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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **KUVER
DESIGNS PTY LTD** [AU/AU]; 24 Waimea Avenue,
Sandy Bay, TAS 7005 (AU).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **ALLISON-ROGERS,
Susan, Margaret** [AU/AU]; 2 Binney Court, Sandy Bay,
TAS 7005 (AU).

(74) Agent: **GRIFFITH HACK**; Level 3, 509 St. Kilda Road,
Melbourne, VIC 3004 (AU).

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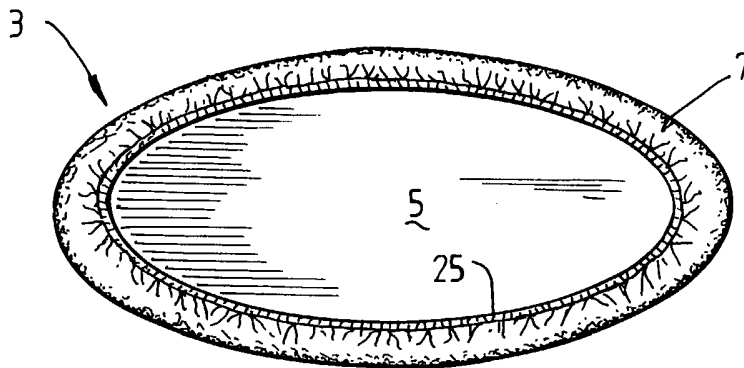
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(54) Title: POUCH FOR ABSORBENT PADS



(57) Abstract: A pouch for an absorbent pad is disclosed. The pouch (3) comprises a sheet of waterproof fabric formed into a pouch shape with a base (5) and a side wall (7) that extends from the base and is inwardly turned and defines an opening to insert a pad into the pouch so that the pouch covers the back and sides of the pad. In use, an assembly of the pouch and the pad received in the pouch can be positioned in a crotch region of an adult, child or baby in an operative position of the pad and with the pouch and the skin of the person enclosing the pad and forming a barrier to leakage from the pad.

- 1 -

POUCH FOR ABSORBENT PADS

The present invention relates to a pouch for absorbent pads.

5

The term "absorbent pads" is understood herein to include absorbent pads that can be used by babies, women during menstruation, and adults and children during periods of incontinence.

10

The term "absorbent pads" includes pads that are compostable and flushable.

The term "absorbent pads" also includes pads that are non-compostable and non-flushable.

15

The term "absorbent pads" also includes pads that are reusable. In this context the term "pad" is understood herein to include cloth nappies.

20

The applicant is aware of a number of products in the patent literature that are designed to operably house absorbent pads to facilitate use of the pads by adults, children and babies. US patents 4,664,663 and 6,764,477 are two examples of patents that relate to such products. The products known to the applicant tend to be relatively complex constructions that are made from a number of different components that are assembled together, typically by being glued together.

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30

The present invention is another such product for housing absorbent pads.

In general terms, the product of the present invention is in the form of a pouch that is formed from a single waterproof member and thereby provides a high level of security against leakage for adults, children and

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- 2 -

babies using adsorbent pads and simplifies handling of the pads during and after pad changeover.

In addition, the pouch of the present invention makes it possible for the "absorbent pads" to be very simple and without the need for built-in waterproof backing, elastic or fasteners (as used in traditional one piece disposable nappies, sanitary pads and incontinence pads or garments). This in turn makes it possible for the "absorbent pads" to be simply constructed from materials which allow it to be both flushable and or compostable, and thus enabling the disposable part of the system to be easily and economically 'recycled'. The resultant product is a two part system which is more ecologically friendly.

According to the present invention there is provided a pouch for an absorbent pad, the pad having a back, front and sides, the pouch comprising a waterproof member formed into a pouch shape with a base and a side wall that extends from the base and is inwardly turned and defines an opening to insert a pad into the pouch so that the pouch covers the back and sides of the pad whereby, in use, an assembly of the pouch and the pad received in the pouch can be positioned in a crotch region of an adult, child or baby in an operative position of the pad and with the pouch and the skin of the person enclosing the pad and forming a barrier to leakage from the pad.

The use of a single waterproof member to form the pouch avoids the disadvantage of known products that require the use of adhesives or other fastening options to assemble together separate components that form the products. The use of a single waterproof member also facilitates forming the member into the pouch shape. A pouch shape is advantageous because, as the term "pouch" is used herein, a pouch has a structure that defines a discrete space into which a pad can be inserted. The

- 3 -

construction of many of the known products is such that significantly more effort is required to open up the product to allow placement of a pad into the product.

5 The pouch may be re-usable.

 Preferably the pouch comprises a base that has the same general shape as the pad.

10 The side wall may be elasticised to pull the side wall inwardly thereby to form the above pouch shape.

 By way of further example, the pouch may be formed by heat-forming the waterproof member thereby to
15 form the above pouch shape.

 The heat forming process may comprise heating a sheet of the waterproof member and positioning the heated sheet into a die that defines the pouch shape and applying
20 a vacuum to force the heated sheet against the die wall.

 Preferably the side wall of the pouch is formed so that the pouch has a curved shape along its length and is thereby more adapted by virtue of the curved shape to
25 be positioned in the crotch region of the adult, child, or baby.

 Preferably the side wall of the pouch defines an opening that is smaller than the surface area of the front
30 of the pad so that, in use, the pad has to be manipulated to be positioned in the pouch.

 Preferably a free edge of the side wall of the pouch that contacts the skin of the adult, child, or baby
35 in use of the pouch is formed from a "soft" material to maximise comfort for the adult, child, or baby.

- 4 -

Preferably a free edge of the side wall of the pouch that contacts the skin of the adult, child, or baby in use of the pouch comprises a rounded bead of soft material to maximise comfort for the adult, child, or
5 baby.

The pouch may comprise a means for releasably holding or attaching the pouch to an item of clothing, which may be by way of example an item of underwear in the
10 case of adults and children or outer "pants" in the case of babies.

Preferably the attachment means comprises press-studs or other suitable connection means on the pouch and
15 the item of clothing.

In one particular embodiment it is preferred that the attachment means comprises:

20 (a) a pair of flaps extending from opposite sides of the pouch that can be folded around an item of underwear so that the ends of the flaps overlap to a certain extent; and

25 (b) press-studs or other suitable connection means that can connect the folded flaps together.

30 The pouch may comprise a means for tying or otherwise fastening the pouch around a wearer.

According to the present invention there is also provided an assembly of the above-described pouch and an
35 absorbent pad fitted in the pouch.

- 5 -

The present invention is described further by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, of which:

5 Figure 1 is a top plan view of one embodiment of a pouch in accordance with the present invention;

 Figure 2 is a top plan view of an assembly of the pouch shown in Figure 1 and an absorbent pad located in
10 the pouch;

 Figure 3 is a perspective view of the assembly of the pouch and the pad shown in Figure 2;

15 Figure 4 is a perspective view that illustrates one method of fitting the absorbent pad into the pouch to form the assembly shown in Figure 3;

 Figure 5 is a top plan view of another embodiment
20 of a pouch in accordance with the present invention;

 Figure 6 is a perspective view of the pouch shown in Figure 5 secured to an undergarment;

25 Figure 7 is a top plan view of another, although not the only other possible, embodiment of a pouch in accordance with the present invention;

 Figure 8 is a top plan view illustrating an
30 assembly of the pouch shown in Figure 7 and an absorbent pad located within the pouch;

 Figure 9 is a perspective view illustrating the assembly of the pouch and absorbent pad shown in Figure 8
35 secured to an undergarment;

- 6 -

Figure 10 is a top plan view of another, although not the only other possible, embodiment of a pouch in accordance with the present invention;

5 Figure 11 is a schematic perspective view illustrating how the pouch shown in Figure 10 can be tied to a baby;

10 Figure 12 is a top plan view of another, although not the only other possible, embodiment of a pouch in accordance with the present invention;

15 Figure 13 is a top plan view of another, although not the only other possible, embodiment of a pouch in accordance with the present invention;

20 Figure 14 is a perspective view that illustrates one method of fitting an absorbent pad into the pouch shown in Figure 13;

Figure 15 is a perspective view illustrating the assembly of the pouch and absorbent pad shown in Figure 14 secured to an undergarment; and

25 Figure 16 is a side view of the assembly shown in Figure 15.

30 The embodiment of the pouch 3 shown in Figures 1 to 4 is formed from a single sheet of a waterproof material so that it comprises a base 5 and a side wall 7 that extends upwardly and inwardly from the base 5.

35 The pouch 3 is adapted to snugly receive an absorbent pad 9, with the back and sides of the pad being located in the pouch 3 and the front 11 of the pad facing outwardly.

- 7 -

The pouch 3 is generally oval-shaped and curved along the length of the pouch. The oval shape is selected to match the general shape of the pad 9.

5 The sheet of waterproof fabric that forms the pouch 3 is elasticised around the perimeter thereof. Elasticising the sheet gathers the flat sheet into the pouch shape, ie with the upwardly and inwardly formed side wall 7.

10

The elasticised construction is such that the pouch 3 can be readily washed so that the pouch can be reused.

15

Figure 4 illustrates one method of fitting the pad 9 into the pouch 3. The method comprises sliding one end of the pad 9 into one end of the pouch 3 and thereafter manipulating the remainder of the pad into the pouch, working from the fitted end to the opposite end.

20

It can readily be appreciated that the assembly of the pouch 3 and the pad 9 shown in Figures 2 and 3 is suitable to be positioned in the crotch region of a adult, child or baby and held in position by an item of clothing.

25

In the case of adults and children the item of clothing may be, by way of example, underwear. In the case of babies the item of clothing may be, by way of example, an outer pair of baby "pants".

30

It can also be appreciated that when the assembly is properly positioned, with the pad in an operative position, the upwardly and inwardly directed side wall 7 contacts the skin of the person, with the result that the fitted pad 9 is enclosed and there is minimal risk of leakage from the pad 9.

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- 8 -

The free edge of the side wall 7 comprises a rounded bead 25 of soft material. The bead-shape and the material selection maximise comfort for a person wearing the assembly of the pouch 3 and the pad 9.

5

The location of the assembly in an optimum position may be facilitated by the use of adhesive.

The embodiments of the pouch 3 shown in Figures 5 to 11 have the same basic construction as the pouch 3 shown in Figures 1 to 4 in that the pouches 3 are also formed by elasticising sheets of waterproof fabric and thereby gathering the sheets into the pouch shapes shown in the figures.

15

The pouches 3 shown in Figures 5 to 9 further comprise means to releasably attach or hold the assemblies of the pouches 3 and the pads 9 to items of clothing.

20

The attachment means shown in Figures 5 and 6 comprises a series of straps 13 that extend from the side wall 7 at the ends of the pouch 3, male or female parts of press studs 15 connected to the straps 13, and complementary male or female parts of press studs on an inside surface of an item of underwear 17 (shown in Figure 6 only).

25

In use, the assembly of the pouch 3 and the pad 9 shown in Figure 6 can be conveniently connected to and thereafter released from the underwear 17 by means of the press studs 15.

30

The attachment means shown in Figures 7 to 9 comprises a pair of flaps or wings 19 extending from the side wall 7 on opposite sides of the pouch 3, a male or female part of a press studs 21 connected to one of the

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- 9 -

flaps 19, and a complementary male or female part of the press stud 21 connected to the other flap 19.

5 In use, the flaps 19 can be folded rearwardly around the outwardly facing surface of an item of underwear 23 into an overlapping relationship and thereafter the male and female parts of the press stud 21 can be pressed together to secure the pouch 3 around the crutch of the underwear 23 (shown in Figure 9 only).

10

The Figure 10 pouch has a more rectangular shape than the Figures 1 to 9 pouches 3 and includes a pair of ties 41 at one end and a pair of looped openings 43 at the other end that facilitate securing an assembly of the pouch 3 and a pad (not shown) inserted into the pouch to a wearer, such as baby - as shown in Figure 11 - rather than to an item of clothing.

15

20 The pouch 3 shown in Figure 12 is similar to the pouches shown in Figures 1 to 11.

The Figure 12 pouch has a similar rectangular shape to the Figures 10/11 pouch 3.

25

However, the Figure 12 pouch 3 has two particular features that are not in the Figures 1 to 11 pouches.

30 Firstly, the Figure 12 pouch is a generally flat construction and does not have a curved shape along the length of the pouch 3.

35 Secondly, the Figure 12 pouch is formed into the pouch shape shown in the figure by heat-forming a single sheet of waterproof material in a die rather than by securing elastic around the perimeter of a sheet of waterproof material, as described in relation to the

- 10 -

Figures 1 to 11 pouches. The heat formed pouch is more likely to be semi-reusable, for example used for a day with some pad changes and then disposed of as a waste product. In this application, preferably the pouch is
5 made from a biodegradable plastic material, such as a starch-based plastic material. Moreover, in this application, typically an assembly of the pouch and a pad, in use, is held in place by means of adhesive securing the assembly to an item of underwear.

10

The embodiment of the pouch 3 shown in Figures 13 to 16 is the same basic construction as the pouch 3 shown in Figure 12.

15

The pouches 3 shown in Figures 13 to 16 further comprises a means to releasably attach or hold the assembly of the pouch 3 and the pad 9 to an item of clothing.

20

As described in relation to the Figures 5 to 9 pouches, in the case of adults and children the item of clothing may be, by way of example, underwear. In the case of babies the outer piece of clothing may be by way of example an outer pair of baby "pants".

25

The attachment means shown in Figures 13 to 16 comprises a pair of flaps or wings 49 extending from the side wall 7 on opposite sides of the pouch 3 and having Velcro, adhesive or other means to facilitate securing the
30 wings to an item of underwear 53.

In use, the wings 19 can be folded rearwardly around the item of underwear 53 and thereafter secured to the undergarment 23.

35

The same method described above to fit absorbent pads 9 into the Figures 1 to 4 pouch may be used to fit

- 11 -

absorbent pads 9 into the Figures 12 to 15 pouches 3.
With reference to Figure 14, the method comprises sliding
one end of the pad 9 into one end of the pouch 3 and
thereafter manipulating the remainder of the pad into the
5 pouch, working from the fitted end to the opposite end.

The above-described pouches 3 provide a greater
level of security against leakage for adults, children and
babies using absorbent pads 9 and simplify handling of the
10 pads during and after pad changeover.

A significant advantage of the above-described
pouches 3 is that they make it possible to greatly
simplify the construction of the absorbent pads 9. This
15 is a clear and significant difference from many current
pads that include built in waterproof backing, elastic, or
fasteners that complicate the construction and cost of the
pads and make it difficult and expensive to dispose of the
pads in an environmentally sensitive way. The above-
20 described pouches 3 make it possible to construct the pads
solely for the absorption of fluids and consequently the
pads can be designed to be bio-degradable in a practical
way.

25 Many modifications may be made to the embodiments
of the pouch of the present invention described above
without departing from the spirit and scope of the
invention.

By way of example, whilst the embodiments of the
30 pouch of the present invention are formed into the pouch
shapes shown in the figures by elasticising and heat
forming the pouches, the present invention is not so
limited and extends to any suitable constructions of
pouch-shape.

- 12 -

CLAIMS:

1. A pouch for an absorbent pad, the pad having a back, front and sides, the pouch comprising a waterproof member formed into a pouch shape with a base and a side wall that extends from the base and is inwardly turned and defines an opening to insert a pad into the pouch so that the pouch covers the back and sides of the pad whereby, in use, an assembly of the pouch and the pad received in the pouch can be positioned in a crotch region of an adult, child or baby in an operative position of the pad and with the pouch and the skin of the person enclosing the pad and forming a barrier to leakage from the pad.
2. The pouch defined in claim 1 comprises a base that has the same general shape as the pad.
3. The pouch defined in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the side wall is elasticised to pull the side wall inwardly thereby to form the above pouch shape.
4. The pouch defined in claim 1 or claim 2 formed by heat-forming the waterproof member thereby to form the above pouch shape.
5. The pouch defined in any one of the preceding claims wherein the side wall of the pouch is formed so that the pouch has a curved shape along its length and is thereby more adapted by virtue of the curved shape to be positioned in the crotch region of the adult, child, or baby.
6. The pouch defined in any one of the preceding claims wherein the side wall of the pouch defines an opening that is smaller than the surface area of the front of the pad so that, in use, the pad has to be manipulated to be positioned in the pouch.

- 13 -

7. The pouch defined in any one of the preceding claims wherein a free edge of the side wall of the pouch that contacts the skin of the adult, child, or baby in use of the pouch is formed from a "soft" material to maximise comfort for the adult, child, or baby.

8. The pouch defined in any one of the preceding claims wherein the free edge of the side wall of the pouch that contacts the skin of the adult, child, or baby in use of the pouch comprises a rounded bead of soft material to maximise comfort for the adult, child, or baby.

9. The pouch defined in any one of the preceding claims comprises a means for releasably attaching the pouch to an item of clothing, which may be by way of example an item of underwear in the case of adults and children or outer "pants" in the case of babies.

10. The pouch defined in claim 9 wherein the attachment means comprises press-studs, adhesive or other suitable connection means on the pouch and the item of clothing.

11. The pouch defined in claim 9 or claim 10 wherein the attachment means comprises:

(a) a pair of flaps extending from opposite sides of the pouch that can be folded around an item of underwear so that the ends of the flaps overlap to a certain extent; and

(b) press-studs or other suitable connection means that can connect the folded flaps together.

- 14 -

12. The pouch defined in any one of claims 1 to 9 comprises a means for tying or otherwise fastening the pouch around a wearer.

5 13. An assembly of the pouch defined in any one of the preceding claims and an absorbent pad fitted in the pouch.

1/4

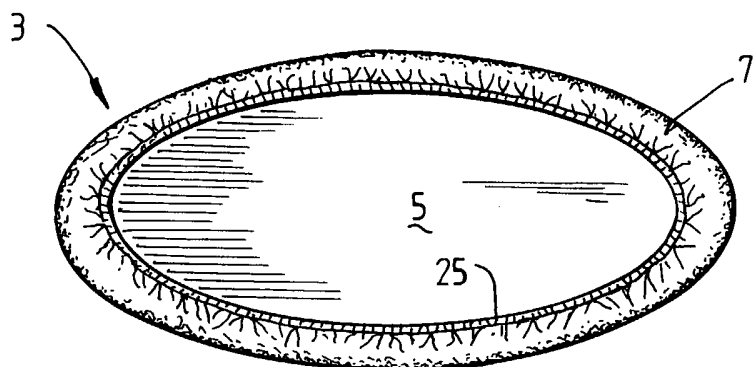


FIG. 1.

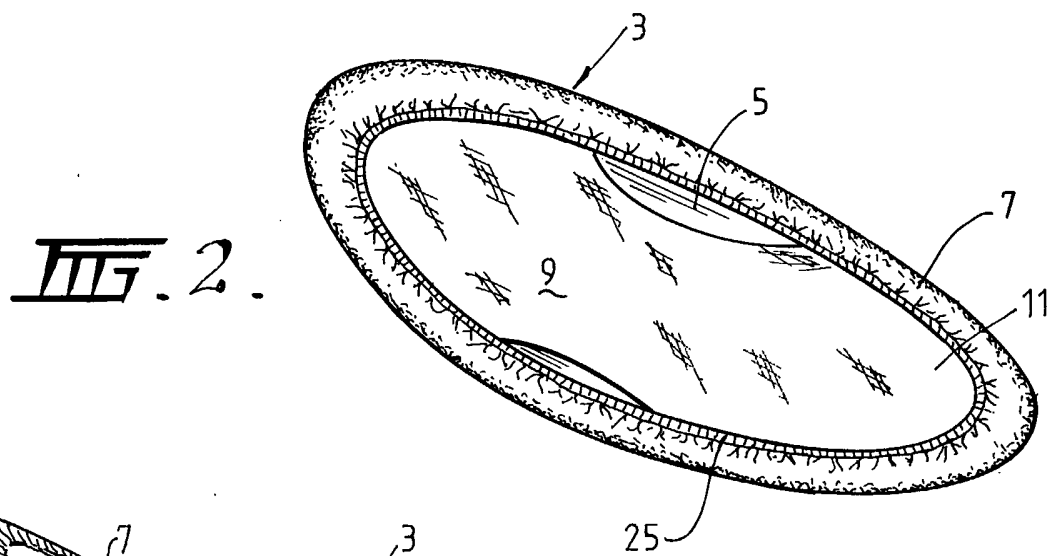


FIG. 2.

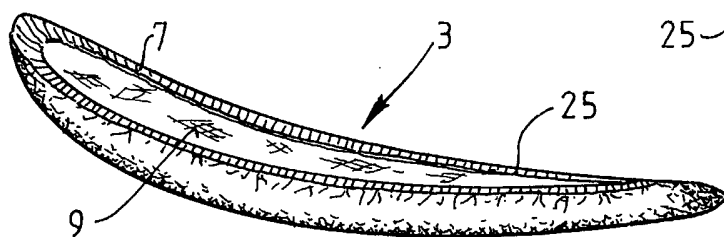


FIG. 3.

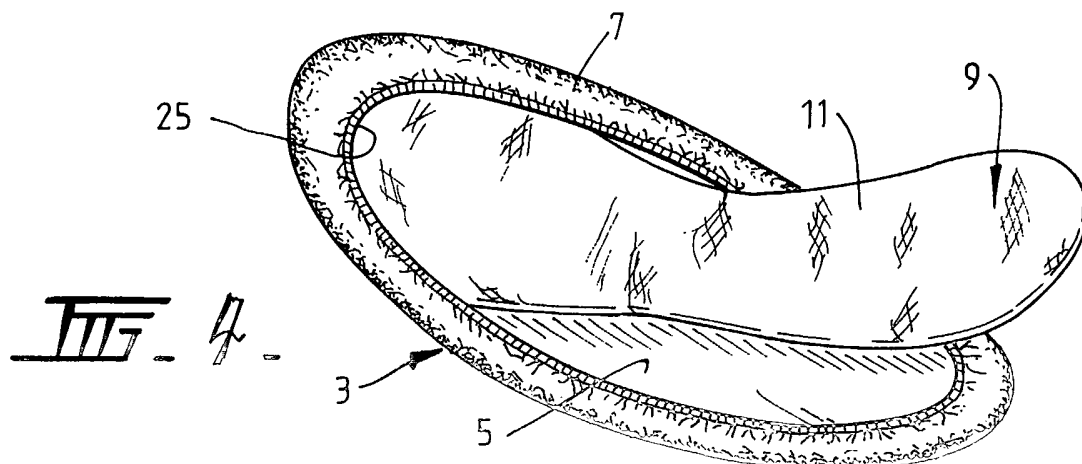
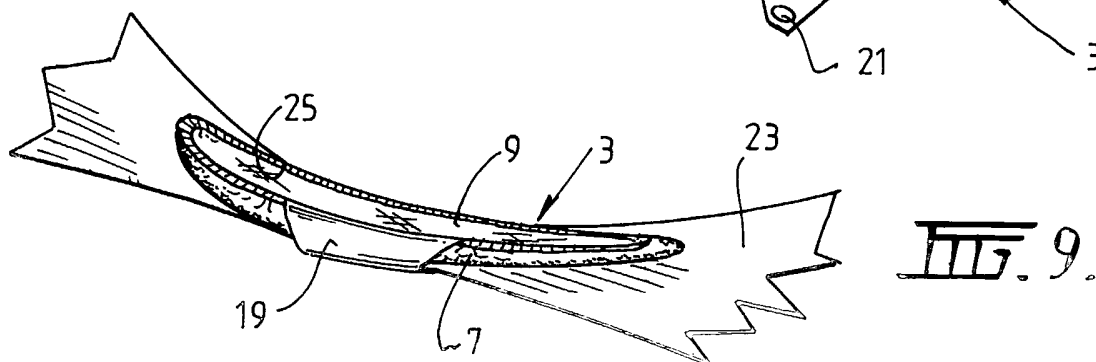
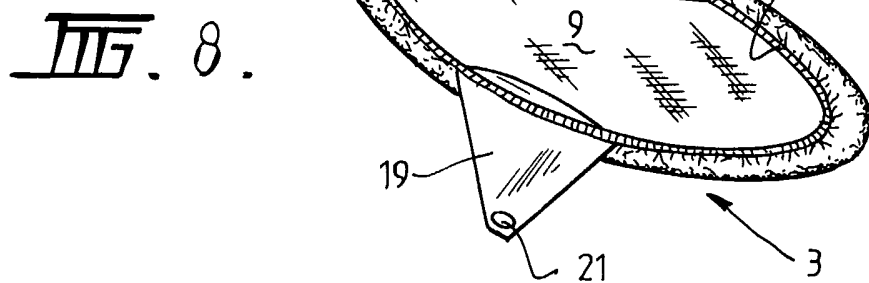
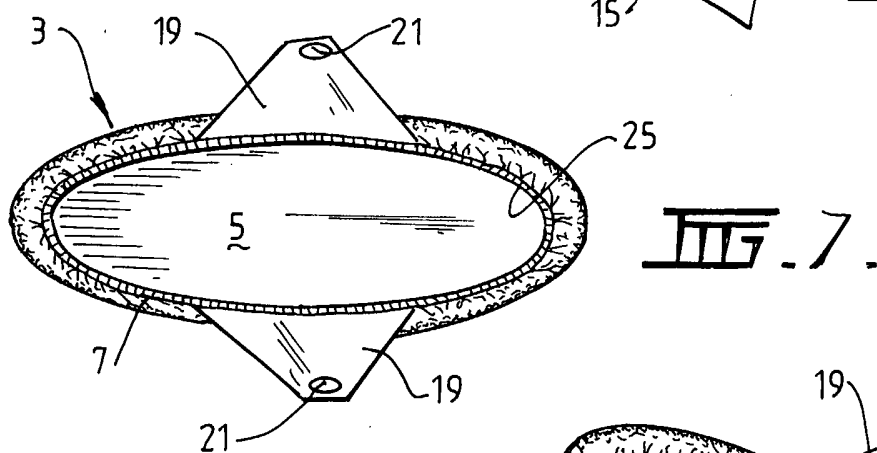
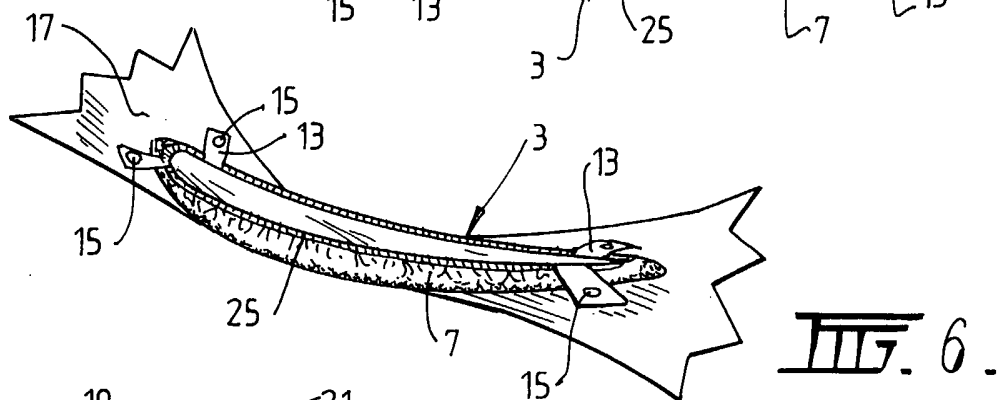
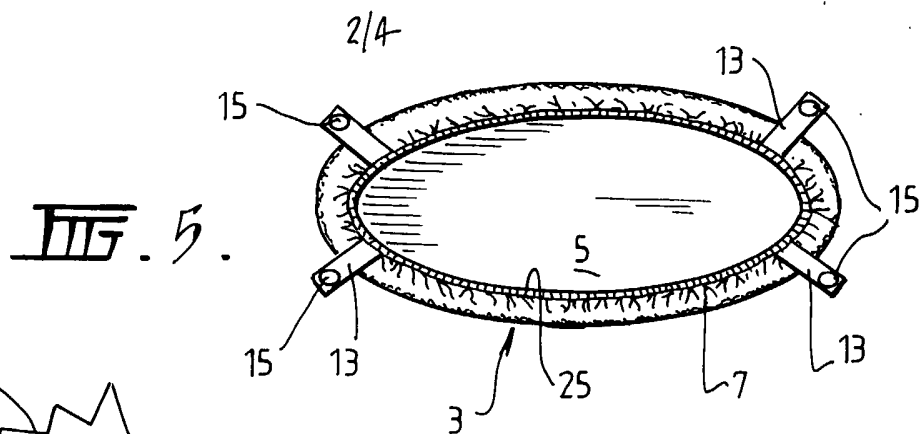


FIG. 4.



3/4

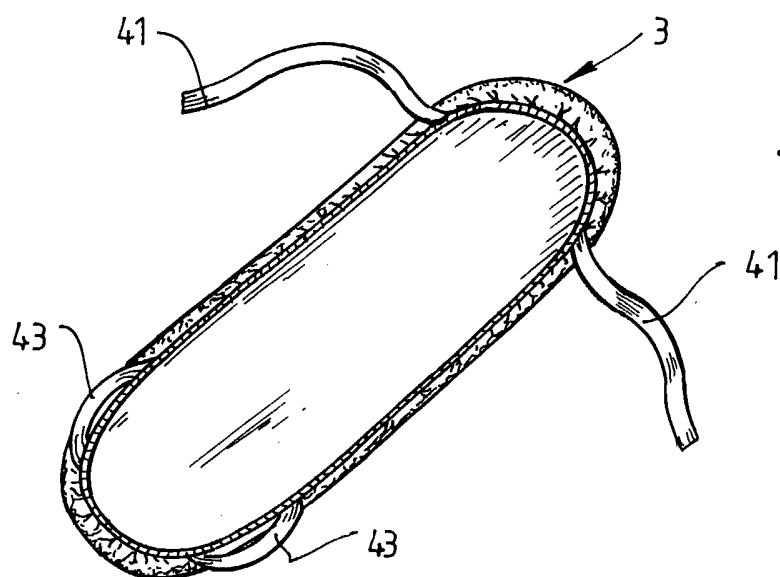


FIG. 10.

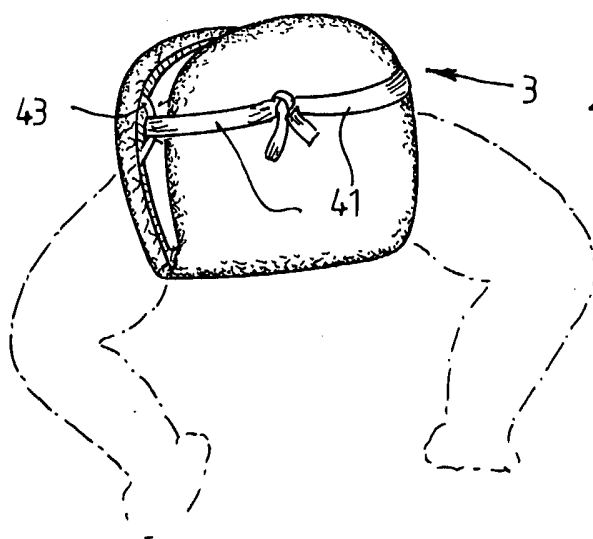


FIG. 11.

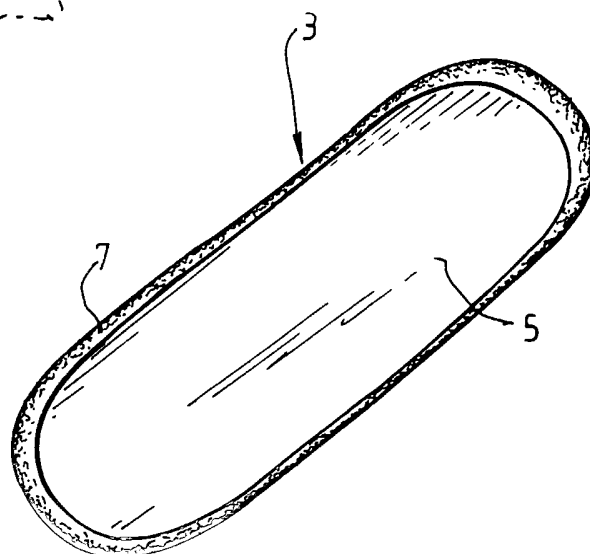
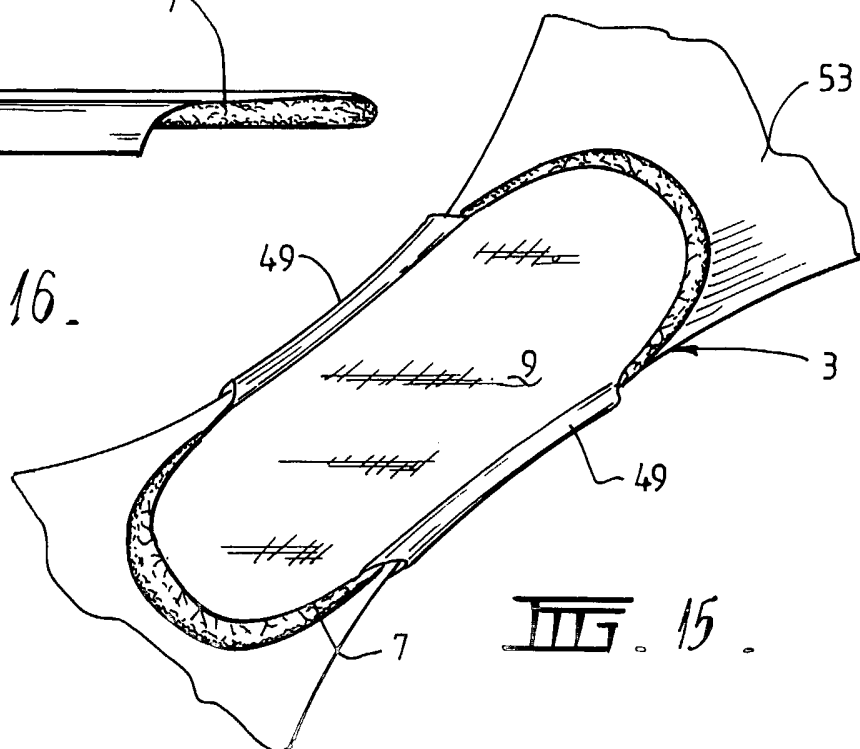
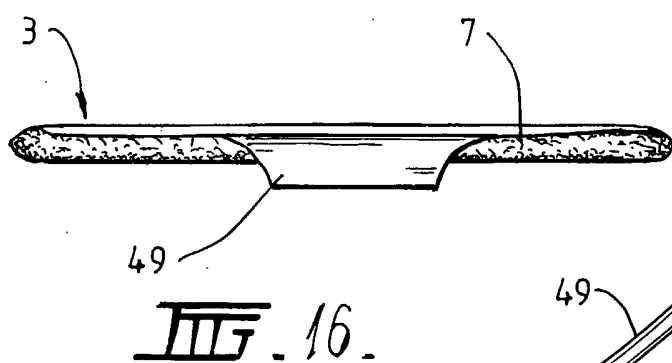
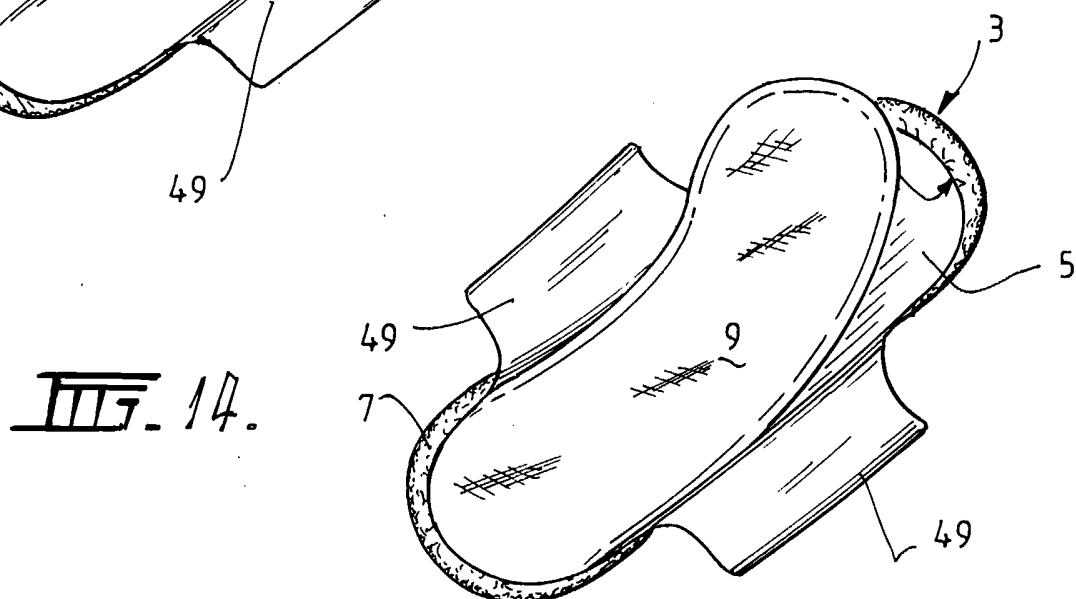
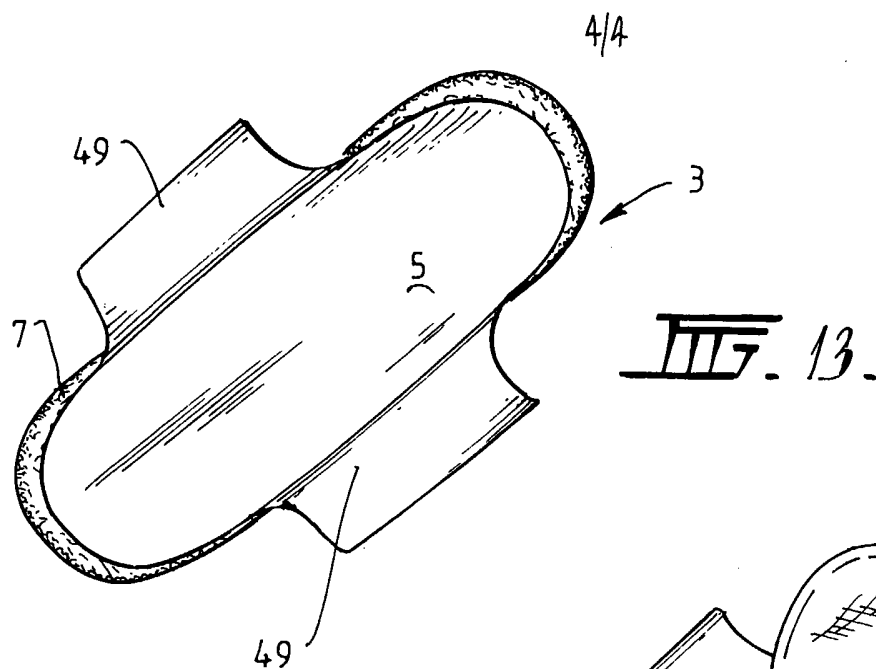


FIG. 12.



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER Int. Cl. ⁷ : A61F 13/70, 13/74, 13/56, 13/15 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC				
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) DWPI IPC A61F 13/70, A41B 13/04 & keywords: (pad, napkin, absorb, pouch, pocket, cavity, envelope, cover, holder, casing, shell, housing, reusable, washable, multi, insert, receive, hold, held, place) and similar terms				
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT				
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.		
X	WO 1994/003137 A1 (CARING PRODUCTS INTERNATIONAL, INC.) 17 February 1994 See figures 1, 4-7, abstract, page 1 lines 21-23, page 2 lines 5-15, page 3 lines 34-37, page 4 lines 1-13, 17-34, page 5 lines 7-10, page 7 lines 34-37, page 8 line 1	1-3, 6, 12-13		
Y	See page 9 lines 17-22	10-11		
X	US 5891122 A (COATES) 6 April 1999 See figures, abstract, column 4 lines 21-35, 55-67, column 5 lines 1-10, column 9 lines 43-53	1-3, 6, 12-13		
X	CA 2255465 A1 (MED-I-PANT INC.) 4 June 2000 See figures 1-2, abstract, page 5 lines 25-31, page 6 lines 1, 16-18, page 7 lines 7-11, page 10 lines 27-30	1-3, 6, 12-13		
☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C ☒ See patent family annex				
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Date of the actual completion of the international search 21 April 2005		Date of mailing of the international search report 22 APR 2005		
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaustalia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929		Authorized officer A. ALI Telephone No : (02) 6283 2607		

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORTInternational application No.
PCT/AU2005/000298

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	AU 19539/99 (714528) B3 (KAMINSKI) 6 January 2000 See figures 1-4, abstract, page 3, page 4 lines 8-13	1-3, 5-6, 12-13
X	WO 1993/023000 A1 (MOLNLYCKE AB) 25 November 1993 See figures 1-7, abstract, page 1 lines 3-8, 29-36, page 2 lines 11-15, page 3 lines 29-31, page 4 lines 17-36, page 5 lines 1-29	1-3, 6-8, 12-13
X	WO 2002/067833 A1 (TAILORED TECHNOLOGIES, INC.) 6 September 2002 See figures, abstract, pages 1-2, 8, 11-12	1-3, 5-6, 9, 12-13
Y	See figure 3A, page 12	10-11

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/AU2005/000298

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member	
WO	1994/003137	AU	47969/93
		EP	0606468
		US	5360422
US	5891122	US	5409476
		US	5707364
		US	5722127
		US	5814037
CA	2255465	NONE	
AU	199919539	NONE	
WO	1993/023000	SE	9003774
WO	2002/067833	EP	1379208
Due to data integration issues this family listing may not include 10 digit Australian applications filed since May 2001.			
END OF ANNEX			