

[54] **HAND HELD FOOD HOLDER AND DISPENSER**

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**Related U.S. Application Data**

[63] Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 785,241, Dec. 19, 1968, abandoned.

[52] U.S. Cl. ....222/205, 99/137, 128/222, 222/386, 222/393

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[58] Field of Search.....206/56 C, 9; 220/93; 30/123, 125, 141; 222/95, 105, 205, 206, 386, 207, 210, 393; 99/137; 128/222, 223, 252, 261

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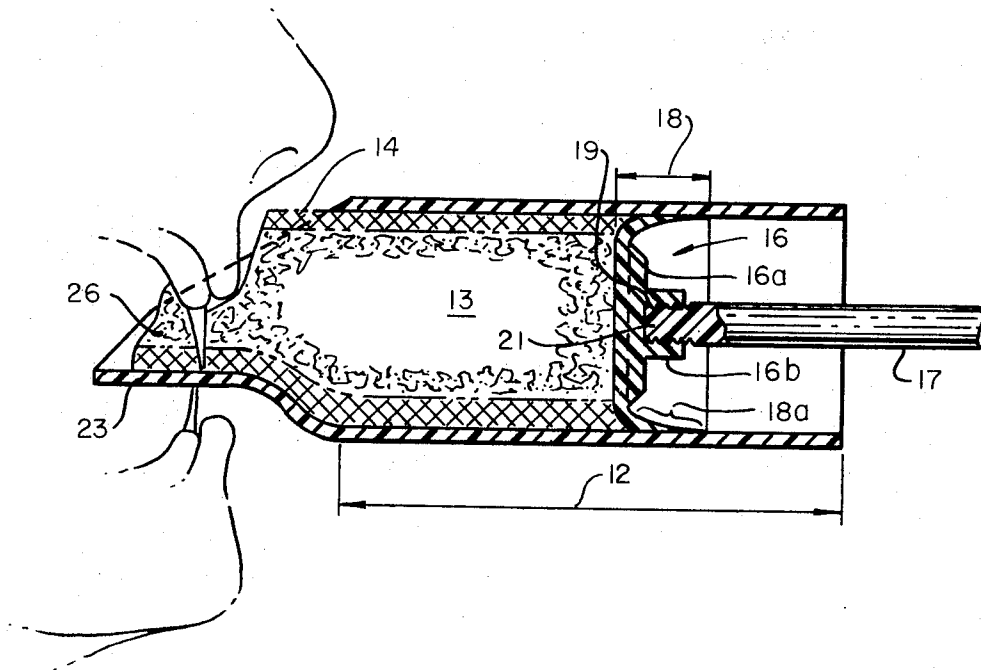
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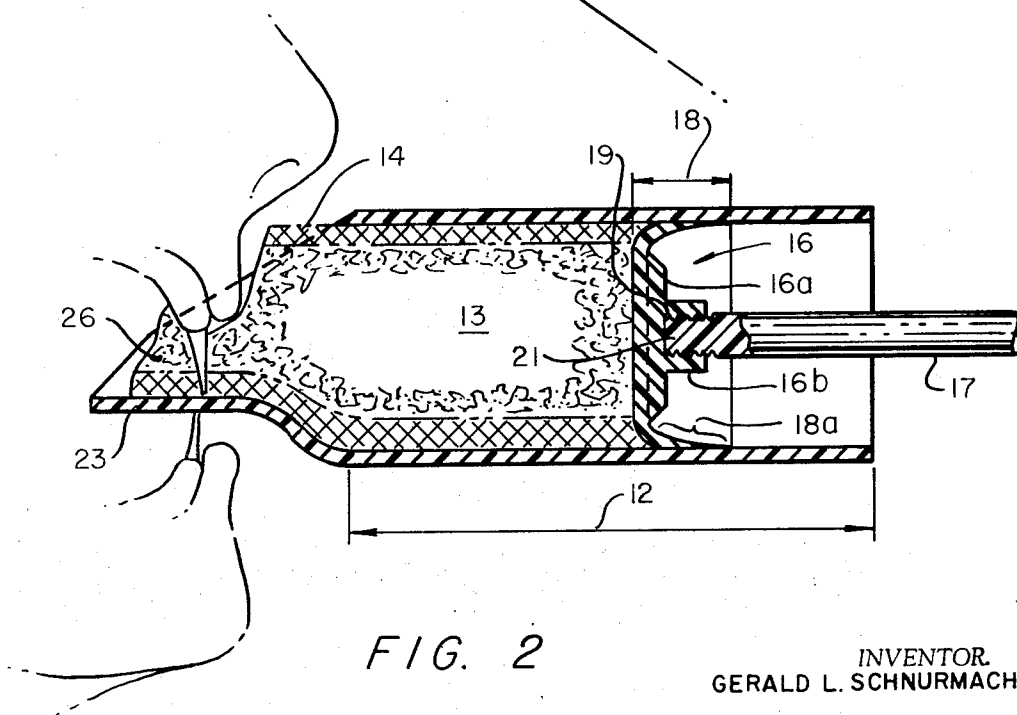
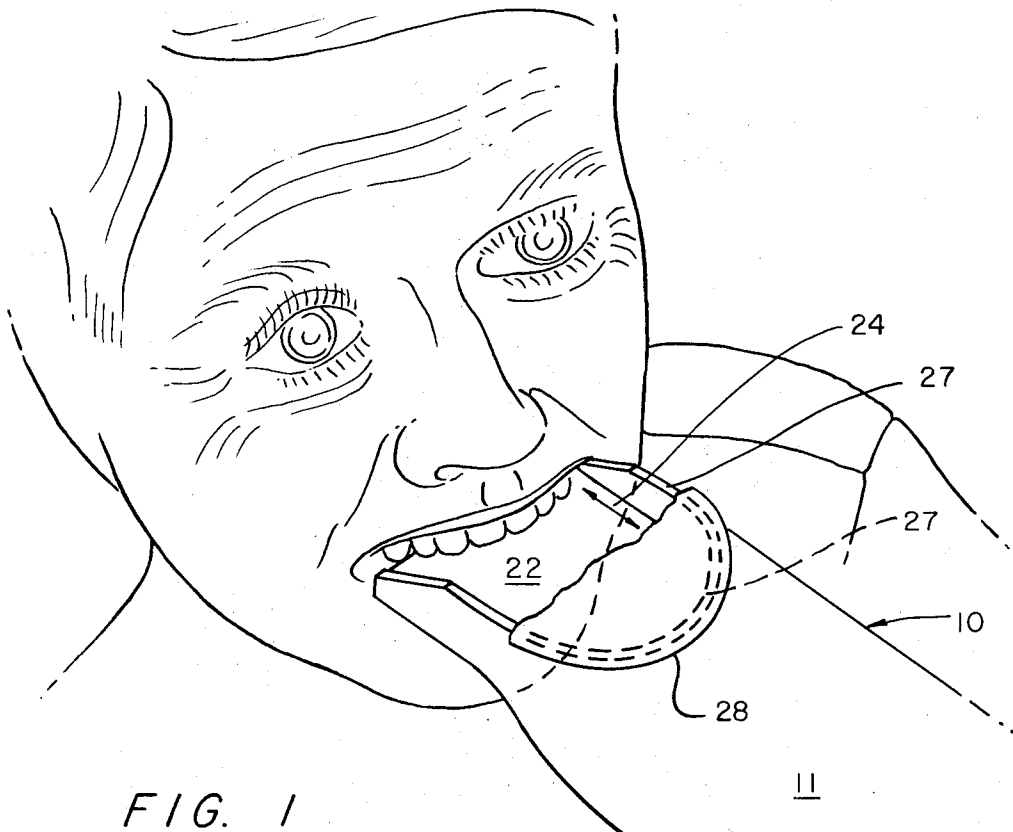
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A generally cylindrical food holder utilizing a plunger at one end driven by a stick to force the contents out the other end. the discharge end of the holder is characterized by a transversely extending sill adapted to be received within the mouth of the consumer to permit the consumer to bite against it while food is supported on it in his mouth. At the lateral side edges of the sill, upwardly extending wall portions serve to confine the bite of food supported on the sill so as to preclude leakage or spilling of fluids from the regions at the corners of the consumer's mouth. In one embodiment a deformable compliant bag is carried within the body of the holder, the upper edge of the bag being secured at the region between the body of the holder and the element forming the serving sill.

**5 Claims, 9 Drawing Figures**

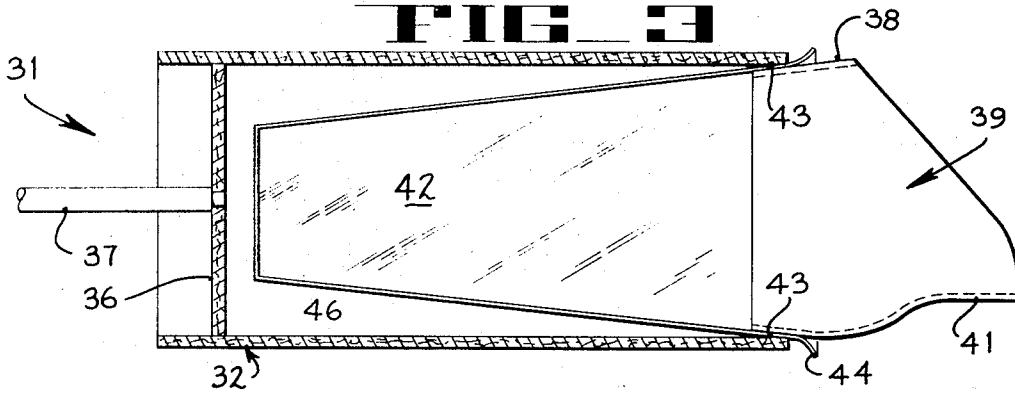




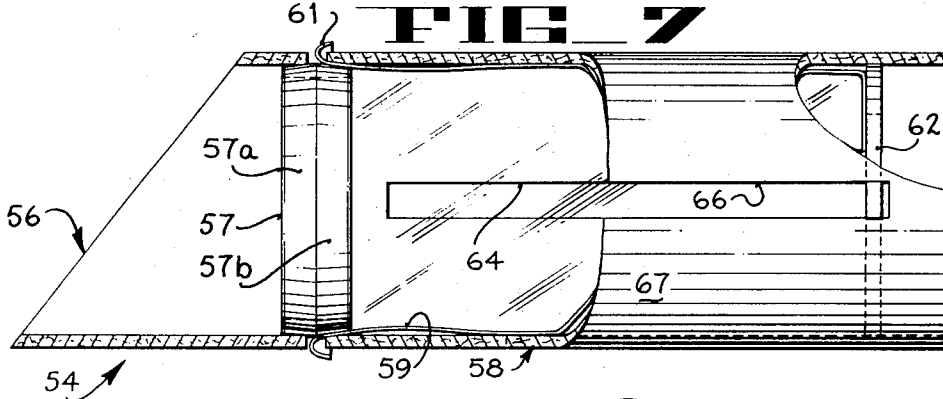
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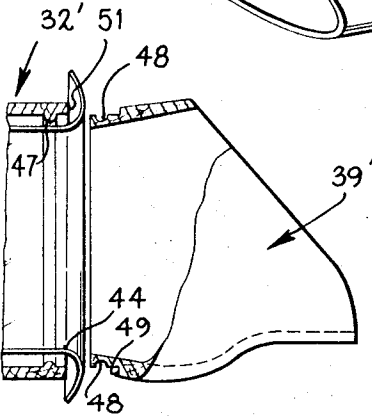
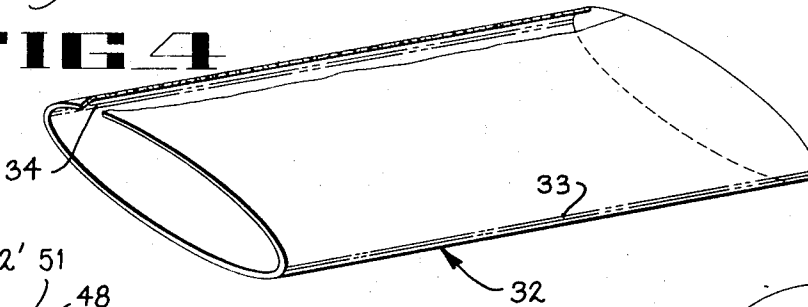
**FIG 3**



**FIG 7**

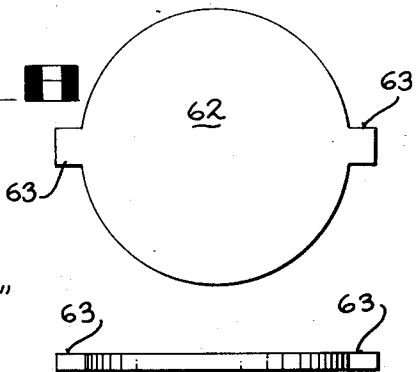


**FIG 4**

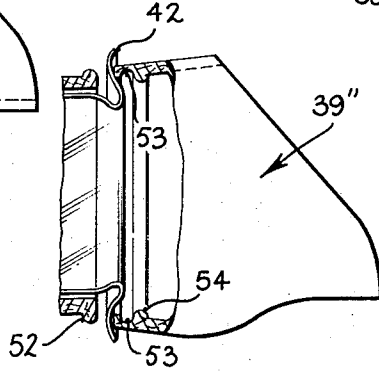


**FIG 5**

**FIG 8**



**FIG 9**



**FIG 6**

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**HAND HELD FOOD HOLDER AND DISPENSER****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application is a continuation-in-part of copending application, Ser. No. 785,241, filed Dec. 19, 1968, and entitled as above, now abandoned.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

This invention pertains to a food holder and dispenser of a type adapted to be held in the hand of the consumer while his other hand is used to forceably discharge the contents of the holder to be eaten.

Heretofore, food holders of a type wherein a plunging element is disposed for pushing the food contents of a generally cylindrical container out of an end thereof for consumption have been characterized by problems involved in being able to consume the food without spilling or leaking juices, sauces or melting liquids thereof so that a consumer must remain quite vigilant and alert in order to avoid getting portions of the contents on his clothes and apparel.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AND OBJECTS**

According to the present invention, a hand held food holder and dispenser of the foregoing general type has been provided whereby a bite of food may be taken by the consumer while it lies within the container. Thus, a biting zone has been provided wherein the bite of food may be positioned within the mount of the consumer while side walls bound the edges of the biting zone at the corners of the mouth of the consumer. A generally broad flat biting platform portion of the device serves to cooperate with the teeth of the consumer to permit the bite to be severed from the remainder of the product in the container. In addition, a hand held food holder and dispenser has been provided wherein the biting platform portion is formed as a portion of a separate element engageable with the cylindrical body of the container. A compliant bag is disposed within the container for holding food in the bag. One end of the bag is sealed and the other end of the bag is open and secured in the region of the open end of the container.

It is a general object of the present invention to provide an improved food holder and dispenser of the hand held type for individual consumption of food therefrom.

It is another object of the invention to provide a food holder and dispenser device of a type whereby as food is forceably discharged from the container, it will be disposed in an appropriate position to aid the consumer in biting off an appropriate portion to be consumed while, at the same time, limiting the possibilities for leakage or spilling of liquids associated with the food contained within the device.

It is another object of the invention to provide a food holder and dispenser of the above type suitable for use with foods containing liquids of a relatively thin consistency, such as gravies, sauces and the like, as would be likely spilled and difficult to eat from a hand held food holder device.

A consumer eating from the food holder as disclosed herein can consume products of a type not normally merchandized in the foregoing style, such as ravioli, manicotti, tamales, enchiladas, chile and the like,

characterized by highly fluid sauces, and handle them with confidence since the likelihood of spilling at the corners of the mouth of the consumer has been minimized.

It is another object of the invention to provide a food holder and dispenser of the above type wherein the food to be eaten is separately contained within a complaint material so as to be capable of being independently heated, inserted into the food holder and dispenser, and subsequently utilized merely by pushing the sealed end of the bag toward the open end of the dispenser.

These and other objects of the invention will be more readily apparent from the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawing.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING**

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing a food holder and dispenser according to the invention, as disposed during consumption of food therefrom;

FIG. 2 is an elevation view, in section, taken along the center line of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side elevation view of a hand held food holder and dispenser assembly according to another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the body element of the assembly shown in FIG. 3 in flattened condition;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged detail section view showing another embodiment for means to engage the body portion of the assembly shown in FIG. 3 to the serving element attached thereto;

FIG. 6 is an enlarged detail section view showing another embodiment for means to engage the body portion of the assembly shown in FIG. 3 to the serving element attached thereto;

FIG. 7 is a side elevation view, partially broken away for clarity, of a hand held food holder and dispenser assembly according to another embodiment of the invention;

FIGS. 8 and 9 are respectively plan and front elevation views in enlarged detail showing a semi-rigid disc utilized in the embodiment shown in FIG. 7.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

In general, as will be described in detail further below, there is provided herein a hand held food holder and dispenser unit 10 for individual consumption of food contained therein. The dispenser comprises, generally, an elongated cylindrical food container adapted to be held in the hand while a plunger assembly is operated by the other hand of the consumer to forceably urge the contents of the container outwardly through one end thereof. A biting zone is formed at the latter end and disposed to receive the emerging food in a manner whereby a transversely extending semi-rigid platform or still supports the food in the mouth of the consumer. Upwardly formed bounding lateral wall portions are laterally spaced to be disposed at the corners of the mouth of the consumer and serve to retain the food from spilling from these regions as a bite of food is taken from the holder.

Referring to the drawing, the holder and dispenser unit 10 comprises a relatively long cylindrical container

portion 12 for holding an edible commodity, such as the food 13. Container portion 10 merges with an un-constricted delivery portion 15 open at one end for discharging food 13.

As shown herein, the food 13 forming the contents of unit 10 has been represented as a generally cylindrically shaped noodle material 14 stuffed with suitable ingredients, such as meat and the like.

The material of food container 11 is preferably liquid proof and semi-rigid whereby it will retain its integrity, shape and size even when subjected to cooking or heating temperatures in order to permit the contents of the unit to be cooked or heated even while contained therein.

Means for urging food out of the open end of unit 10 comprises the plunger assembly 16 slidably movably along and within cylinder portion 12. An elongated rigid handle 17 is attached thereto and adapted to be gripped by the hand of the consumer for moving plunger assembly 16 to discharge food from the container.

Thus, plunger assembly 16 has been formed with a diaphragm 18 having a semi-rigid central portion 16a coaxially disposed within cylinder portion 12. The central portion is sufficiently rigid to transmit forces applied by handle 17 to assembly 16. Thus, handle 17 has been secured to and acts upon the central portion 16a. Portion 16a has been stiffened in its central section by means of the thicker central portion to which a cylindrically hollow boss portion 16b has also been formed. Preferably, diaphragm 18 and portions 16a and 16b may be molded from a suitable plastic material to provide a unitary element. The end 21 of handle 17 is coaxially lodge within portion 16b and engages teeth 19 formed interiorly of portion 16b.

Diaphragm 18 includes an outer marginal portion of a resilient deformable character 18a which is deformed to extend substantially coaxially of cylinder portion 12 and in continuous sealing engagement with respect thereto in order to provide a continuously sealed, movable end wall serving to contain fluids without leakage. Thus, between the wiping surfaces of portions 18a and the interior wall surfaces of cylinder portion 12 there will be a fully sealed wiping action. Accordingly, it is preferable, within the limits of the economies of the circumstances, to employ a non-wettable type of plastic material for diaphragm 18 capable of withstanding the heat of cooking and reheating temperatures.

The open end of the holder and dispenser unit 10 includes a biting zone 22 to facilitate biting into portions of the emerging food thereat while the bit of food is positioned in the mouth of the consumer even while it also remains partially within the container.

Thus, the biting zone 22 includes a transversely disposed semi-rigid platform portion 23 adapted to be received in the mouth of the consumer and serving to form a biting surface cooperating with the teeth of the consumer while underlying the emerging food.

Upwardly formed wall portions 24 bound the lateral edges of platform 23 and serve to form a continuation of the side walls of the cylinder portion 12 in order to preclude spilling or leakage of food from the regions at the corners of the consumer's mouth while eating.

Thus, the lateral spacing between side wall portions 24 correspond substantially to the average spacing

between the corners of the mouth of the usual consumer.

The biting zone 22 is open for access from above to permit the consumer's upper teeth to move downwardly into the zone 22 to platform 23 while platform 23 is disposed within the consumer's mouth, a bite 26 of food (FIG. 2) may therefore be bitten off with comparative ease.

Finally, the bounding edge 27 of the open end of unit 10 forms a relatively wide portion adapted to constitute a sealing surface for attaching a sheet of sealing material laid across the opening. Thus, suitable thin, plastic adherent materials may be sealed to the edge 27 whereby the contents of unit 10 will be protected from the outside surroundings until the sheet is stripped away at the time of consumption.

Only a portion of such a sealing sheet 28 or cover has been represented herein attached to edge 27. It is to be understood, however, that during consumption, this sheet 28 would quite likely be entirely stripped away and no such portion would remain.

From the foregoing, it will be readily apparent that there has been provided an improved food holder and dispenser for individual consumption of food whereby the possibility of spilling highly liquid sauces and the like while eating from such a dispenser has been minimized.

It is further apparent that a food holder and dispenser of the foregoing type can be quite suitable for cooking or heating the food directly therein and merchandizing the cooked food in this manner.

While a right cylindrical container portion 12 has been shown as preferred, it is intended that the term "cylindrical" as used herein defines other hollow bodies including those having rectangular cross-sections.

According to another embodiment shown in FIG. 3, a food holder and dispenser assembly 31 comprises a generally cylindrical body member 32 shown as a flattened "blank" in FIG. 4. Body member 32 is preferably constructed of semi-rigid foldable material such as a suitable paper product of the type commonly employed with dairy products or other food dispensing cartons.

Body member 32 includes lines of weakness 33, 34 on opposite sides of member 32 whereby body member 32 can be flattened relatively compactly for shipment and compact storage.

In FIG. 3, body member 32 has been expanded. At the left end of body member 32 (as shown in FIG. 3), there has been provided a plunger consisting of a rod 37 and disc 36 disposed within the body to retain the cylindrical shape of the body at the left end. Body member 32 is retained in a cylindrical configuration at its right hand end by the annular base 38 or seat of a detachable serving element 39. Said base or seat 38 is provided with a high friction exterior surface to prevent disengagement of the mating pieces shown in FIG. 3.

Serving element 39 is given a configuration as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 with respect to the earlier described embodiment above whereby a sill 41 serves to support food in a position convenient for the consumer to bite downwardly against the semi-rigid sill.

In addition to the above, a compliant bag 42 is disposed within body 32 for holding the food. The bag is sealed at the left end as shown in FIG. 3 and is open at the right hand end which is secured to the right hand

end of body 32 by engagement between the outer surface of base 38 and the inner edge 43 of body 32. Thus, the edge margin 44 of the open end of bag 42 is disposed in pinched relation between serving element 39 and body 32.

Accordingly, when the consumer holding the assembly shown in FIG. 3 desires to consume the product contained within bag 42, it is a simple matter merely to push upon rod 37 and thereby compress bag 42 longitudinally along body 32 as the food emerges outwardly of the container via serving element 39. In order to accommodate folding of the sides of bag 42 during advancing movement of disc 36, bag 42 has been tapered to provide a correspondingly tapered peripheral spacing 46 forming a gradually diminishing zone around bag 42 to accommodate the wrinkles formed in its outer surface.

A suitable material for bag 42 can be found among the various plastics available on the market, such as polypropylene and others. For example, a suitable collapsible plastic bag can be formed to hold food very nicely with a wall thickness on the order of 0.001 inch of polypropylene whereby the bag may be first loaded with the food to be consumed, then sealed and warmed in hot water or otherwise heated as by microwave oven and then subsequently inserted into body member 32 to be retained in place by inserting the serving element 39 into the inner edge 43 of body member 32.

From the foregoing, it will be readily evident that there is provided a hand held food holder and dispenser having a number of advantages. The disc 36 is not required to make a liquid-tight seal with the inner side wall of body member 32 inasmuch as the food remains contained within the sealed bag 42. In addition, the food can be readily prepared and handled separately in the bags 42 for insertion at the proper time into the food holder and then delivered to a consumer.

According to another embodiment, there is shown in FIG. 5 an exploded view of another means for engaging the upper edge margin 44 of bag 42. In this arrangement, there is provided an exterior coupling between the serving element 39' and body member 32'. Body member 32' is formed with an interior rolled end edge 47 which serves to snap into the annular groove 48 so as to form a tight fit therewith and capture the upper edge margin 44 of bag 42 therebetween. A shoulder 49 serves to abut the upper edge 51 of body member 32' and thereby form a tight seal with the edge margin 44 captured therein.

According to another embodiment shown best in the exploded view of FIG. 6, an improved seal is formed with the upper edge margin of bag 42 whereby the serving element 39'' slips over the outer rolled edge 52 and is snap-locked in place by the mating action of the annular groove 53 backed up by the internal shoulder 54. As in the previous examples, the upper edge margin 44 of bag 42 is captured between the serving element and body member 32.

Referring to another embodiment shown in FIGS. 7, 8 and 9, there is provided a food holder and dispenser assembly 54 which includes a serving element 56 of the type described above with the exception that the element 56 is formed of deformable resilient material such as a suitable grade of low to medium density polyethylene which will be formed to provide a biting

platform which conforms to the consumer's teeth when pressure is applied to it during the biting process. When the consumer opens his mouth, the end piece will resume its original shape and in this manner the food on the sill provided by element 56 serves to retain and continue to surround food being urged out of assembly 54.

An annular "doughnut-shaped" coupling 57 of substantially rigid material serves to provide rigidity to the otherwise somewhat pliable material of element 56. Ring 57 further serves to join element 56 to the upper end of body member 58 formed of material as noted above with respect to body member 32.

Accordingly, coupling ring 57 includes tapered conical friction surfaces 57a, 57b disposed on opposite ends to provide a maximum diameter intermediate element 56 and body member 58, one of the tapered surfaces 57a, 57b engaging element 56. The outer end margin 61 of bag 59, corresponding to bag 42, is captured between the other tapered surface of ring 57 and the outer end of the container or body member 58.

Means for urging the food outwardly of assembly 54 consists of the generally circular shaped disc 62 formed with radial tabs 63. A pair of elongated slots 64, 66 is formed through and along the side wall of body member 58 at diametrically opposite positions. The disc within the container is disposed with tabs 63 extending through slots 64, 66 to project beyond the outer surface 67 of body member 58 whereby the consumer can engage the tabs 63 and move disc 62 along the container and in this manner compress bag 59 so as to discharge its contents via element 56.

I claim:

1. A hand held food holder and dispenser for individual consumption of food therefrom comprising an elongated generally cylindrical body forming a container adapted to be held in the hand of a consumer as food within the body is urged outwardly through an end of the container, a serving element having an annular base readily releasably engaging the margin at said end to form a continuation of the container and provide a biting zone to facilitate biting into portions of the emerging food thereat, said serving element in a horizontal disposition having a semi-rigid transverse bottom portion for receiving said food thereon and side walls forming a continuation of the side walls of said body, said zone being open and unobstructed from above said bottom to permit said bottom portion to be inserted into the mouth of a consumer for biting against same as it carries food thereon, the side walls of said element being sufficiently spaced to prevent dripping and leakage of juices at the sides of the mouth, a complaint bag within the container for holding food therein, said bag being sealed at one end within the container, the other end of the bag being open and secured to the first named end of the container, and means for pushing against the sealed end of the bag to discharge the contents thereof via the other end.

2. A hand held food holder and dispenser according to claim 1 wherein the outer end margin of the bag is disposed and retained in pinched relation between said container and said element.

3. A hand held food holder and dispenser according to claim 1 wherein the last named said means comprises a pair of elongated slots formed through and

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along the side wall of said container, and a disc within the container having radial tabs disposed to extend through the slots to project beyond the outer surface of said container whereby the consumer can engage the tabs and move the disc along the container to compress the bag and urge the food therefrom.

4. A hand held food holder and dispenser according to claim 1 further including an annular ring formed with tapered conical friction surfaces disposed in opposite directions to provide a maximum diameter intermediate its ends, said ring being interposed between said element and container, one of said tapered friction surfaces engaging said element, and the outer end mar-

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gin of said bag being captured between the other tapered friction surface and the inner surface of the outer end of the container.

5. A hand held food holder and dispenser according to claim 1 wherein said cylindrical body is formed of a foldable material with lines of weakness forming fold lines extending along the sides of said body, a plunger within the body serving to retain the cylindrical shape of the body at one end, and the annular base of said serving element serving to retain the cylindrical shape of the body at the other end.

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