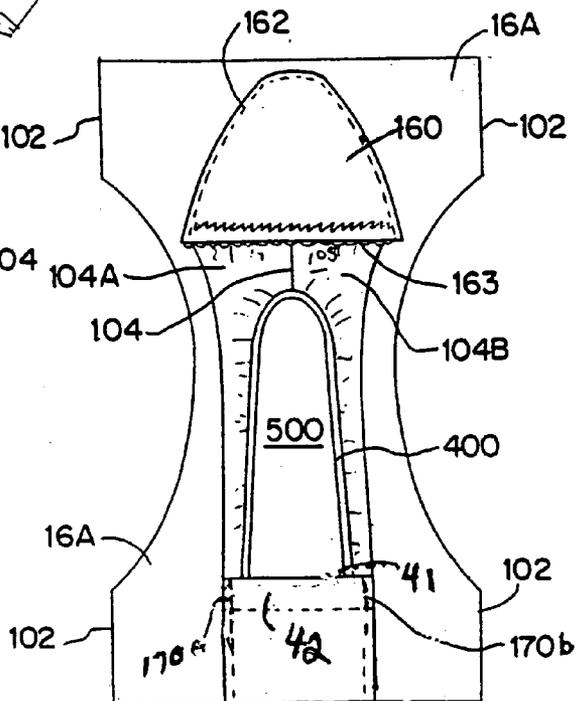
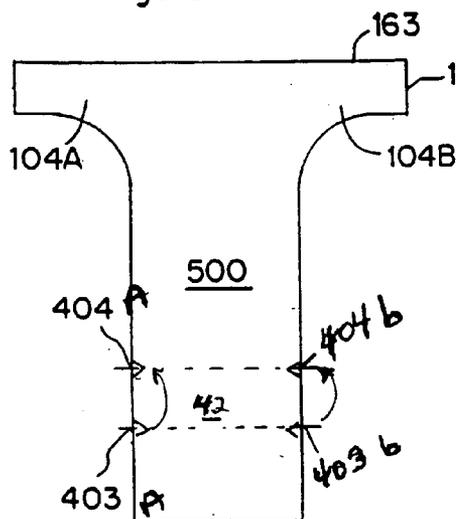
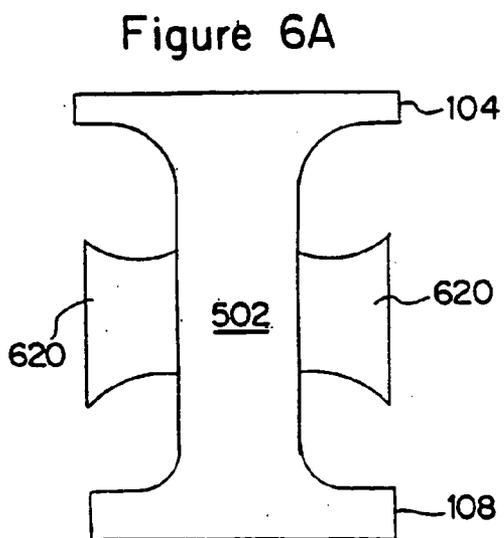
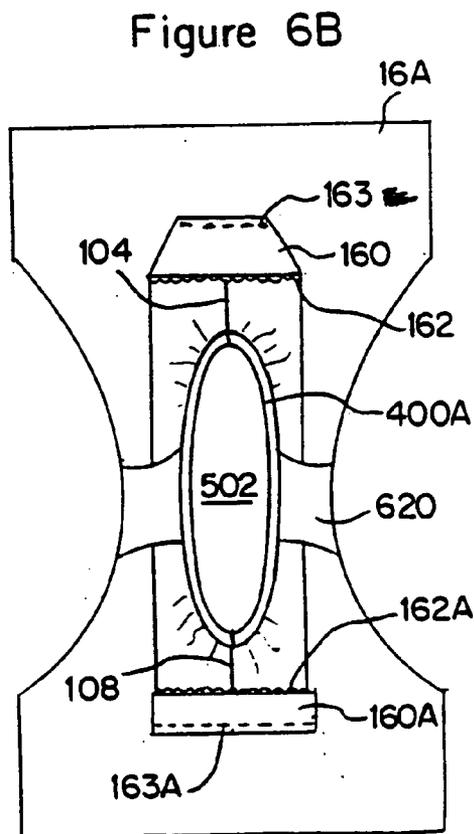
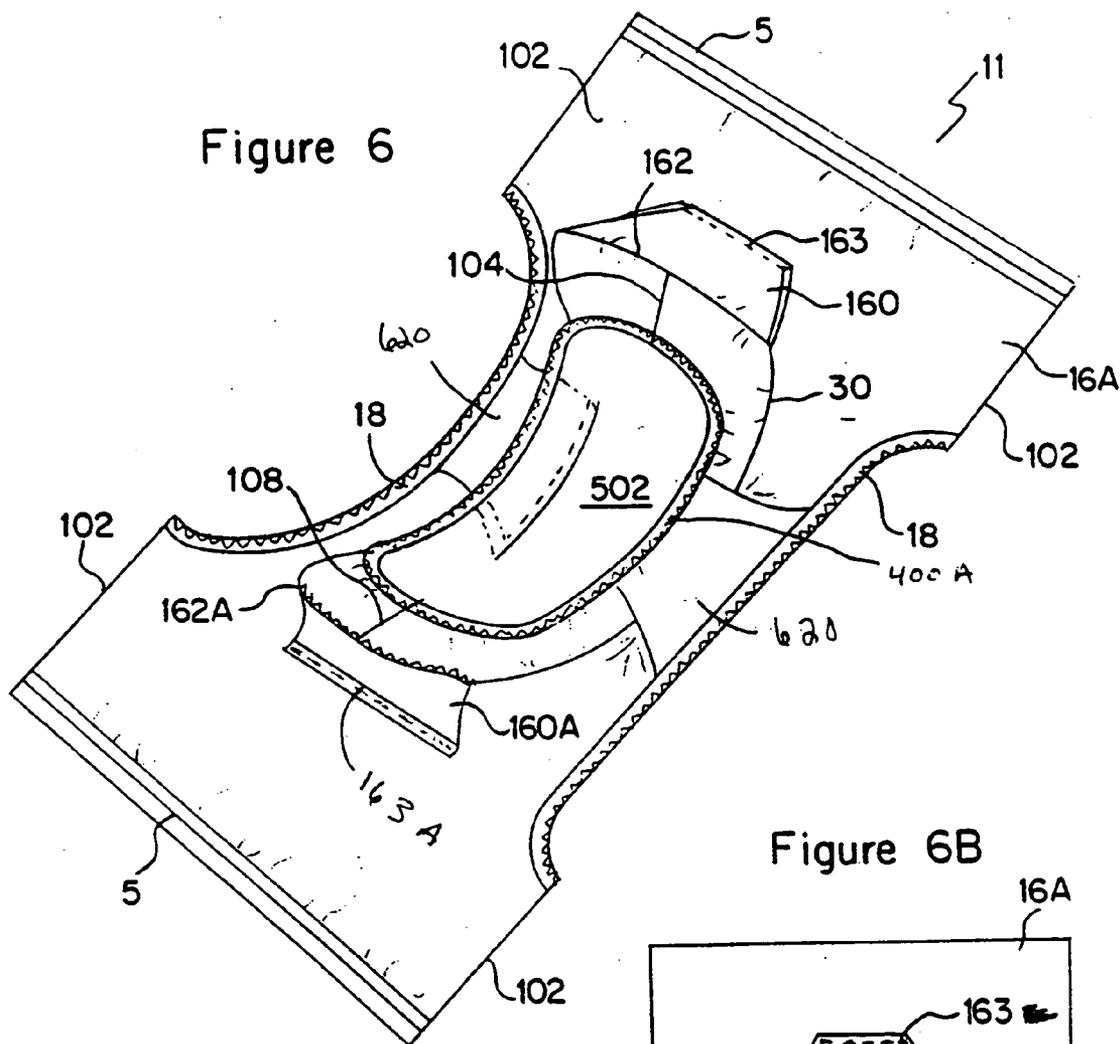


Figure 5A





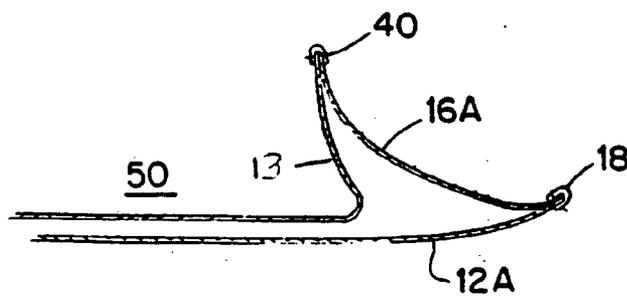
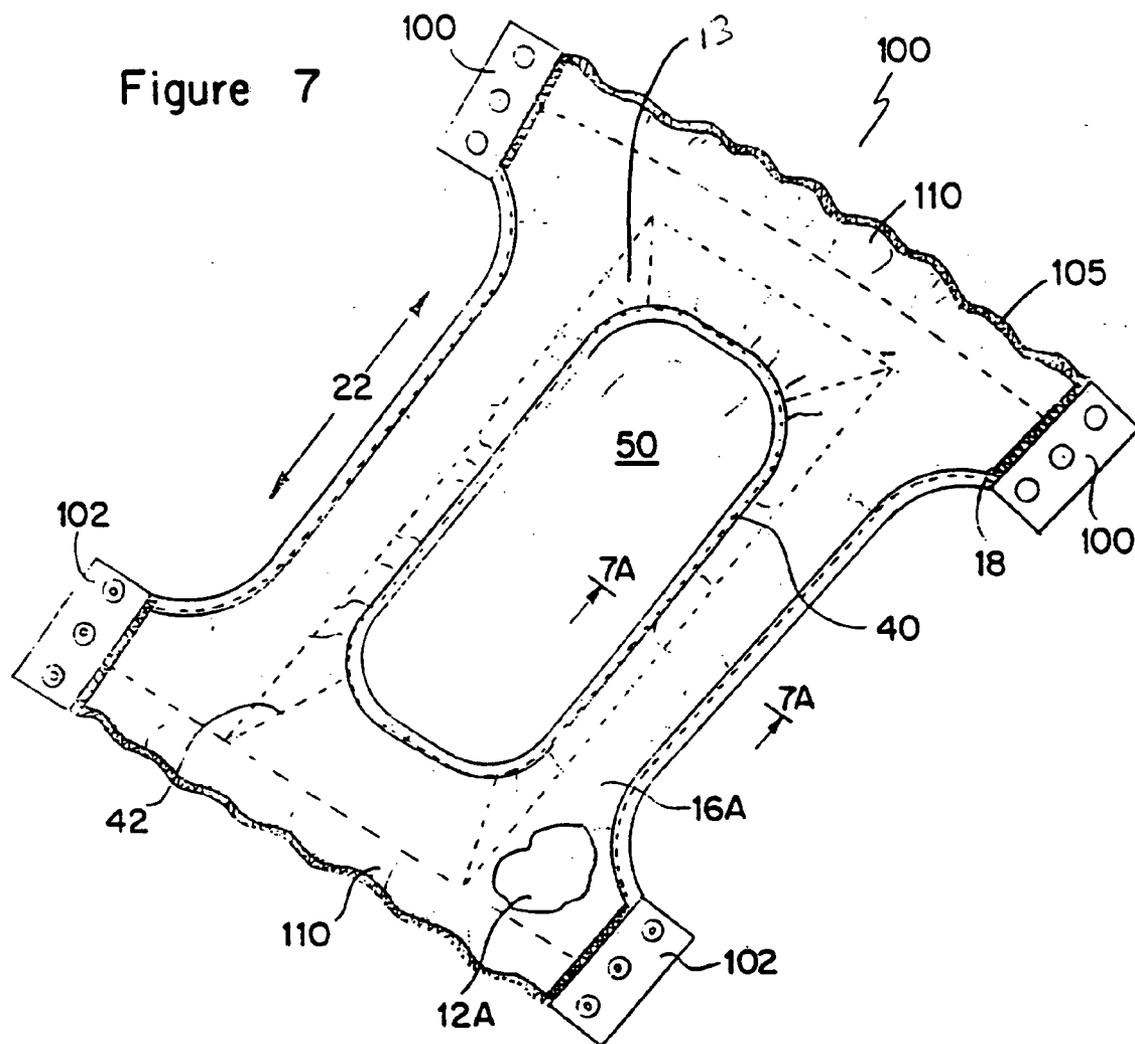


Figure 7A

Figure 7B

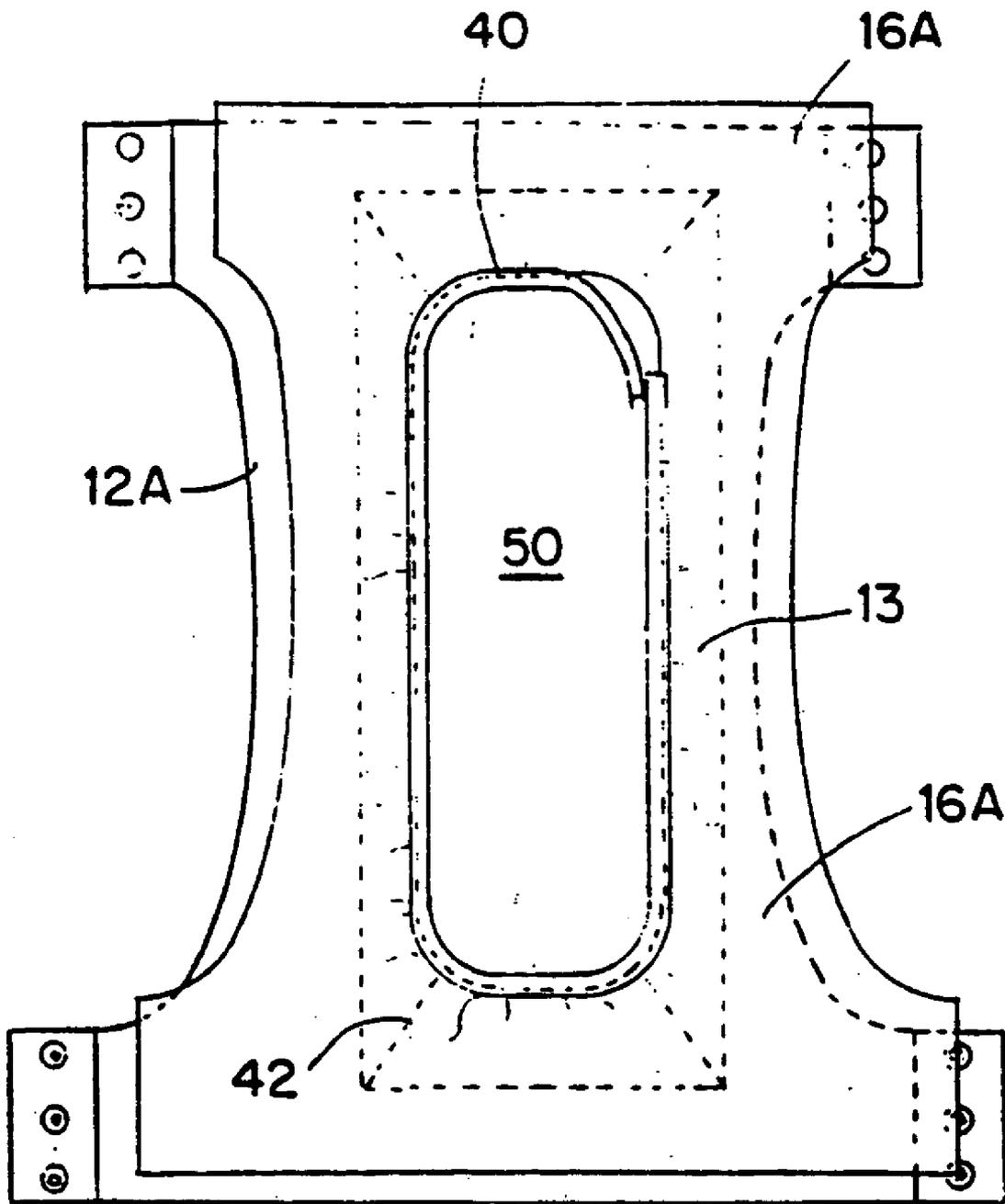


Figure 8

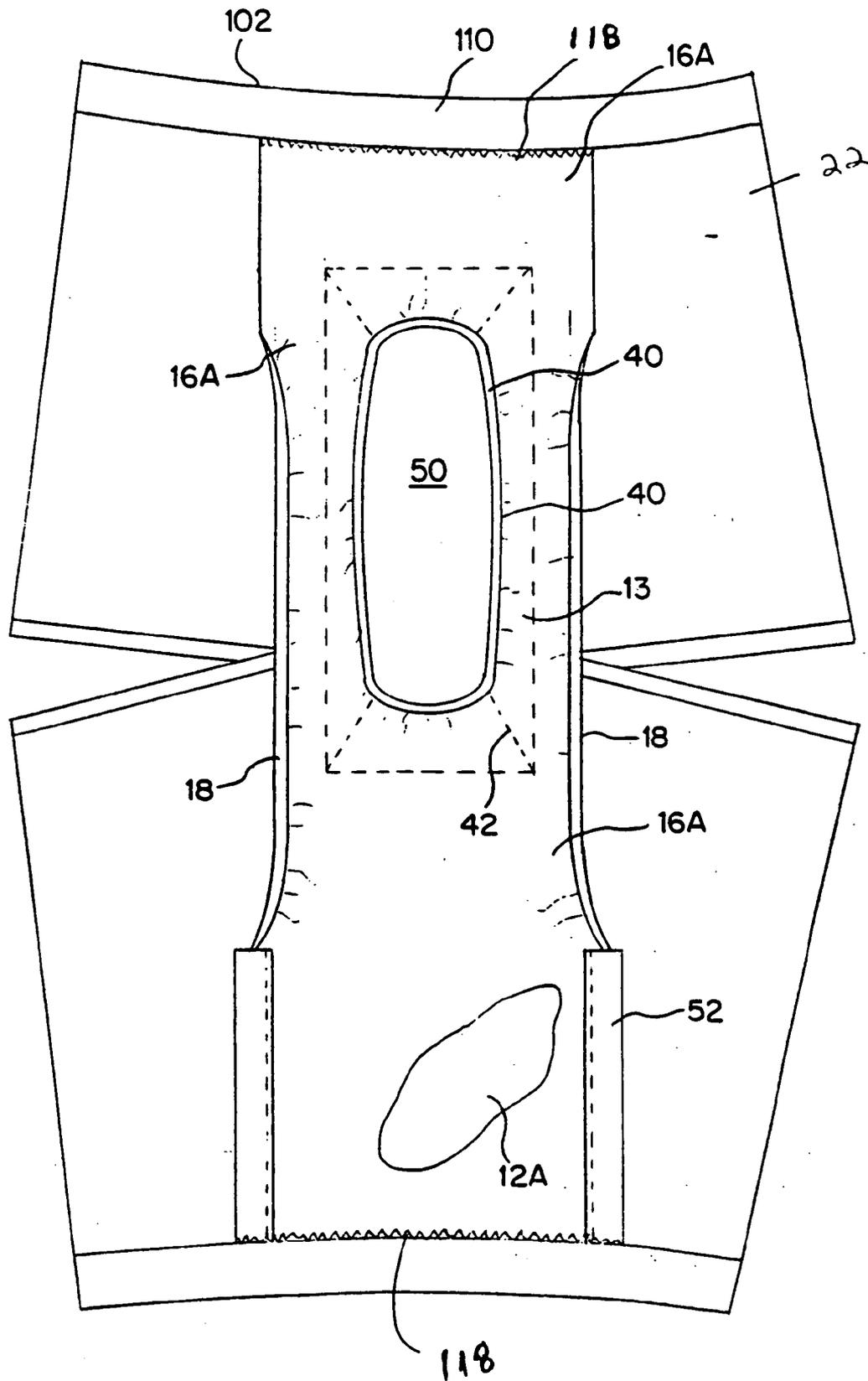


Figure 9

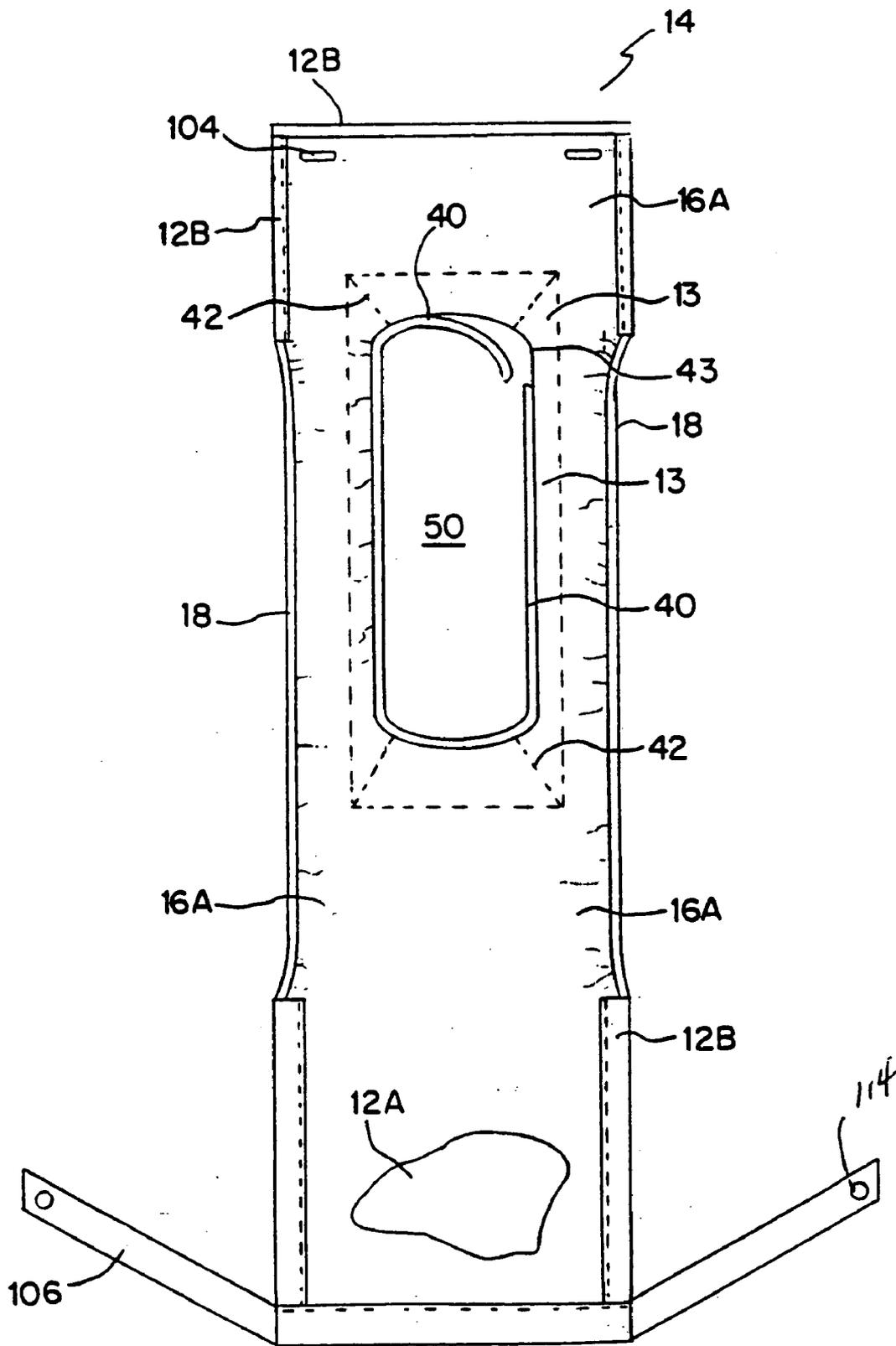


Figure 10

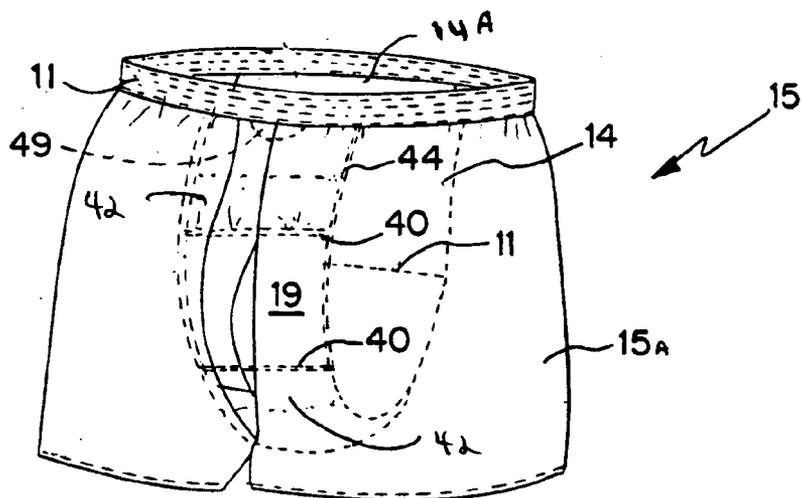


Figure 10A

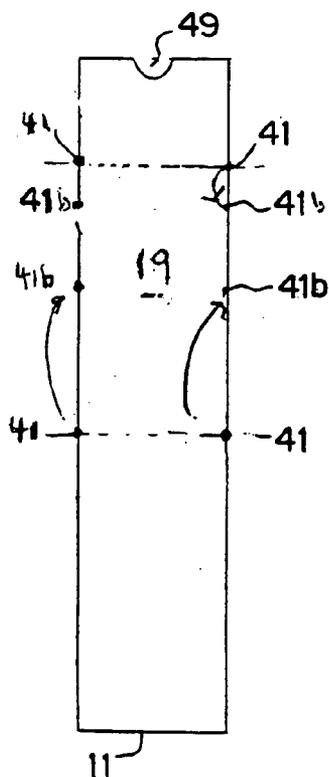


Figure 10B

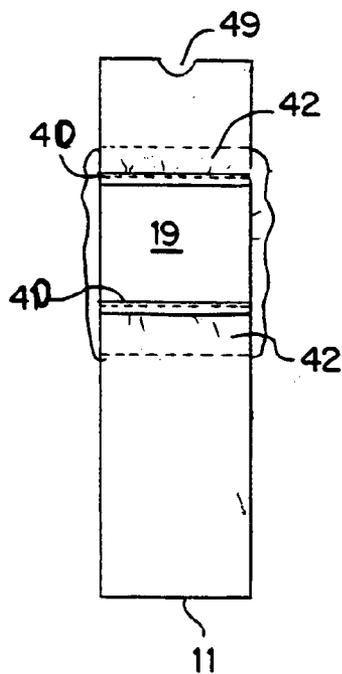


Figure 10C

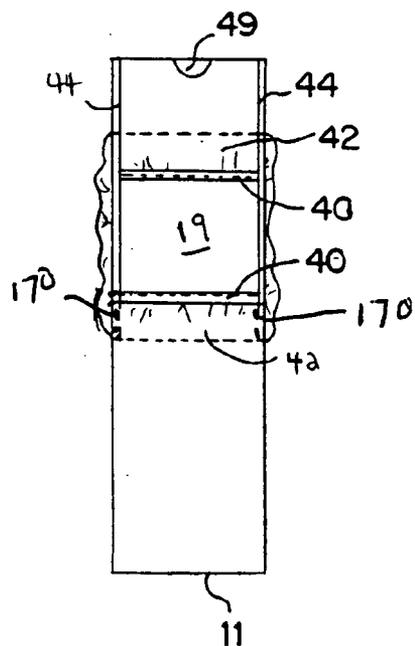


Figure 10D

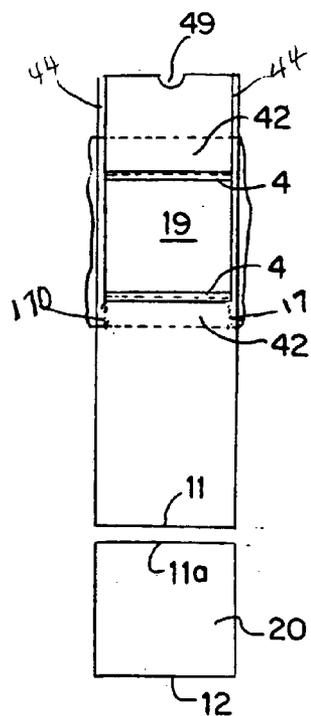


Figure 10E

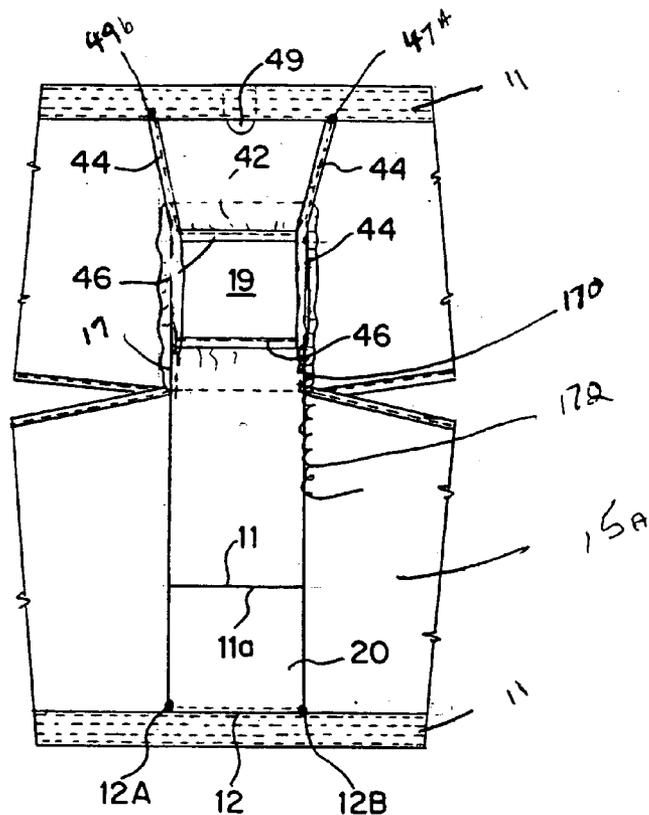


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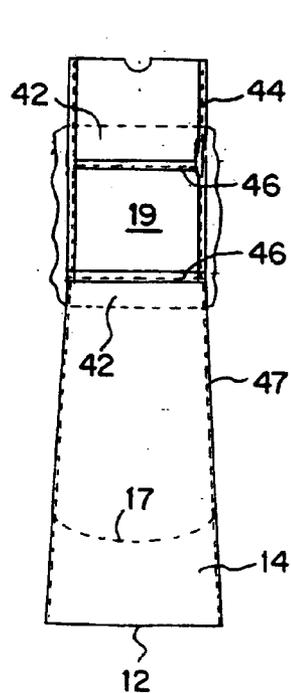


Figure 10G

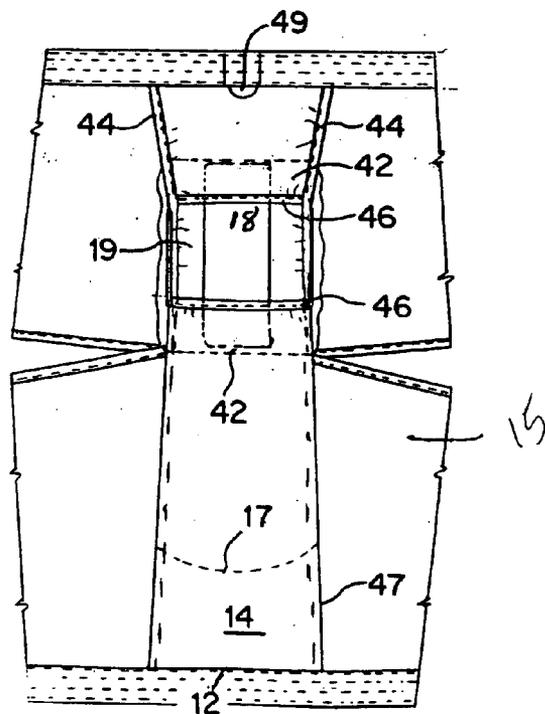


Figure 11B

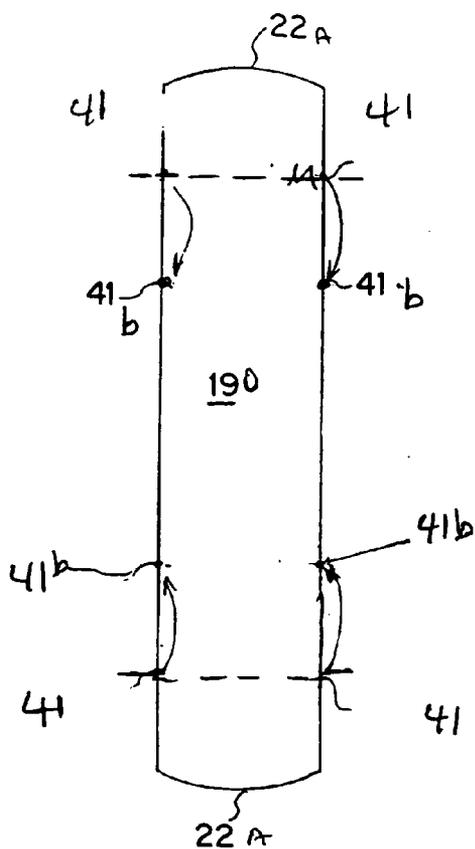


Figure 11C

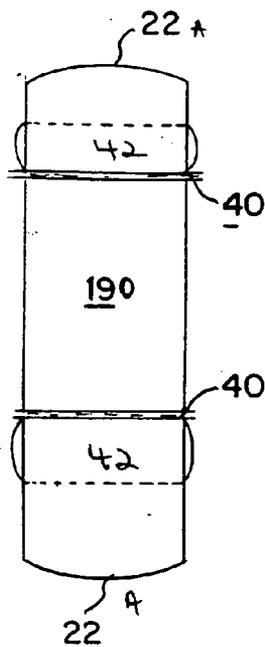


Figure 11D

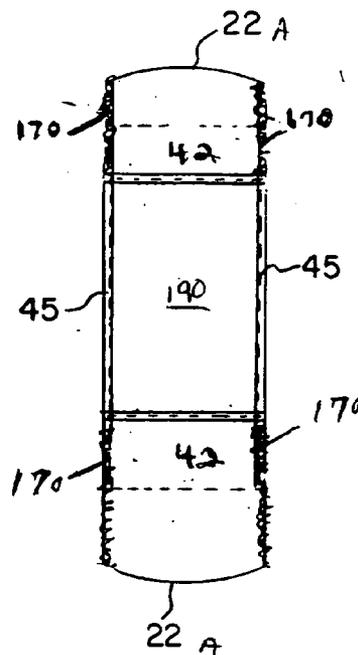
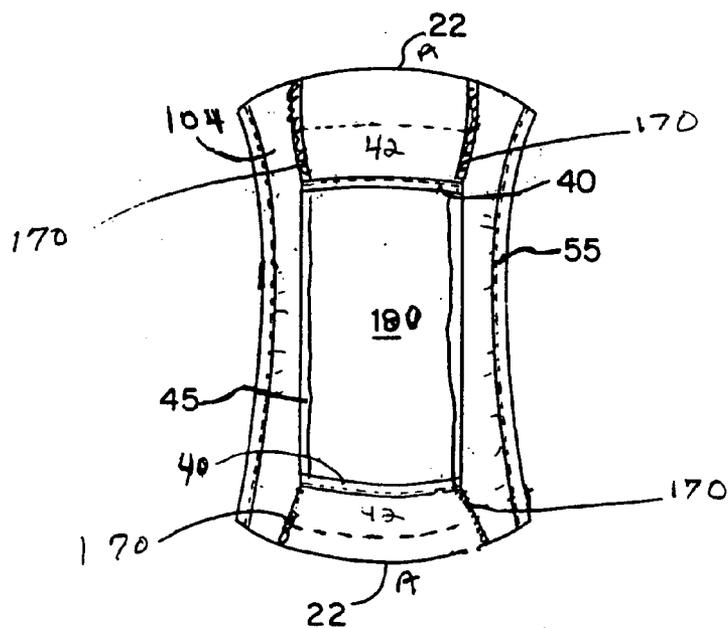


Figure 11E



**PROTECTIVE UNDERGARMENTS HAVING
ANCHORED POCKETED-SLING STRUCTURES
AND MANUFACTURING METHODS THEREFOR**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 09/512,085, filed on Feb. 24, 2000 that in turn claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/121,960, filed on Feb. 25, 1999, both of whose contents are incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates generally to protective undergarments, and more particularly to reusable underwear having, or retrofitted with, novel body fluid containment and fecal matter collection structures.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] To enhance the fluid and fecal containment properties of protective underwear, U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,137,526 and 5,409,476, issued to Fredrica Coates, describe protective underwear having a waterproof or water-resistant sling with its front and rear ends adjoined through connecting pieces to an outer shell. This sling isolates body fluids from spreading to the outer region of the shell by implementing elastic on the outer perimeter edge of the sling or waterproof gussets mounted on opposite sides of the sling. The elasticized and gusseted sling design is effective, although the volume of fluid able to be contained in this structure is limited.

[0004] As an improvement, in U.S. Pat. No. 5,722,127, issued to Fredrica Coates, the sling is enhanced to form a deeper pocket and fasteners of greater adjustability to retain the garment to the wearer. However, even with improved fit and a deeper inner pocketed sling, there still remains a need for a greater circumferential area for fluid and fecal matter containment. Hence, further disclosed in the '127 patent is a pocketed sling for retaining fluid absorbent pads. And Coates application Ser. No. 08/792,735, filed on Jan. 31, 1997, discloses a frontal hidden pocket added to a connecting frontal piece for enhanced circumferential area and hence fluid absorption. However, a need continues to exist for an alternative device for increasing circumferential area for fluid containment. It is also preferred to provide body fluid containment structures, within what will appear to be conventional underwear, particularly desirable for an adult wearer.

[0005] There continues to exist a need for more effective protective underwear, and garments for bed wetters or adults, that provide containment while preserving underwear of aesthetic appeal. Prior devices, sewn or heat sealed to garments, are uncomfortable or tend to leak at places in the garment where holes are formed by sewing needles used during assembly.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing one embodiment of a reusable diaper with anchor pocketed sling, produced in accordance with the principles of the invention and shown open into position to be worn.

[0007] FIG. 1A is a cross-sectional view of a diaper with anchored sling, taken along the line 1A-1A in FIG. 1.

[0008] FIG. 1B is a cross-sectional view of a diaper with anchored sling taken along line 1B-1B in FIG. 1.

[0009] FIG. 1C shows the anchor cloth overlying the outer shell, as a first step in manufacture of the reusable diaper.

[0010] FIG. 1D shows the anchor cloth with a mounted pocket sling, together with cutting away of the corner of the pocketed sling and folding of the corner of the pocketed sling for formation of the pocketed sling structure.

[0011] FIG. 1E is a view of the pocketed sling, with the four corners of the pocket removed,

[0012] FIG. 1F shows a double pocket sling, where a second pocket is formed and anchored by a first anchored pocket.

[0013] FIG. 1G shows the four corners of the pocketed sling joined and formed with pocket edge covered by an elastic.

[0014] FIG. 1H shows assembly of an anchored pocket sling to the anchor cloth overlying a shell.

[0015] FIG. 2 is a perspective view showing another embodiment of the invention with anchor pocket sling having extended cuffed pockets.

[0016] FIG. 2A is a cross-sectional view of the diaper of FIG. 2, with anchored pocketed-sling and extending cuff pockets, taken along line 2A-2A in FIG. 2.

[0017] FIG. 2B is a plan view of the anchor cloth overlying the shell cloth.

[0018] FIG. 2C shows the anchor cloth with mounted fabric piece to form a cuffed pocketed sling.

[0019] FIG. 2D shows mounting and folding of the cuffed pocketed sling on its anchor cloth.

[0020] FIG. 2E shows assembly of a cuffed pocketed sling to the anchor cloth and shell.

[0021] FIG. 3 shows another embodiment of the invention, with fasteners for anchoring a pocketed sling, produced in accordance with the invention.

[0022] FIG. 3A shows a removable pocketed sling with an attachment mechanism at the reverse side of the sling.

[0023] FIG. 3B is a cross-sectional view of the sling shown in FIG. 3.

[0024] FIG. 3C shows the anchor cloth with a snap attachment for the pocketed sling structure.

[0025] FIG. 3D shows a pocketed sling cloth with corresponding snap attachment mechanism.

[0026] FIG. 3E is a view of the anchor cloth having a Velcro® type fastening attachment mechanism.

[0027] FIG. 3F shows the pocketed sling cloth with corresponding Velcro® attachment tabs.

[0028] FIG. 4 shows another embodiment of an anchored sling and strip anchors, produced in accordance with the invention.

[0029] FIG. 4A shows the anchor cloth with attached strips in position to hold the pocket.

[0030] FIG. 4B shows a mounted pocket sling, held by anchor strips on an anchor cloth and overlying shell cloth.

[0031] FIG. 5 depicts another embodiment of the invention, in which a shell or lady's or man's underpant is fitted with a pocketed sling anchored by an anchor cuff and a rear folded sling portion.

[0032] FIG. 5A shows the pocket sling structure of FIG. 5.

[0033] FIG. 5B is a view of the frontal cuffed anchor piece attached to a frontal portion of an anchored pocketed sling, seamed to form a pocket at the frontal end, and at the opposite end, folded to form a rear pocket attached to the underlying pant.

[0034] FIG. 6 is a view of another embodiment of ladies' or men's underpant, with a pocketed sling anchored by an anchor cuff in both frontal and rear portions of the garment.

[0035] FIG. 6A is a view of the pocketed sling structure of FIG. 6.

[0036] FIG. 6B shows the cuff anchor piece attached to an anchored pocket, attached to the underpant fabric as an anchor cloth.

[0037] FIG. 7 is a plan view of an embodiment of a reusable diaper having snaps, with a submerged pocket sling produced in accordance with the principles of the invention, and opened in position to be worn.

[0038] FIG. 7A is a cross-sectional view of a diaper taken along line 7A-7A of FIG. 7.

[0039] FIG. 7B shows an anchor cloth holding the submerged pocket, with pocket attached on the underside of the anchor cloth and overlying a shell cloth with snap fasteners.

[0040] FIG. 8 is a plan view of another embodiment of a man's boxer underpant, open at its side seams, laid flat with a submerged pocket-sling structure retrofitted and produced in accordance with the principles of the invention.

[0041] FIG. 9 is plan view of a belted undergarment with submerged pocket, produced per this invention.

[0042] FIG. 10 shows another view of a man's boxer short with a pocketing sling anchored at the waistline.

[0043] FIG. 10A shows the first step in creating the pocketed sling structure with parallel folds.

[0044] FIG. 10B shows the second step of manufacture, creating the pocketed sling with parallel elasticized folding regions.

[0045] FIG. 10C shows the third manufacturing step in creating the pocketed sling with parallel elasticized folding regions and their parallel, vertical, elasticized sides.

[0046] FIG. 10D depicts the pocketed sling formed and ready for attachment to an adjustable knot connecting piece.

[0047] FIG. 10E shows the pocketed sling formed with its connecting knit fabric back and anchored to the frontal center portion of the boxer short, and anchored with stitching to the rear portion of the boxer short between the boxer fabric and the elastic waistband, retrofitted into the boxer short with anchor stitching in frontal and rear portions of the garment.

[0048] FIG. 11 depicts a garment implementing a pocketed sling, in accord with an embodiment helpful to wheelchair bound or otherwise incapacitated users.

[0049] FIGS. 11A-E show manufacturing steps therefor.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

[0050] Referring to FIGS. 1A-1H, a reusable diaper in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, designated generally by numeral 10, comprises a waterproof or water-resistant (breathable type fabric) diaper shell (outer shell) 12 within which is retained a fluid containment pocket 50, positioned to be located about the groin when worn by an infant or adult. Referring to FIG. 1A, the diaper is formed of three layers; a waterproof or water-resistant outer shell 12, an inner liner 16A generally soft to the touch and optionally of fluid absorbent fabric, and a layer forming a fluid containment pocket, or anchored pocketed-sling, 50 of water-resistant or waterproof material 13. The two outer layers 12 and 16A of the diaper shell are generally of the same shape, and the anchor cloth 16A is on the inside of, and aligned with, the outer shell 12. This liner 16A forms an attachment mechanism at a stitch line 217 to anchor the pocketed sling 50 to shell 12. The outer shell 12 and its inner liner 16A are joined at the leg hole by a leg elastic strip 218, which convolutes the two layers, stitched at line 20 and holding the two layers together to form a leg hole 22. The inner pocketed sling is positioned and attached (stitched) centrally to the inner liner 16A only. Hence, the stitching does not pierce shell 12.

[0051] Shell 12 has a fastener 24 of loop-type filamentary material attached to the outer frontal surface of diaper 10. In the rear portion of the outer corners of diaper 10 are fasteners 26, affixed to the diaper 10 such that hook-type filamentary material 30 closes onto loop material 28 to protect the hook material from accumulating lint during laundering, with the hook and loop materials being separated from each other by a space 26 to form a hinge. The elastic strip 32 conforms the layers to fit the waist and buttocks region of the wearer through gathers 34.

[0052] Stitch line 242, which may be replaced by heat sealing, assembles the corners of the pocket. This assembly may also be accomplished by folding the corners 21 inward to the reverse side, and then sealing to establish an inside seam.

[0053] Referring to FIG. 1A, which is a cross-sectional view of outer layer 12 connected to the inner layer 16 at elastic strip 218, stitch line 217 adjoins pocket 50 to the inner liner 16A. Elastic trim 240 forms an adjustable pocket opening to receive fluid into a fluid absorbing pad (not shown). Stitch line 242 connects the corners of the pocket 50, as previously described, and the pocket is bounded by elastic strip 240 to present a smooth finished surface 242 to contact the wearer.

[0054] FIG. 1B is similar to FIG. 1A, but depicts the presence of loop-type filamentary material 24 positioned on the outer surface of shell 12. The loop material 24 fastens the garment to the wearer when hook tabs 30, shown in FIG. 1, close onto the front of the garment.

[0055] FIGS. 1C-1H show the construction method by which three layers of fabric come together to form a leak

proof undergarment interior. In FIG. 1C, a piece of anchor cloth 16 is positioned over outer shell 12, similarly configured, as a first step in the manufacture of anchored pocket 50. In FIG. 1D, stitch line 217 pierces the cloth 16 in a rectangular pattern and attaches to hold pocket 50 to its anchor cloth now stitched centrally. The edges or sides of the material 13 take shape into a pocket-shape 50 as corners 21 are removed, and the sides become seamed at 242. The pocket may alternatively take shape by forwarding the corners at 42A and 42B, the folded cover 21A therefore is not removed.

[0056] In FIG. 1E, bulk is advantageously reduced in the garment by removing the triangular corners at 21A shown in FIG. 1D. In Figure 1F, an additional piece of fabric at 50B is optionally added at stitch line 217A (for either waterproof or absorbing purpose) at pocket 50 as it overlays the stitch line 217 of the primary pocket 50.

[0057] In FIG. 1G, pocket 50 is now formed as seamed, joined or heat sealed at 242, so as to keep the pocket sides properly shaped, and with elastic 240 convoluting the edge of the pocket.

[0058] In FIG. 1H, the three layers are now in position to be joined at stitch line 217B. The layers are held together for assembly of the garment to its fasteners and leg hole elastic strips, as seen in FIGS. 1, 1A and 1B.

[0059] Refer now to FIG. 2, depicting another embodiment of the invention, in which the outer shell is the same, but sling configuration different compared to the embodiment of FIG. 1. In FIG. 2, diaper 10 is again composed of three layers; outer layer 12 of water-resistant material, inner layer 16 that is not water-resistant and an inner fabric 72 cuffed to form pocketed sling 68 of water-resistant material. The rectangular pocketed sling 68 has folded fabric 72 at end cuffs 60 and 61, the rear end cuff 60 being formed by folding outer perimeter edge 80 of fabric 72 inward, and the two raw edges of the fold inserted into elastic strip 62. Elastic strip 62 extends longitudinally to frontal cuff pocket 61, where an alternative folded edge 61A joins outer pocket edge 71 at seam line 71A. A frontal pocket 61 is formed from the cuff as raw edge 71 joins with raw edge 61B at seam line 71 on the interior side of the cuff. Cuff pocket 60 is formed in the rear portion of the diaper by adjoining folded edges within the elastic, as compared to frontal cuff pocket 61 where elastic 62 covers edge 71 and together they are joined to folded edge 61B at seam line 71 on the interior side of the formed cuff pocket. Optionally, the elastic may be omitted on underside at 71 as finished edge is formed by seamline 71 rather than elastic 62. The rear cuff outer corner may be stitched down at stitch line 62A. The entire pocketed-sling 68 is attached to anchor cloth 16 in the central portion of diaper 10 at stitch line 70, which forms a stabilizing rectangular attachment of cuffed pocketed-sling 68 to its anchor cloth 16. Leg hole 22 and fasteners 24 and 26 are identical to those depicted in FIG. 1.

[0060] Referring to FIG. 2A, which is a cross-sectional view of pocket 68, outer layer 12 is connected to inner layer 16 at elastic trim 218, and held fast by zig-zag or straight stitching at 20. Cuff pocket 60 is formed as the sidewall of fabric 72 of pocket 68 bends at outer edge 80 into the point of stitch line 70.

[0061] Manufacture is carried out first by overlaying cloth 16 on waterproof cloth 12 as its liner, as shown in FIG. 2B.

In FIG. 2C, liner 16 and fabric piece 72 are stitched in an hourglass fashion at 70 to anchor cloth 16. Opposite ends of waterproof fabric piece 72 are overlock stitched at 80.

[0062] FIG. 2D shows the opposite ends being folded inward to form cuff 60 and folded backward forming cuff 61. At cuff 60, the folded sides will meet and be encased in elastic strip 62, bending the wall of fabric 72 inward. The opposite end of the cuff is formed in a different fashion, as end 80 of cuff 61 is folded backward, and the two raw edges 61B and 71A are encased in elastic strip 62.

[0063] In FIG. 2E, the cuff is reversed and seam 61 is made flush with the fabric raw edges, and elastic is now on the inside of pocket 68. Optionally, a tacking 62A can be added to hold elastic down at cuff 60. The formed pocket 68 adjoined to cloth 16, overlies outer shell fabric 12, and is ready for assembly as a garment of protective underwear.

[0064] In another embodiment of the invention, depicted in FIG. 3, diaper 10 is composed of two layers, with liner 16 and shell 12 connected at elastic strip 18 by stitching 20. The absorbing pocketed-sling 50 of FIG. 1 is detachable through an optional fastener material, such as Velcro® in the form of a rectangular sewn piece 86, or alternatively as snaps 120. In FIG. 3B, the Velcro® fastener is mounted at line 82 on anchor cloth 16, whereas in FIG. 3A, the pocketed sling 50 is shown detached from its anchor cloth to expose the underlying attachment. Examples are snaps 121 to be matched within 120 of FIG. 3 when coupled for use, or Velcro® fastening strips 66 stitched at 84 for coupling with complementary Velcro® strip 86, stitched at 82.

[0065] FIGS. 3C-3F show optional placement of the fastening means for enabling the pocketed sling to be detached from its anchor cloth. FIG. 3C shows the mounting of four male snaps 120 overlying shell 12, FIG. 3D the pocket piece 50 with corresponding female straps 121, and FIG. 3E Velcro® loop material mounted on anchor cloth 16 overlying cloth 12. And in FIG. 3F, a pocket 50 is formed with hook fastener strip 84 stitched at 66 to be coupled with a rectangular member 86 when the pocket is fully formed, as shown in FIG. 1, where attachment is stitching.

[0066] In another embodiment, depicted in FIG. 4, diaper 10 is composed of two layers of fabric: an inner layer overlying a shell 12. The pocketed sling device described in FIGS. 1-3 is now anchored to the liner cloth 16 with strips of fabric 64A, 66A, 67A, positioned on one side of the anchor cloth 16, and on the opposite side anchor strips 64B, 66B and 67B are positioned to hold and stabilize the pocket. In this figure, the anchor strips are each tacked to the anchor cloth 16; 64A is tacked at 62C, 66A at 66C, 67A at 67C, 64B at 64C, 66B at 66C and 67B at 67C. As the first step in the stabilization of pocketed sling 68, FIG. 4A shows the tacking on the anchor cloth 16, and in FIG. 4B the strips each bend inward into the elastic strip 62 as the pocket is formed. Just as in FIG. 2, elastic strip 62 is exposed at cuff 60, but not at cuff 61. Hence, strips 64A and 64B are inserted in the elastic 62 at one end and at the opposite end are inserted in the seam 61B with elastic 62 on the underside of cuff 61, holding the seam together.

[0067] In another embodiment, depicted in FIG. 5, the (anchor) liner cloth 16 of the previously described embodiments now becomes 16A, the waterproof or fluid-resistant outermost surface of protective underwear diaper to which

pocketed sling **500** is of a waterproof or water resistant material stabilized before side seams **102** are joined together. This material **16A** could also be a non-waterproof or non-fluid-resistant material like that of a traditional lady's panty or a man's jockey pant.

[0068] Still referring to **FIG. 5**, an anchor cuff **160** of preferably triangular shape attaches to outer material **16A**. This cuff **160** is held to the waterproof garment or panty fabric **16A**, in a triangular stitch pattern **162**. At the widest end of the triangular cuff **160**, pocketed sling **500** is attached at seam line **163** by an overlock finishing stitch. This may be stitched on the underside or topside of the sling **500**. Leg hole **22** is covered by elastic **118**. An elastic strip **5** finishes the frontal and rear edges of the garment **11**.

[0069] In the rear portion of the garment, pocketed sling **500** is stabilized with stitching **170A**, **170B** on opposite sides of pocket **500**. The stitching anchors the waterproof sling **500** to the shell **16A**. The resulting design is most advantageous for the wearer who needs protection in the rear portion of the garment.

[0070] In **FIG. 5**, the frontal sidewalls **104A**, **104B** of pocketed sling **500** are brought together at seam **104** to form a frontal pocket portion **105**. This process of forming the pocketed sling **500** is seen in **FIGS. 5A and 5B**. In **FIG. 5A**, the shape of sling **500** is formed as sides **104A** and **104B** are folded inward, centrally and joined at seam **104** in **FIG. 5B**. Elastic strip **400** is applied to fit the groin of the wearer as pocketed sling **500** becomes elasticized around the pubic area. A rear pocket portion **42** of pocketed sling **500** is formed as the rectangular fabric piece folds at notches **403A** and **403B** on opposite and parallel sides of the rectangular piece of fabric. The fold defined by line **403A-403B** becomes a permanent crease line **41** when the fold is top stitched. The crease line **41** may also be an overlock stitch. Once crease line **41** is folded inward (upward in the figure) to notches **404A** and **404B** as shown by the arrows in **FIG. 5A**, top stitching **170A** and **170B** holds the outer sides of pocket portion **42** together. As shown in **FIG. 5**, a fluid absorbent pad **18** may now be held in the rear portion of the garment by the hidden fluid-tight pocket portion **42**. Elastic **40** may be applied to enhance the cupping action of formed pocket portion **42** as it holds one end of pad **19** as the pad resides on top of a first ply of fabric of single thickness wrapped around the end of the pad to become a second ply of fabric. The remainder of the pocket **42** is suspended by a third ply of the fabric folded backward and attached to the garment establishing a continuous S-shaped fabric configuration in cross-section in the longitudinal direction of the pocketed sling **500**. The third ply of fabric faces the skin of the wearer while suspending the rear portion of a fluid-tight pocket.

[0071] **FIG. 6**, another embodiment of similar structure to **FIG. 5**, incorporates the same elements of structural formation; outermost surface layers **16A** forming as both a panty and anchor cloth for a pocketed sling, the same elastic **5** for finishing outer waist portions of the garment, and side seams **102**, that, when seamed form protective panty **11**. The anchored pocket of **FIG. 6** carries central connecting pieces **160** and **160A** respectively at frontal and rear portions, now stitched centrally to **16A** at stitch line **163** and **163A**, respectively. Anchor strips **620** are inserted in both sides of leg hole elastic **18** at central portion of leg hole elastic **18** and

then connected, or inserted in, elastic of pocket elastic **400A**. Manufacturing of garment strips **620** may be in reverse order of assembly by first being inserted in pocket elastic **40** and then attached to central portion of the panty (stitched over top of elastic **18**). These connecting pieces **620** anchor the pocket **502** without piercing the fluid absorbing or containing area of pocket **502**. The connecting pieces suspend the pocket **502** centrally at opposite ends. The pocket **502** is connected at opposite ends by overlock stitching **108**. Elastic **18** finishes the leg hole. Elastic **400A** terminates within seam **104** and seam **108**, and the outermost edge of the pocket is finished by overlock stitch **162**.

[0072] In **FIG. 6A**, pocket **502** shows the attachment of side anchor strip **620**.

[0073] In **FIG. 6B**, center anchor pieces **620** are now encased in elastic **400A**.

[0074] In **FIG. 7**, there is yet another embodiment of an anchored pocket sling.

[0075] This embodiment is identical to **FIG. 1** with the exception that the pocketed structure is attached, suspended below the anchor cloth **16A**, therefore, the pocket **50** resides between the shell **12A** and anchor cloth **16A**.

[0076] **FIG. 7** also depicts side snap fasteners for fastening sides of garment together for wearing. Side snap fasteners **100**, **102** are used in this garment as an alternative to Velcro® fasteners shown in earlier figures.

[0077] Waist elastic **110** is also positioned beneath anchor cloth **16A**, so as to protect the skin of a wearer in the event that the elastic may be wide and need fabric over it. Overlock stitching **105** connects **16A** with outer shell **12A** at the outermost edge of the garment.

[0078] In **FIG. 7B**, on the underside, dotted lines represent the now suspended and floating pocket, **50**, of same structure as pocket **50** of **FIG. 1**. It is a hidden pocket, suspend by the joining of perimeter edge **13** to anchor cloth **16A** at elastic **40**. Side seams **42** are joined as in **FIG. 1**, but no stitch line **17** is necessary in this embodiment as the base of the pocket floats. This feature further enhances the waterproof property of the pocket.

[0079] In **FIG. 7A**, pocket **50** is suspended between anchor cloth **16A** and shell **12A**. Elastic **40** holds pocket perimeter edge with anchor cloth circular edge.

[0080] In **FIG. 7B**, another view of manufacture of submerged pocket design, anchor cloth **16A** overlies shell **12A**.

[0081] In **FIG. 8** the submerged pocket structure of **FIG. 7** is applied to a male boxer short **22**. The submerged pocket **50** includes the principles of the invention disclosed in **FIG. 6** including submerged pocket **50**, with seamed corners **42**, suspended between anchor cloth **16A** and waterproof piece **12A** held on opposite sides by elastic **18**. The addition to this variation of the invention is anchor strip **52** which stabilizes the protective sling in the rear portion of boxer short **22**. Boxer short **22** has an elastic waist **110** and a sling device with submerged pocket **50** held to central frontal interior portion of boxer pant **22** at stitching **118**.

[0082] In **FIG. 9**, the submerged pocket of **FIGS. 6, 7** and **8** is the same except, as shown, as a belted undergarment **14**, where all principles of the invention are applied, and for fastening to the wearer, belt **106** with button **114** is coupled

with buttonhole **104**. Buttonhole **104** pierces with stitching both shell **12A** and anchor cloth **16A**. Folded edge **12B** finishes the part of the undergarment.

[0083] In FIG. 10, like FIG. 5 there is a suspended pocketed sling, but in this boxer style garment the pocketed sling of FIG. 5 has been adapted to fit the male anatomy. For this boxer short garment, male boxer short garment **15** appears as a traditional boxer pant undergarment with waist-line stitched with elastic **11** to hold the pant to the body of the wearer. Pocketed sling **19** is sewn under or to elastic **11** in the center back of short **15** at **14A**. Pocketed sling frontal portion is centered at **49** and attached to or under elastic **11**.

[0084] FIG. 10A shows the first step in creating the boxer version of the pocketed sling device. Crease line **41** of FIG. 5 now becomes the crease line for both a frontal and rear pocket of the pocketed sling structure. As in FIG. 5, crease line **41** is folded inward to notch **41B** creating a three-ply thickness. The folds at the frontal and rear ends may be identical to each other in depth, or as depicted different in depth.

[0085] In FIG. 10B, the pocket **42** is formed both in the frontal and rear portions of the garment. Crease line **41** is covered with elastic **40**.

[0086] In FIG. 10C, opposite side walls of pocketed-sling **19** receive elastic **44**, as shown, to recess and cup the entire frontal portion of the sling to better fit to the male anatomy. Stitching at **170** holds the 3 plies of the S-folded fabric construction together at bottom pocket **42**. Elastic **44** also serves the purpose of holding and stabilizing the 3 plies of the S-folded fabric pocket **42** construction together at the top fold of the pocket.

[0087] FIG. 10D is a view of pocketed sling **19** when connecting seam edge **11A** to be joined to seam edge **11** of the terminal rear end of the pocketed sling **19** of waterproof or non-waterproof material. Piece **20** is ideally of stretch material and as a connecting piece to the boxer short that will be made to be of greater length for larger boxer shorts. Hence, the same pocketed sling device can be accommodated in many different sizes of boxer short simply by extending piece **20**.

[0088] In FIG. 10E, the pocket sling **19** is attached at **11** and **11A**, and then attached centrally to boxer outer shell **15** at notches **49B** and **47A** in the frontal interior waistband **11** and in the center rear attachment points, or notches, **12A**, **12** and **12B**. Alternatively, in FIG. 10F, fabric **14** is laid over the top of the waterproof material of pocketed sling **19**, stitched at **47**, the terminal end of fabric **19** being arcuate at **17** to waterproof the buttocks region of the garment while providing absorbent stretch material on top. Stitching **47** functions also to stabilize 3 plies of folded fabric, at opposite sides of pocket **42** in the same way stitching **170** stabilizes pocket **19** of FIGS. 10D and 10E. The extended piece of material with no waterproof material under it is identified by **14**. Extended fabric **14**, like separate piece of material **20** of FIG. 10D, may be adjusted in length to accommodate different sizes of boxer short outer material **15**. This construction also offers an optional finishing overlock stitch to the sidewalls of sling **19** in the rear portion of the garment.

[0089] In FIG. 10G, the pocketed sling device of FIG. 10F is now attached to the interior portion of garment **15A** in the same manner as described with respect to FIG. 10E.

[0090] In FIGS. 11 and 11A, the pocketed sling of FIGS. 5 and 10 has been adapted for wheel chair bound persons who cannot step into underwear but must be lifted or rolled onto or into underwear. Protective underwear garment **100** provides fastening at the tops using a combination of snaps **68** and Velcro® strip **60** of hook-type filamentary material and strip **62** of loop-type filamentary material to join together the sides of the garment **100** after the user of the garment is placed on top of the pant. Material **101** is preferably a stretch material with waist line **102** being of greater stretch material and joining line **22** being an arcuate joining line of material in the groin area of either waterproof or non-waterproof material **104**. Elastic **55** is the leghole elastic of the groin region material **104**, and suspended from the terminal ends of material **104** is the pocketed sling device **190** of construction similar to pocketed sling structure **19** of the boxer short except for omission of elastic **44** of the boxer short of FIG. 10. Elastic **44** has now been replaced by overlock stitching **170C**. However, like FIG. 5 and FIG. 10, a three-ply folded pocket **42** is seen with its crease edge covered with elastic **40**. The first ply portion is now covered with elastic at **45** but stops where the three-ply folds of material join at parallel stitching **170C** at both the frontal and rear portions of the garment.

[0091] FIG. 11B depicts a first step in forming pocketed sling **190** where crease line **41** is folded to notch **41B** on opposite sides and opposite ends forming, in FIG. 11C, three-ply material pockets, with crease line **41** covered by elastic **40**. In FIG. 11D, this single ply of fabric portion is covered by elastic **45**, and at the point where the two-ply fold joins the single ply material at an overlock stitch **170** finishes the edge and holds the three-ply material in place. The base of pocket **42** or terminal end of the folded portion of pocket **42** has no stitching and hence prevents migration of fluid out of the pocket.

[0092] In FIG. 11E, pocketed sling **190** is joined at arcuate seam **22A**, sealing material **104** and pocketed sling **190** together. Returning to FIGS. 11 and 11A, material edge **22A** is now joined in seam line **22** to hold the entire protective pant together, stretch top material **101** to waterproof cavity **104** and its pocketed sling receptacle **190**.

1-2. (canceled)

3. A protective garment, comprising:

first and second generally rectangular pieces of material interconnected by a strip of material, corresponding opposite sides of each of the first and second pieces having complementary fasteners to enable the first and second pieces to be joined together to establish frontal and rear portions of the garment, the strip positioned and configured to fit to the groin of a wearer, and with the first and second pieces joined together at the fasteners, an upper portion of the garment forming a waist, and a lower portion of the first and second pieces forming leg holes; and

an elongated sling of material on the inner surface of the strip, having opposite ends connected to the waist at the frontal and rear portions of the garment, wherein parts of the sling are folded longitudinally into complementary S-shapes so as, at each fold, to provide three plies of the sling material, establishing at each fold a pocket part for retaining an end of a fluid absorbent pad.

4. The protective garment as in claim 3, in which the fasteners include a snap fastener.

5. The protective garment as in claim 3, in which the fasteners include a filamentary fastener.

6. The protective garment as in claim 3, in which the fasteners include both snap and filamentary type fasteners.

7. The protective garment as in claim 3, wherein the first and second pieces of material are a stretch material.

8. The protective garment as in claim 7, wherein the waist region of the first and second pieces is of a material having

a greater stretch than the remainder of the first and second pieces.

9. The protective garment as in claim 3, wherein the leg holes are bordered by elastic strips.

10. The protective garment as in claim 3, wherein the opposite sides of the sling are covered by elastic strips.

11. The protective garment as in claim 3, wherein an exposed fold of each pocket part is covered by an elastic strip.

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