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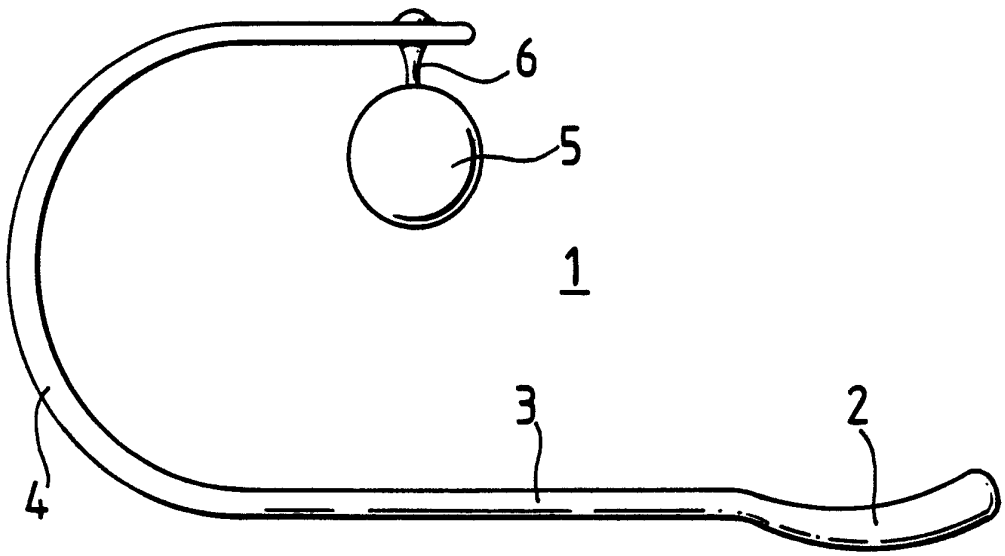
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(54) Title: FEEDING SPOON



(57) Abstract

A feeding spoon (1) comprises a bowl (2) and a handle (3). The handle (3) runs into a substantially semi-circular extension (4), which extends both upwardly and back towards the bowl (2). Suspended from the top of the extension (4) is a rattle in the form of a brightly coloured plastics ball (5). The feeding spoon (1) may be particularly suitable for use in weaning infants. Upon offering the spoon (1), the infant's eyes are attracted upwardly to the ball (5), thus causing the infant to lift its head and thereby open its mouth, to achieve easier feeding. After weaning, the spoon (1) with rattle ball (5) may serve as a toy.

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FEEDING SPOON

This invention relates to feeding spoons, and is particularly although not exclusively concerned with spoons that may be used for weaning infants.

As many mothers will know, teaching young babies to eat from a spoon can be a messy business. We have noticed that, when most young babies begin to be spoon fed, they tend to pull down their chins to their chests, which makes feeding both difficult and messy.

We aim to improve upon this situation, by providing a feeding spoon which may counteract this tendency.

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a feeding spoon comprising a bowl and a handle and, extending upwardly from the handle, an extension which carries attraction means for attracting the attention of an infant being fed with the spoon.

We have found that, when an infant is attracted by the attraction means, it may lift its head in an inquisitive manner, but not its lower jaw, such that the mouth is left open to accept food.

Although reference is made herein to an "infant", it is to be understood that feeding spoons as disclosed in this specification may be used by any suitable person - for example a handicapped person.

Preferably, the attraction means makes a sound when the spoon is moved - for example, in the manner of a rattle.

The attraction means may be suspended from the extension, to permit movement of the attraction means with respect to the extension.

The attraction means may comprise a ball, and is preferably of a primary colour. It is preferred that the attraction means is of a colour which contrasts with that of the spoon and handle, and/or with that of the extension.

The attraction means is preferably secured to the extension by a fastener which prevents or resists detachment of the attraction means.

The extension preferably extends both upwardly and towards the bowl. The extension is preferably resiliently deformable, and may be of a curved configuration. For example, the extension may be substantially semi-circular.

The attraction means is preferably disposed at a height in the range 40mm to 120mm, above the bowl and handle.

The bowl, handle and extension may conveniently be made of a plastics material.

For a better understanding of the invention and to show how the same may be carried into effect, reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying diagrammatic drawing, in which:

Figure 1 is a side view of an infants feeding spoon;

Figure 2 is a plan view of the feeding spoon;

Figure 3 is a detail view of the spoon, showing a rattle attachment means; and

Figure 4 shows an alternative attraction means.

The feeding spoon 1 which is illustrated in Figures 1 to 3 comprises a bowl 2 and a handle 3, which may be conveniently made of a plastics material, and may be of a more or less conventional design.

However, in contrast to conventional feeding spoons, the handle 3 runs into an extension 4, which is of substantially semi-circular shape, extending both upwardly and back towards the bowl 2. Suspended from the top of the extension 4 is a rattle in the form of a brightly coloured plastics ball 5. A link 6 serves to suspend the ball 5 from the top of the extension 4.

This suspension arrangement is shown in more detail in Figure 3, where it may be seen that the link 6 has a spherical head 7 and a depending resilient barb 8, connected by a neck 9. Figure 3 is a sectional view, and shows the neck 9 extending through an aperture 10 in the extension 4, and an aperture 11 in the ball 8. The aperture 10 opens into a spherical seat 12 in the extension 4, which seat faces upwardly.

It will be appreciated that the extension 4 may be formed in a single moulding operation, integrally with the bowl 2 and handle 3. Thereafter, the resilient barb 8 of the link 6 may be pushed downwardly through the aperture 10 in the extension 4, and then through the aperture 11 in the ball 5. Once the barb 8 has passed

through the aperture 11, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to remove the ball from the link 6, without destroying either the ball 5 or the link 6.

Thus, the ball 5 is held securely captive on the extension 4, and the spherical part 7 of the link 6 sits loosely in the seat 12, to allow free movement of the ball 5, within which there is contained one or more suitable element(s) 13, to serve as a rattle.

In use, food is offered to a young baby on the bowl 2 of the spoon 1, much as normal. However, movement of the spoon during feeding inevitably causes the ball 5 to move and rattle, and the baby is attracted to the colour, shape, movement and noise of the ball 5, as the food is offered to it. The baby then lifts its head, in an inquisitive manner, but without raising its lower jaw, so as to leave the mouth open to accept food. As successful feeding progresses, the baby soon develops a habit of preparing for food, upon presentation of the spoon.

The ball 5 is preferably suspended at such a height as to permit the handle 3 of the spoon 1 to be conveniently grasped, but not so high as to raise the centre of gravity of the spoon 1 too high, whereupon the spoon 1 could become unwieldy. For example, the ball 5 may be suspended at a height in the range 50mm to 100mm, and preferably 75mm, above the handle 3. The ball 5 may have a diameter in the range 30mm to 50mm, and preferably has a diameter greater than 32mm. The or each rattle element 13 may be a small, smooth glass bead.

As mentioned above, the extension 4 is preferably resilient. It may have a very high degree of resilience,

such that it may be bent a considerable distance from its natural position, without breaking. This will tend to promote movement of the ball 5, as well as reducing the risk of breakage of the spoon 1.

It will be appreciated that, not only does the illustrated spoon 1 serve a purpose an an improved feeding spoon, it may also serve as an interesting toy and rattle for a child, as it grows older.

By way of example, the bowl 2, handle 3 and extension 4 of the spoon 1 may be of a light colour (e.g. ivory) whereas the ball 5 is of an attractive, relatively dark, primary colour (e.g. red).

It is to be appreciated that other attraction means may be provided, instead of the illustrated ball 5. Figure 4 shows one such example of an alternative attraction means, comprising a spinner 15, which may be suspended from the extension 4 by means of a link 16. The illustrated spinner 15 has four radiating webs 17, each having two faces which each carry an attractive coloured shape or pattern 18. Different web faces may carry designs of different shape, pattern or colour.

Thus there may be provided an infants feeding spoon which may be produced in a simple and economic manner, yet may permit much improved weaning and feeding of infants.

The invention is not restricted to the details of the foregoing embodiment(s). The invention extends to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the features disclosed in this specification and/or drawings, or to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the steps of any method or process disclosed herein.

CLAIMS:

1. A feeding spoon comprising a bowl and a handle and, extending upwardly from the handle, an extension which carries attraction means for attracting the attention of an infant being fed with the spoon.

2. A feeding spoon according to Claim 1, wherein said attraction means makes a sound when the spoon is moved.

3. A feeding spoon according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein said attraction means is suspended from said extension, to permit movement of the attraction means with respect to the extension.

4. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said attraction means comprises a ball.

5. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said attraction means is of a primary colour.

6. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said attraction means is of a colour which contrasts with that of said spoon and handle, and/or with that of said extension.

7. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said attraction means is secured to said extension by a fastener which prevents or resists detachment of the attraction means.

8. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said extension extends both upwardly and towards said bowl.

9. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said extension is resiliently deformable.

10. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said extension is curved.

11. A feeding spoon according to Claim 10, wherein said extension is substantially semi-circular.

12. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said attraction means is at a height in the range 40mm to 100mm, above said bowl and handle.

13. A feeding spoon according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said bowl, handle and extension comprise a plastics material.

14. A feeding spoon substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

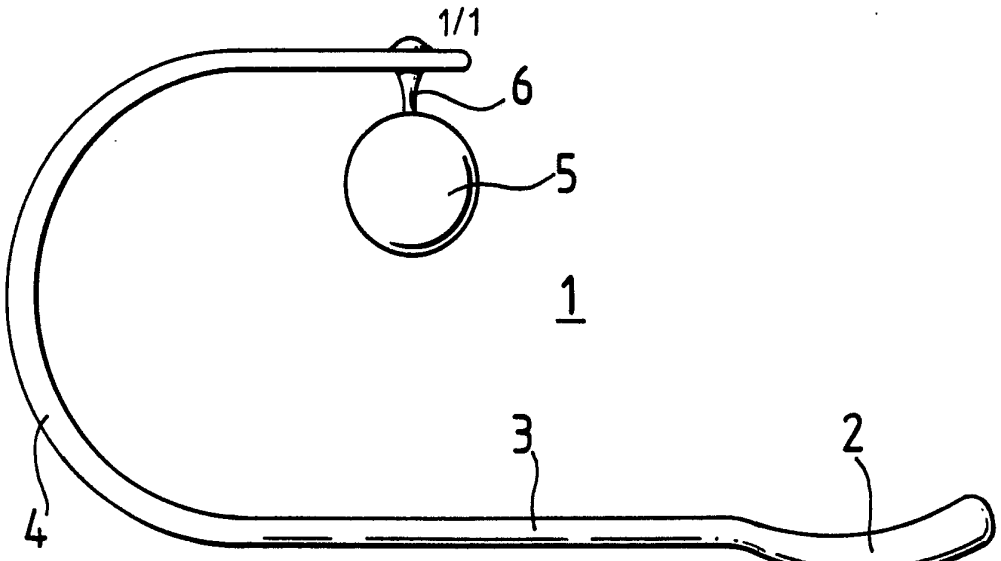


FIG.1.

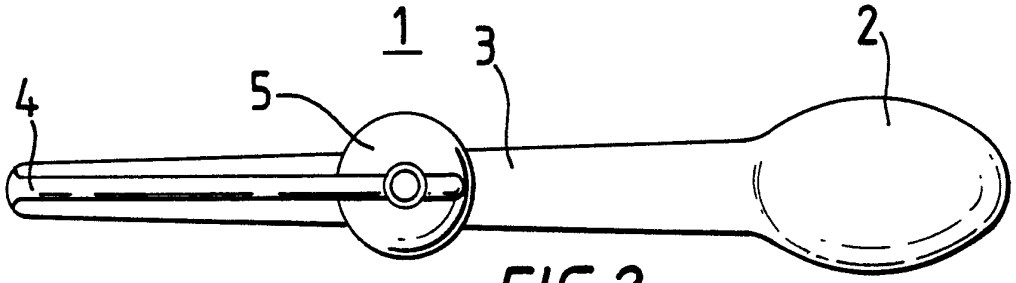


FIG.2.

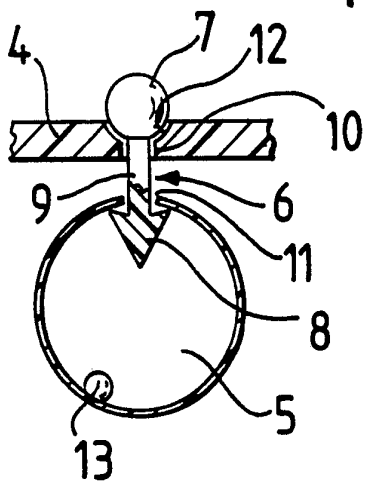


FIG.3.

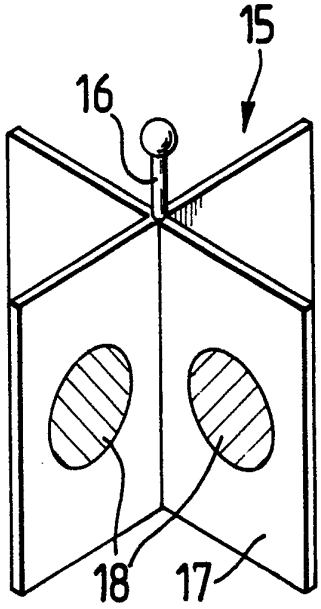


FIG.4.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No PCT/GB 87/00162

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) [6]

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC

IPC[4]: A 47 G 21/04; A 63 H 5/00

II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched [7]

Classification System	Classification Symbols
IPC[4]	A 47 G; A 61 J; A 63 H

Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched [8]

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT [9]

Category [10]	Citation of Document, [11] with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages [12]	Relevant to Claim No. [13]
X	US, A, 2833084 (HLOUSEK) 6 May 1958 see figure 1; column 1, lines 19-28	1,3,7
X	US, A, 2787055 (WERTZ) 2 April 1957 see figure 1; column 2, lines 14-27	1,2,7,13
X	CH, A, 338935 (FARO) 31 July 1959 see the whole document	1,2
X	US, A, 3839793 (CRAPIO) 8 October 1974 see the whole document	1,5-7

* Special categories of cited documents: [10]

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"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

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IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report
18th June 1987	20 JUL 1987
International Searching Authority: EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE	Signature of Authorized Officer: M. VAN MOL

ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT ON

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/GB 87/00162 (SA 16451)

This Annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on 02/07/87

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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US-A- 2833084		None	
US-A- 2787055		None	
CH-A- 338935		None	
US-A- 3839793	08/10/74	None	