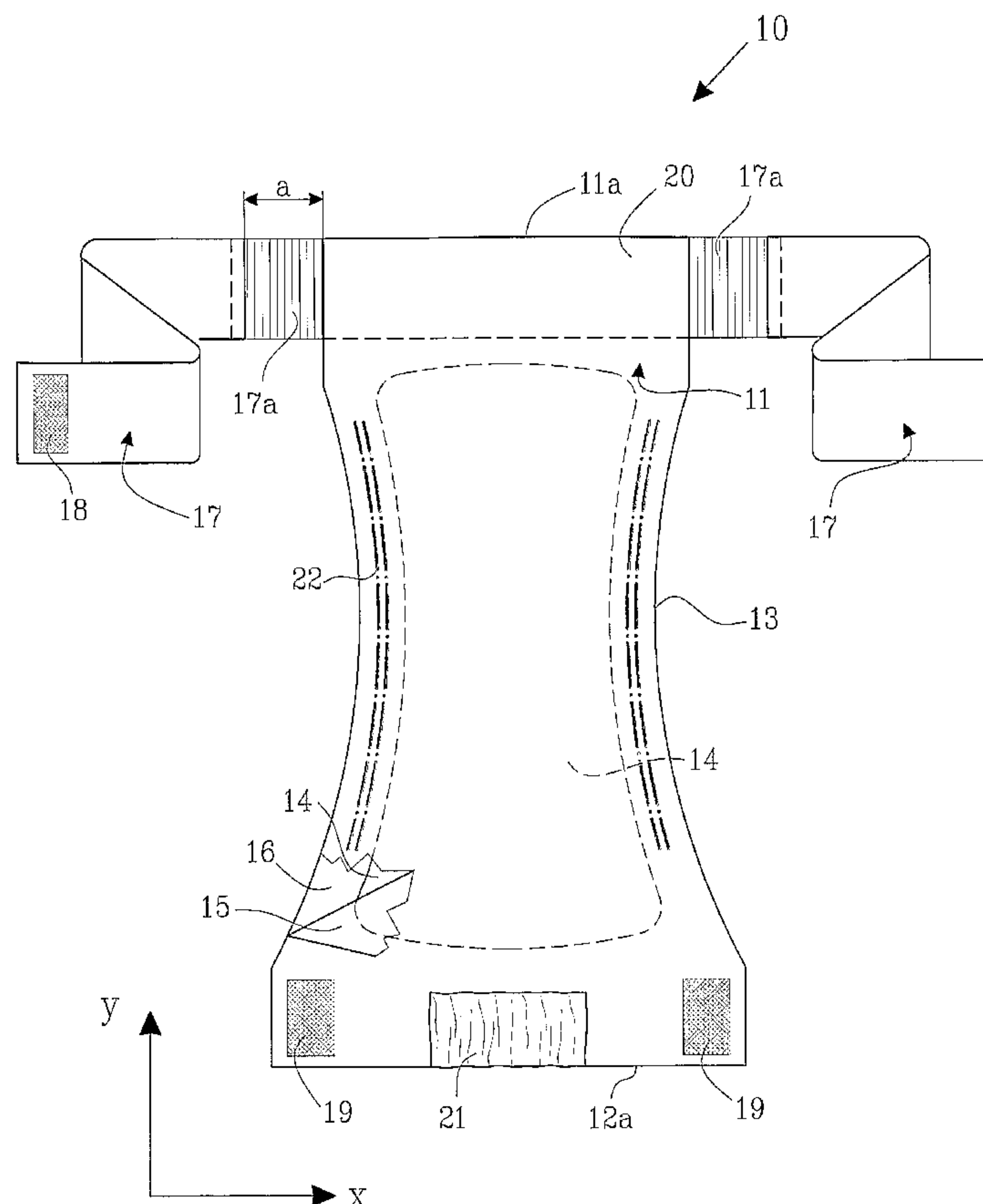




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(54) Title: BELTED ABSORBENT GARMENT



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

Absorbent garment such as a diaper and an incontinence guard, said garment comprises a first body panel (16), a second body panel (17) and a crotch portion (13) there between. The garment is provided with opposed laterally extending belt members (17)



(57) **Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

attached to the waist portion of the first body panel (11) and are adapted to be wrapped around the waist of the wearer of the garment and fastened together by means of first fastening means (18). The second body panel (12) at its waist portion is provided with second fastening means (19) adapted to be fastened to the belt members (17), in such a way that the garment will assume a pant-like shape. The belt members (17) are interconnected by a waist band (20) extending in transverse direction (x) along the waist portion (11a) of the first body panel (11). At least one of the belt members (17) comprises an elastic region (17a) located at the proximal end of said belt member adjacent said waist band (20).

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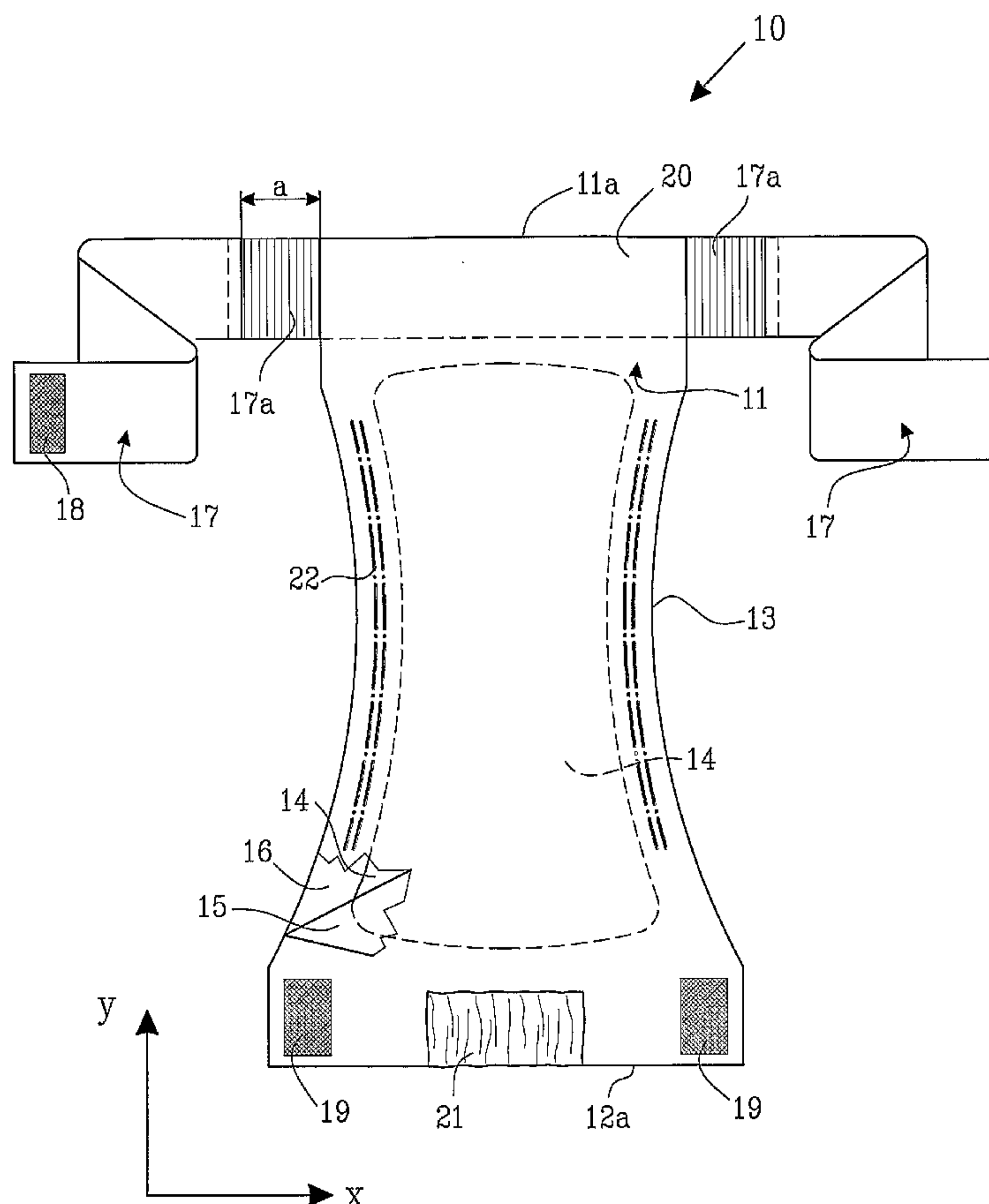
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: BELTED ABSORBENT GARMENT



(57) Abstract: Absorbent garment such as a diaper and an incontinence guard, said garment comprises a first body panel (16), a second body panel (17) and a crotch portion (13) there between. The garment is provided with opposed laterally extending belt members (17) attached to the waist portion of the first body panel (11) and are adapted to be wrapped around the waist of the wearer of the garment and fastened together by means of first fastening means (18). The second body panel (12) at its waist portion is provided with second fastening means (19) adapted to be fastened to the belt members (17), in such a way that the garment will assume a pant-like shape. The belt members (17) are interconnected by a waist band (20) extending in transverse direction (x) along the waist portion (11a) of the first body panel (11). At least one of the belt members (17) comprises an elastic region (17a) located at the proximal end of said belt member adjacent said waist band (20).

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

Belted absorbent garment

Technical field

- 5 The present invention refers to an absorbent garment such as a diaper and an incontinence guard provided with a belt as part of the fastening means for attaching the garment around the waist of the wearer.

Background of the invention

- 10 So called belted absorbent garments comprise a front body panel adapted to be applied over the stomach of the wearer, a back body panel adapted to be applied over the back of the wearer and a crotch portion adapted to extend over the crotch of the wearer between the legs. The garment further comprises a pair of opposed laterally extending belt members usually attached to the back panel at the waist portion thereof. These belt
15 portions are adapted to be wrapped around the waist of the wearer of the garment and fastened together by means of first fastening means, such as an adhesive tape or mechanical fastening means, for example a hook-and-loop fastener. The front panel is then passed between the legs of the wearer and fastened to the outside of the belt members by means of second fastening means provided at the waist portion of the front
20 panel. The garment will then assume a pant-like shape. Alternatively the belt portions are arranged at the front panel and the second fastening means at the back panel. Since often the front and back panels are more or less identical as to shape and size the wearer or caretaker may apply the article after individual preference, so that the front panel may be used as back panel and vice versa.

25

The belt provides for improved possibilities to adjust the fit of the absorbent garment. It further simplifies the change of the garment especially when the wearer is standing up.

30

Examples of belted absorbent garments are found in for example EP-A-0 287 388, EP-A-0 409 307, EP-A-0 605 012 and FR-A-2 586 558.

It is also known to make part of the belt elastic in order to further improve comfort and fit. JP-B-3471999 discloses a belted diaper wherein the belt portions are attached to the lateral side edges of the back panel and have a stretchable part at the respective base

end thereof, which allows the belt portions to be extended along their length direction. The back panel of the diaper is further provided with an elastic portion (waist elastics).

5 EP-A-1 110 529 discloses a belted diaper wherein the belt members are interconnected by a waist band which is attached by adhesive to the external side of the back panel of the diaper. One portion close to the distal end of the belt members may be elastic.

Object and most important features of the invention

10 The present invention aims at providing a belted absorbent garment having improved comfort and fit and which can be made with a cost-efficient manufacturing process. This has according to the present invention been accomplished by a garment having belt members being interconnected by a waist band extending in transverse direction along the waist portion of the first body panel, wherein at least one of the belt members comprises an elastic region located at the proximal end of said belt member adjacent said waist
15 band.

In one embodiment the elastic region extends over no more than 50% of the length of each belt member, preferably over no more than 40% and more preferably over no more than 30% of the length of each belt member.

20

In a further aspect the elastic region extends over a length of at least 1 cm, preferably at least 2 cm, of each laterally extending belt member.

25 The elastic member may comprise an elastic film or an elastic laminate. Alternatively it comprises one or more elastic threads or strips contractably affixed between web materials.

30 In one embodiment the elastic member extends over and is attached in a face-to-face relationship to the waist portion of the first body panel either to the garment facing side thereof or to the wearer facing side thereof or between material layers contained in the first body panel.

In an alternative embodiment the elastic member is attached to a distal edge of the waist portion of the first body panel so as to form a longitudinal extension of said waist portion.

35

In one aspect of the invention the first and second fastening means comprise hook members and at least part of the external surface of the belt members facing away from the wearer's body is of a material adapted to act as a loop material engaging with said hook members.

5

In one embodiment of the invention the elastic region of the respective belt member is provided with a contrasting colour, pattern or marking so as to be distinguishable from the rest of the belt member, or alternatively that said rest of the belt member is provided with a contrasting colour, pattern or marking so as to be distinguishable from said elastic region.

10

Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will in the following be closer described with reference to an embodiment shown in the accompanying drawings.

Figure 1 shows a plan view of a belted diaper as seen from the wearer facing side according to one embodiment of the invention.

15

Figure 2 is a plan view of part of the belted diaper in Fig. 1 as seen from the garment facing side.

Figure 3 is a plan view of part of a belted diaper according to a modified embodiment as seen from the garment facing side.

20

Figure 4 is a plan view of part of a belted diaper according to a further embodiment as seen from the garment facing side.

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate how a belted diaper is put on a wearer.

Description of preferred embodiments

Fig. 1 of the drawings shows an embodiment of an absorbent garment in the form of a diaper or incontinence guard 10 comprising a first body panel 11, which in the embodiment shown in the drawings is the part of the garment that in use is intended to extend over the back and the rear hip area of the wearer. The garment also comprises a second body panel 12, which in the shown embodiment is the part of the pant diaper that in use is intended to extend over the stomach and front hip area of the wearer. Each of said first and second body panels 11 and 12 has a waist portion 11a and 12a respectively. It is understood that in other embodiments the first body panel 11 may be the front body panel and the second body panel 12 may be the back body panel. The crotch portion 13 of a garment 10 is the part of the garment that in use is intended to extend through the wearer's crotch area, between the legs. An absorbent core 14 is disposed in the crotch

35

portion 13 and extends into the first and second body panels 11 and 12. The absorbent core 14 is disposed between an inner coversheet 15 and an outer coversheet 16. The garment has a longitudinal direction y and a transverse direction x.

5 The term "inner coversheet" refers to the liquid permeable material sheet forming the inner cover of the absorbent garment and which in use is placed in direct contact with the skin of the wearer. The inner coversheet can comprise a nonwoven material, e.g. spunbond, meltblown, carded, hydroentangled, wetlaid etc. Suitable nonwoven materials can be composed of natural fibers, such as wood pulp or cotton fibres, man-made fibres, such as
10 polyester, polyethylene, polypropylene, viscose, rayon etc. or from a mixture of natural and man-made fibres. The inner coversheet material may further be composed of tow fibres, which may be bonded to each other in a bonding pattern, as e.g. disclosed in EP-A-1 035 818. Further examples of inner coversheet materials are porous foams, apertured plastic films etc. The materials suited as inner coversheet materials should be soft and non-
15 irritating to the skin and be readily penetrated by body fluid, e.g. urine or menstrual fluid. The inner coversheet may further be different in different parts of the absorbent garment.

The "outer coversheet" refers to the material forming the outer cover of the absorbent garment. The outer coversheet may be the same or different in different parts of the
20 absorbent garment. At least in the area of the absorbent core the outer coversheet comprises a liquid impervious material a thin plastic film, e.g. a polyethylene or polypropylene film, a nonwoven material coated with a liquid impervious material, a hydrophobic nonwoven material, which resists liquid penetration, or a laminate of a plastic film and a nonwoven material. The outer coversheet material may be breathable so as to
25 allow vapour to escape from the absorbent core, while still preventing liquids from passing therethrough. Examples of breathable outer coversheet materials are porous polymeric films, nonwoven laminates of spunbond and meltblown layers and laminates of porous polymeric films and nonwoven materials. Preferably, the outer coversheet comprises a nonwoven material on at least the undergarment-facing surface thereof.

30 The "absorbent core" is the absorbent structure disposed between the two coversheets of the absorbent garment in at least the crotch region thereof. The absorbent core can be of any conventional kind. Examples of commonly occurring absorbent materials are cellulosic fluff pulp, tissue layers, highly absorbent polymers (so called superabsorbents), absorbent
35 foam materials, absorbent nonwoven materials or the like. It is common to combine

cellulosic fluff pulp with superabsorbent polymers in an absorbent core. Superabsorbent polymers are water-swellaable, water-insoluble organic or inorganic materials capable of absorbing at least about 20 times their own weight of an aqueous solution containing 0.9 weight percent of sodium chloride. Organic materials suitable for use as superabsorbent materials can include natural materials such as polysaccharides, polypeptides and the like, as well as synthetic materials such as synthetic hydrogel polymers. Such hydrogel polymers include, for example, alkali metal salts of polyacrylic acids, polyacrylamides, polyvinyl alcohol, polyacrylates, polyacrylamides, polyvinyl pyridines, and the like. Other suitable polymers include hydrolyzed acrylonitrile grafted starch, acrylic acid grafted starch, and isobutylene maleic anhydride copolymers and mixtures thereof. The hydrogel polymers are preferably lightly cross-linked to render the material substantially water insoluble. Preferred superabsorbent materials are further surface cross-linked so that the outer surface or shell of the superabsorbent particle, fibre, flake, sphere, etc. possesses a higher crosslink density than the inner portion of the superabsorbent. The superabsorbent materials may be in any form which is suitable for use in absorbent composites including particles, fibres, flakes, spheres, and the like.

A high liquid storage capacity is provided by the use of high amounts of superabsorbent material. For an absorbent core comprising a matrix of hydrophilic fibres, such as cellulosic fibres, and superabsorbent material, the proportion of superabsorbent material is preferably between 10 and 90% by weight, more preferably between 30 and 70% by weight.

It is conventional for absorbent garments to have absorbent cores comprising layers of different properties with respect to liquid receiving capacity, liquid distribution capacity and storage capacity. The thin absorbent bodies, which are common in for example baby diapers and incontinence guards, often comprise a compressed, mixed or layered structure of cellulosic fluff pulp and superabsorbent polymers. The size and absorbent capacity of the absorbent core may be varied to suit different uses, such as infants or adult incontinent persons.

The absorbent core may further include an acquisition distribution layer placed on top of the primary absorbent body, which is adapted to quickly receive and temporarily store discharged liquid before it is absorbed by the primary absorbent core. Such acquisition distribution layers are well known in the art and may be composed of porous fibrous

wadding or foam materials.

A pair of belt members 17 are attached to the waist portion of first body panel 11 and are intended to be wrapped around the waist of the wearer of the garment and fastened together by means of first fastening means 18, for example a mechanical fastener, especially a hook fastener of a hook-and-loop fastening means. The external surface of the opposite belt member, especially if this comprises a fibrous nonwoven, may function as a loop material. Further examples of mechanical fasteners are button and holes or button loops, snap fasteners and the like. The buttons can either be fastened to the belt or to the garment.

A "hook-and-loop fastener" refers to complementary fastening means having a "hook" portion and a "loop" portion and which are refastenable. The term "hook" as used herein refers to any element capable of engaging another element, the so called "loop" portion. The term "hook" is not limited to only "hooks" in its normal sense, but rather encompasses any form of engaging elements, whether unidirectional or bi-directional. The term "loop" is likewise not limited to "loops" in its normal sense, but also encompasses any structure capable of engaging with a "hook" fastener. Examples of "loop" materials are fibrous structures, like nonwoven materials. Hook-and-loop fasteners are for example available from Velcro, USA.

Alternatively the first fastening means 18 is an adhesive fastener such as a tape tab, wherein the external surface of opposite belt member 17 may be of a material to which the tape can adhere.

Second fastening means 19 are provided at the lateral edges of the waist portion 12a of the front panel 12 as illustrated in Fig. 1. These second fastening means 19 are mechanical fasteners, such as hook fasteners, button and holes or button loops, or adhesive tape fasteners and are intended to be fastened to the external surface of the belt members 17.

The width of the belt members 17 should be from 5 to 20 cm, preferably from 7 to 15 cm.

The belt members 17 are preferably made from a laminate of a carrier material, which forms the external surface of the belt, and a soft nonwoven, which forms the inside of the

belt which is intended to be in direct contact with the skin of the user.

A suitable nonwoven material can be a spunbond material of e.g. polypropylene or polyethylene fibres. Conjugate fibres may also be used. Another suitable nonwoven
5 material is formed from a carded thermobonded material of e.g. polypropylene, polyester or conjugate fibres.

The external surface of the belt members, for example the carrier material, should be adapted to function as a reception surface for the fastening means 18. In case the
10 fastening means is a hook fastener a nonwoven material may be used as a carrier material. In case the fastening means 18 is a tape tab, a plastic film is suitable as carrier material.

Each belt member 17 comprises at its proximal end adjacent the first body panel 11, an
15 elastic region 17a. Said elastic region 17a may be in the form of an elastic web material such as an elastic film, an elastic nonwoven, an elastic laminate or the like. The elastic laminate may be a laminate between two or more nonwoven layers, two or more film layers or a combination of film and nonwoven layers.

20 Examples of elastic laminates suitable for forming said elastic regions 17a are any elastic laminate known in the art. One group of elastic laminates are so called "stretch-bonded" laminates, in which the elastic layer is stretched in at least one direction before laminating it with one or more inelastic layers. After the tension is removed from the elastic layer it can freely retract to its untensioned state, and the inelastic layer(s) laminated thereto
25 become gathered, giving a three-dimensional puckering.

Another group of elastic laminates are so called "neck bonded" laminates, which refer to laminates in which an elastic material is bonded to a non-elastic material while the non-elastic member is extended under conditions reducing its width or necked. "Neck bonded
30 laminate" refers to a composite material having at least two layers in which one layer is a necked, non-elastic layer and the other layer is an elastic layer. The layers are joined together when the non-elastic layer is in an extended condition.

A further group of elastic laminates are disclosed in for example WO/047488, in which
35 inelastic nonwoven layers are laminated to an elastic film layer, and the laminate is

stretched above the point of failure of the nonwoven materials, so that the inelastic layers break.

5 Examples of elastic laminates are described in EP-B-0 646 062, WO 98/29251, WO 03/000165 and US-A-5,226,992. Examples of commercially available elastic laminates are Fabriflex 306 from Tredegar and PK 6358 from Nordenia.

The elastic regions 17a should have an elasticity of at least 30% as measured in the elasticity test as described below.

10

Alternatively the elastic regions 17a comprises one or more elastic threads or strips contractably affixed between web material layers.

15 In an alternative embodiment only one belt member 17 is provided with an elastic region 17a.

It is preferred that the elastic region 17a does not extend over more than 50% of the length of each belt member, preferably over no more than 40% and more preferably over no more than 30% of the length of each belt member 17. This since the effectiveness of the fastening means 18 and 19 is decreased if attached to an elastic region, since the elastic region may expand and/or contract and thereby weaken the bond between the fastening means and the elastic region. It is further preferred that the active part of the respective elastic region 17a extends over a length, a, of at least 1 cm, preferably at least 2 cm, of each laterally extending belt member 17. The active part, a, of the elastic region 17a refers to the part of the elastic region which has not been made inactive due to bonding to the in-elastic belt members 17. This is shown in Fig. 2. Thus the part of the elastic region 17a overlapping with and bonded to the in-elastic belt members 17 are not included in the active part, a.

30 The belt members 17 are interconnected by a waist band 20 extending in transverse direction, x, along the waist portion of the first body panel 11. The waist band 20 may be of the same material as the belt members 17 or of a different web material.

35 The waist band 20 may be attached to the garment facing side of the first body panel 11, i.e. to the outer coversheet 16, adjacent the waist portion 11a thereof as is shown in Fig. 1

and 2. Alternatively it is attached to the wearer facing side of the first body panel 11, i.e. to the inner coversheet, or between the inner and outer coversheets 15 and 16. The waist band 20 is attached by gluing, ultrasonic welding, thermobonding or other suitable bonding technique to the first body panel 11.

5

A waist elastic member 21 extends in transverse direction, x, along at least part of the waist portion 12a of the second body panel 12. The waist elastic member may be an elastic web material such as an elastic laminate, an elastic film or the like contractably attached between the inner and outer coversheets, to the external side of the outer coversheet or to the wearer facing side of the inner coversheet. Alternatively it comprises two or more elastic threads or strips contractably affixed between the outer and inner coversheets. A corresponding waist elastic member may also be arranged in the waist portion 11a of the first body panel 11.

15 The leg openings are also elasticized, said elastification is usually accomplished by a plurality of elastic members 22, such as elastic threads, which are contractably affixed between the outer and inner coversheets. The garment may also be provided by so called barrier cuffs, in order to provide an improved security against leakage. These barrier cuffs may in some instance replace leg elastics.

20

In the embodiment shown in Fig. 3 the waist band 20 is attached a certain distance inside the distal edge of the waist portion 11a of the first body panel 11, so that a part of said waist portion extends outside the waist band 20 in longitudinal direction, y.

25 In the embodiment shown in Fig. 4 the waist band 20 is attached to the distal edge of the waist portion 11a of the first body panel 11 and extends outside said waist portion in longitudinal direction, y.

When applying the belted garment to a wearer the belt members 17 are wrapped around the waist of the wearer of the garment and fastened together by means of the first fastening means 18. This is illustrated in Fig. 5. The second body panel 12 is then passed between the legs of the wearer and fastened to the outside of the belt members 17 by means of the second fastening means 19 provided at the second body panel 12, as illustrated in Fig. 6.

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In one embodiment of the invention the elastic regions 17a of the belt members 17 are indicated by a contrasting colour, pattern or marking, so as to be readily distinguishable to the user or caregiver for indicating that this region should not be used as an attachment surface for the fastening means 18, 19, for the reasons given above. Alternatively the non-elastic portions of the belt members 17 are indicated with said contrasting colour, pattern or marking for indicating that this region should be used as attachment surface.

Elasticity test

The method measures how an elastic material behaves at repeated load and unload cycles. The sample is stretched to a predetermined elongation and a cyclic movement between 0 and said predetermined elongation is performed. Desired load and unload forces are recorded. The permanent, i.e. remaining, elongation of the relaxed material is measured.

A tensile tester, Lloyd LRX, able to perform cyclic movements and equipped with a printer/plotter or software presentation is used. The sample is prepared by cutting it to a width of 25 mm and a length that is preferably 20 mm longer than the distance between the clamps in the tensile tester.

The tensile tester is calibrated according to the apparatus instructions. The parameters needed for the test (load and unload forces) are adjusted to:

- Crosshead speed: 500 mm/min
- Clamp distance: 50 mm
- Preload: 0.05 N

25

The sample is placed in the clamps according to the marks and it is made sure that the sample is centred and fastened perpendicularly in the clamps. The tensile tester is started and three cycles between 0 and the predetermined elongation, equal to the highest defined 1st load, are performed. Before the last cycle, the sample is relaxed for 1 minute, then the permanent elongation is measured by stretching the sample until a force of 0.1 N is detected and the elongation is read.

The permanent elongation after relaxation should be less than 10% and is measured by the method above. Thus an elasticity of 30% is defined as that the laminate should have a permanent relaxation after elongation of less than 10% after being exerted to an

elongation of 30% in the tensile tester above. An elongation of 30% means an elongation to a length that is 30% longer than the initial length of the sample.

- 5 Although only a few exemplary embodiments have been described in detail above, those skilled in the art will readily understand that many modifications are possible and that any such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this invention, which is defined in the following claims.

Claims

- 5 1. An absorbent garment such as a diaper and an incontinence guard, said garment having a longitudinal (y) and a transverse direction (x) and comprises a first body panel (16), a second body panel (17) and a crotch portion (13) there between, each of said first and second body panels having a waist portion (11a), said garment further being provided with opposed laterally extending belt members (17) being adapted to be wrapped around the waist of the wearer of the garment and
- 10 fastened together by means of first fastening means (18), the second body panel (12) at its waist portion being provided with second fastening means (19) adapted to be fastened to the belt members (17), in such a way that the garment will assume a pant-like shape, *characterized in* that said belt members (17) are interconnected by a waist band (20) extending in transverse direction (x) along the
- 15 waist portion of the first body panel, and that at least one of the belt members (17) comprises an elastic region (17a) located at the proximal end of said belt member adjacent said waist band (20), said elastic region (17a) extends over no more than 50% of the length of the respective belt member (17).
- 20 2. The absorbent garment according to claim 1, *characterized in* that said elastic region (17a) extends over no more than 40% and preferably over no more than 30% of the length of the respective belt member.
- 25 3. The absorbent garment according to claim 2, *characterized in* that said elastic region (17a) extends over a length (a) of at least 1 cm, preferably at least 2 cm, of the respective belt member (17).
- 30 4. The absorbent garment according to claim any of the preceding claims, *characterized in* that the elastic region (17a) comprises an elastic film or an elastic laminate.
- 35 5. The absorbent garment according to any of claims 1-3, *characterized in* that the elastic region (17a) comprises one or more elastic threads or strips contractibly affixed between web materials.

5 6. The absorbent garment according to any of the preceding claims, *characterized in* that the waist band (20) extends over and is attached in a face-to-face relationship to the waist portion of the first body panel (11) either to the garment facing side thereof or to the wearer facing side thereof or between material layers contained in the first body panel.

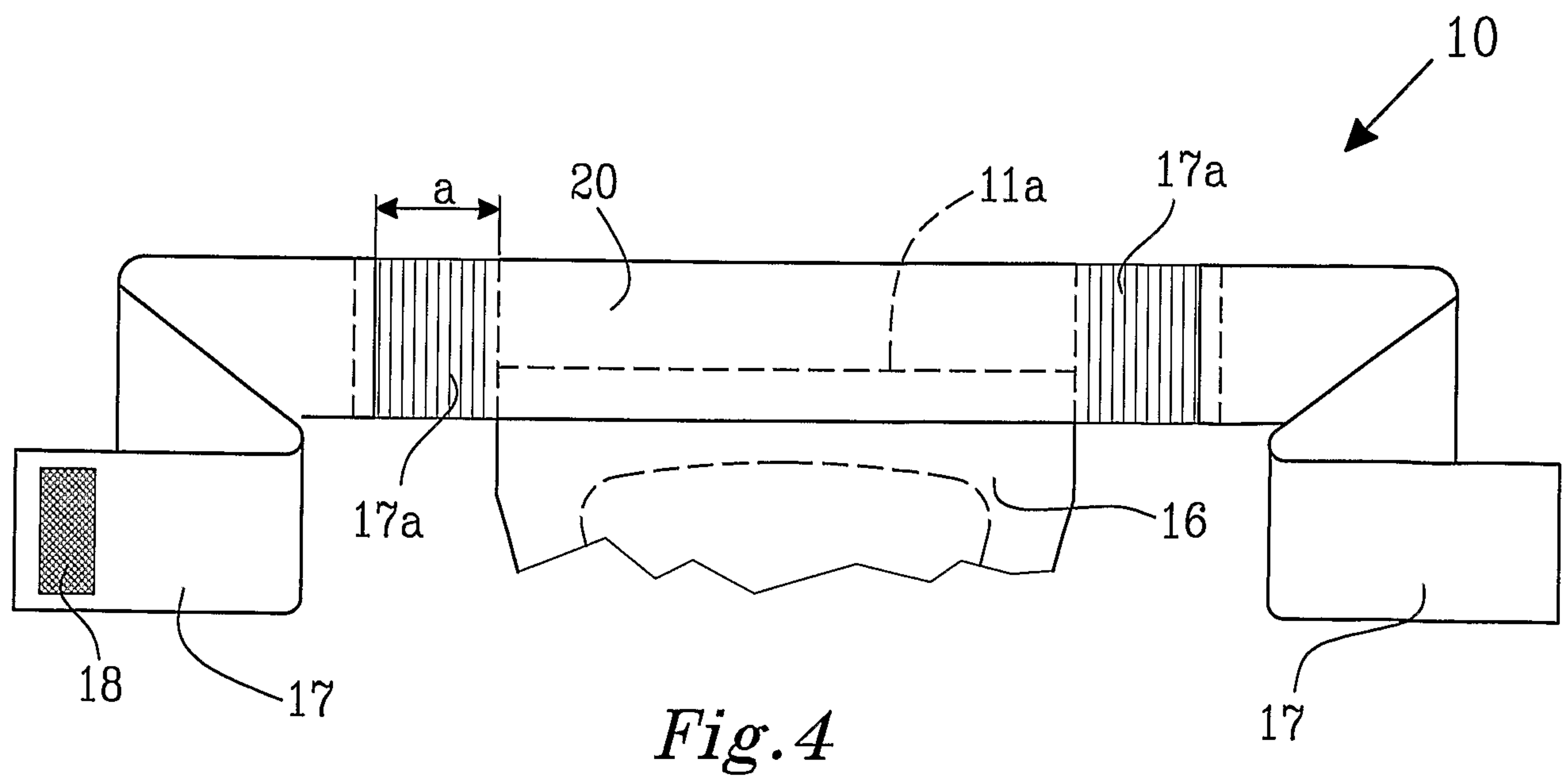
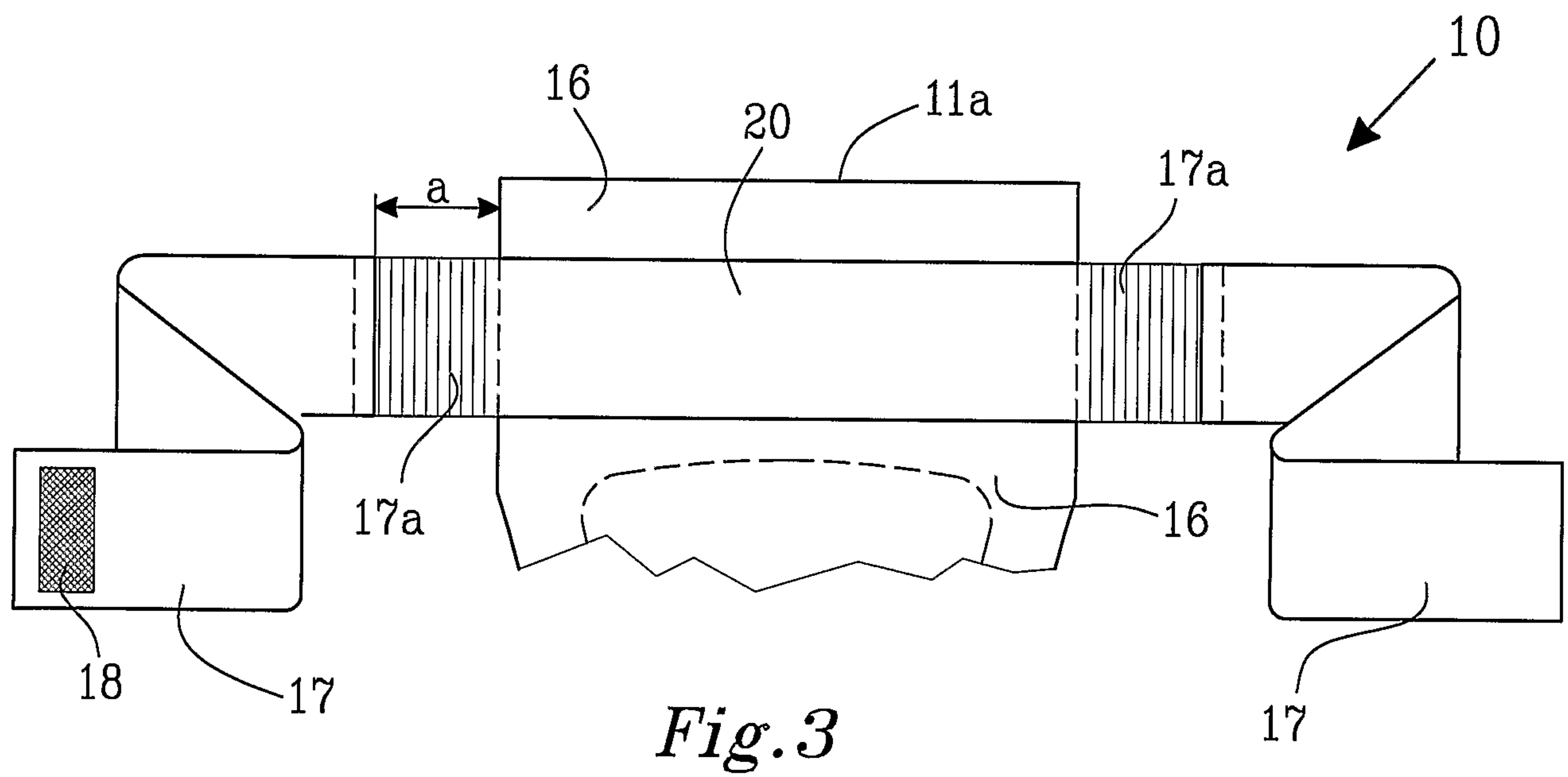
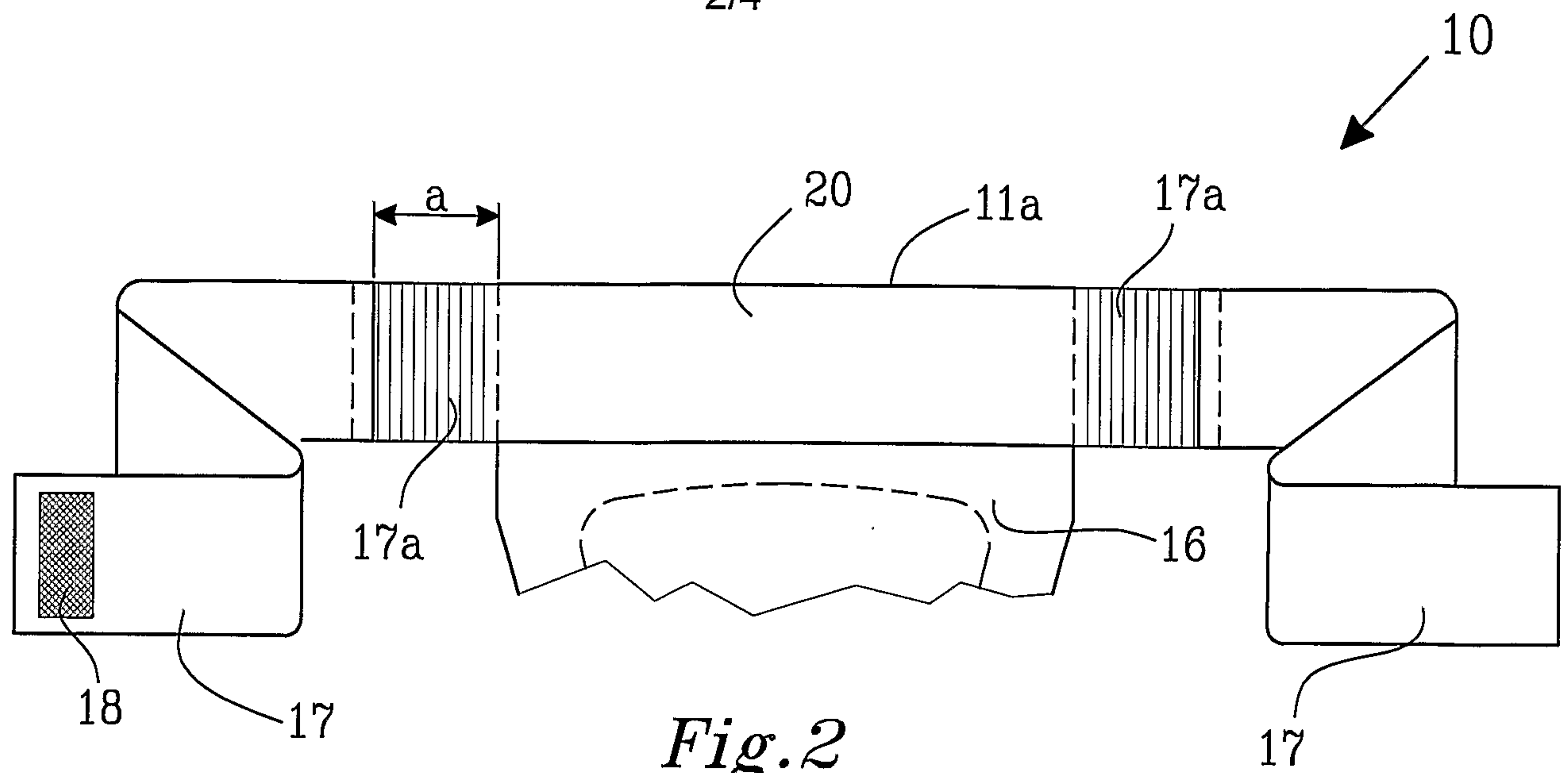
10 7. The absorbent garment according to any of claims 1-5, *characterized in* that the waist band (20) is attached to a distal edge of the waist portion (11a) of the first body panel (11) so as to form a longitudinal (y) extension of said waist portion.

15 8. The absorbent garment according to any of the preceding claims, *characterized in* that the first and second fastening means (18, 19) comprise hook members and that at least part of the external surface of the belt members (17) facing away from the wearer's body is of a material adapted to act as a loop material engaging with said hook members.

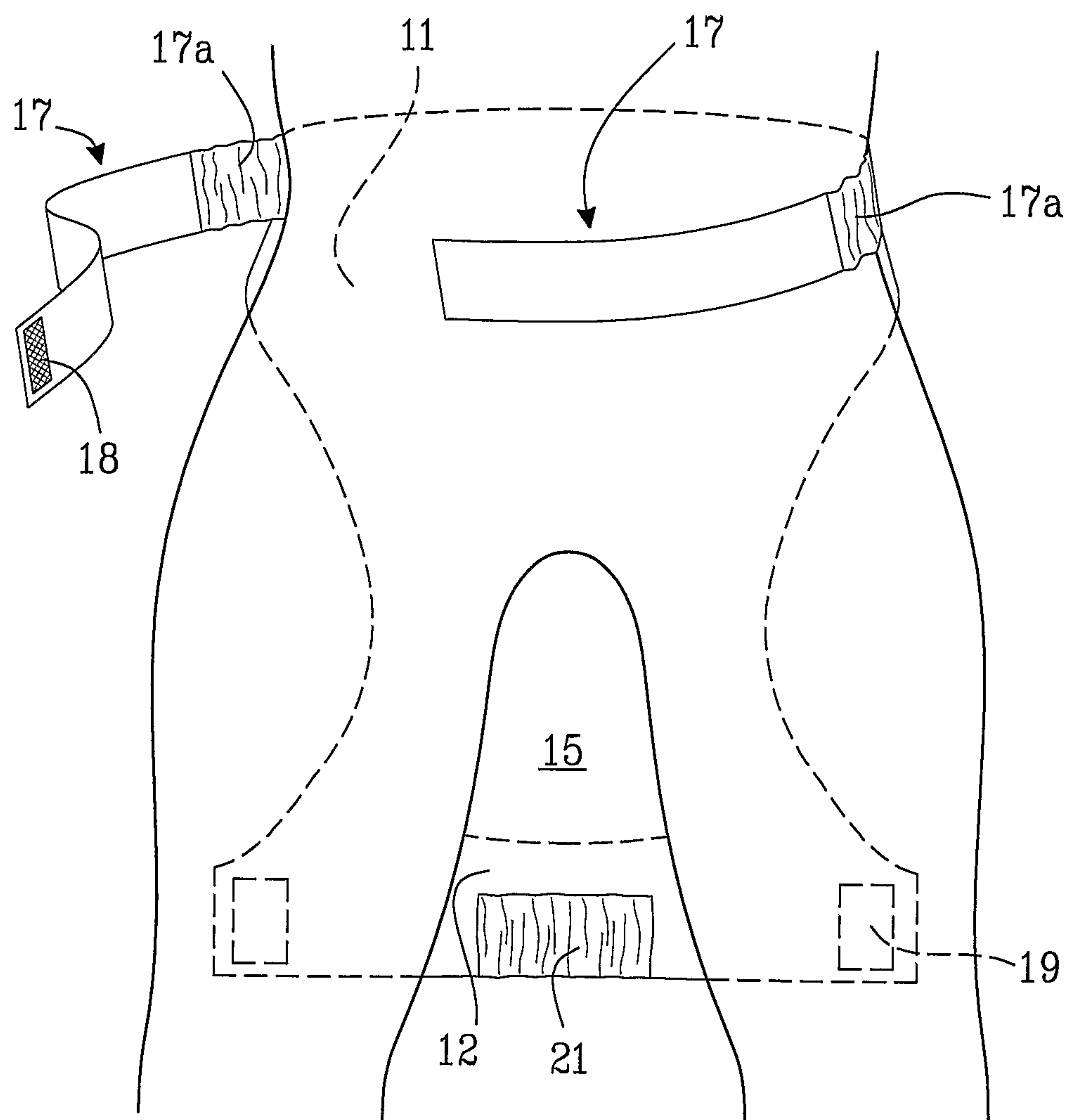
20 9. The absorbent garment according to any of the preceding claims, *characterized in* that the elastic region (17a) of the respective belt member (17) is provided with a contrasting colour, pattern or marking so as to be distinguishable from the rest of the belt member, or alternatively that said rest of the belt member is provided with a contrasting colour, pattern or marking so as to be distinguishable from said elastic region (17a).

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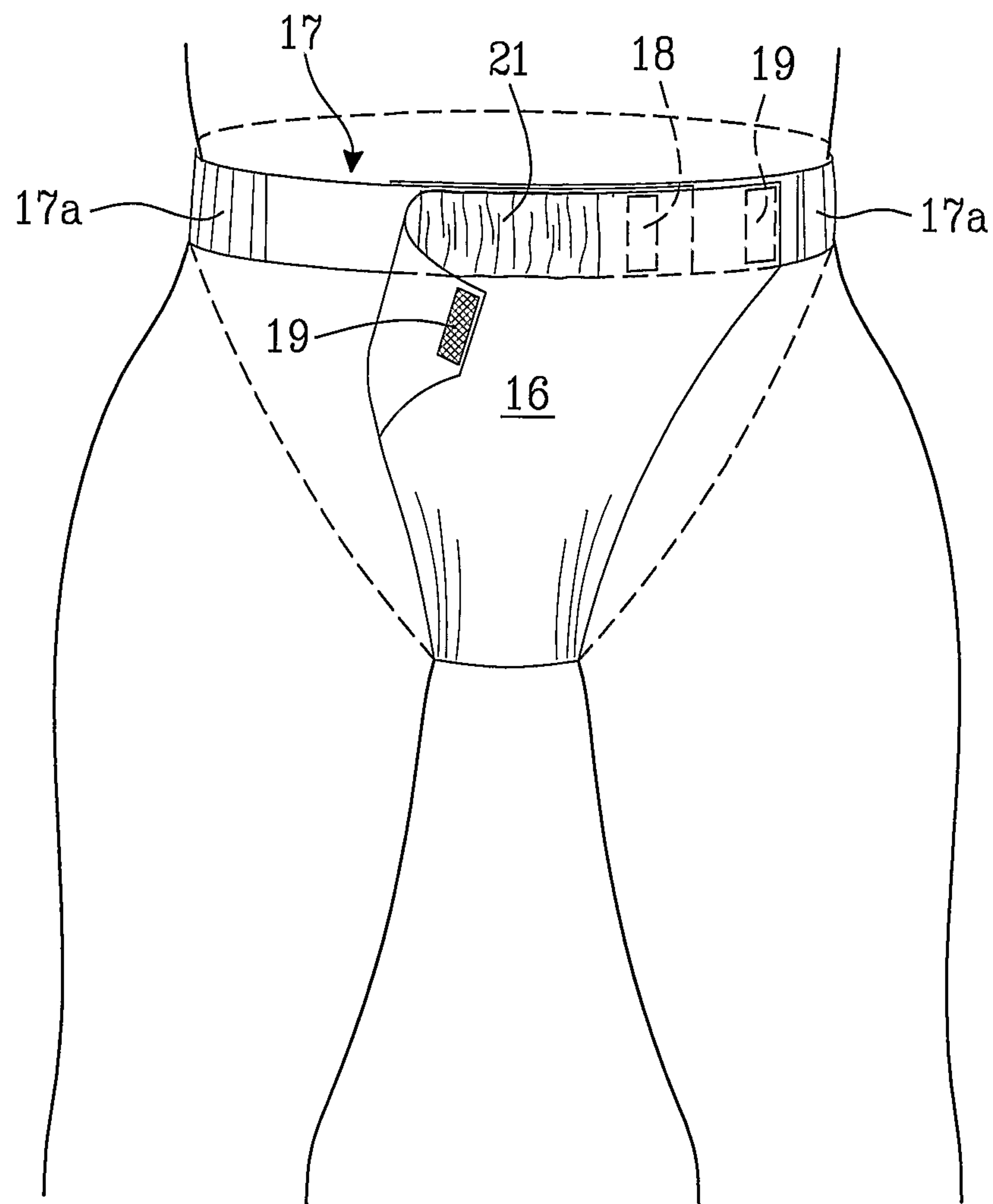
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*Fig. 5*

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*Fig. 6*

