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MEDICATION CONTAINER PACKAGE

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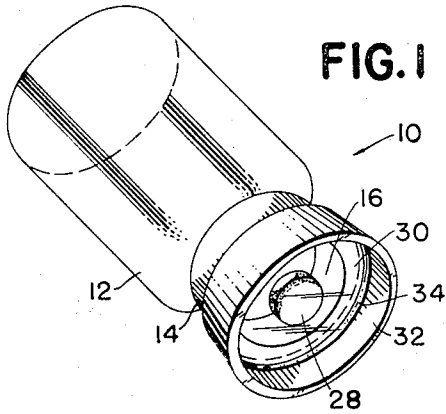


FIG. 1

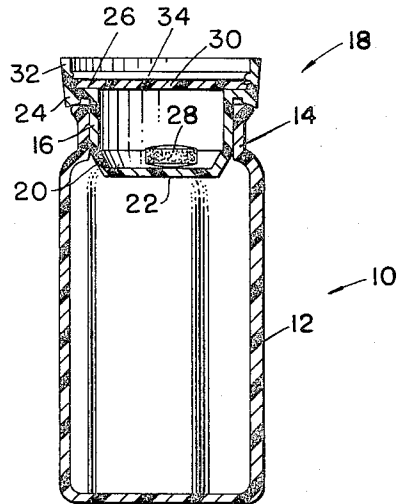


FIG. 2

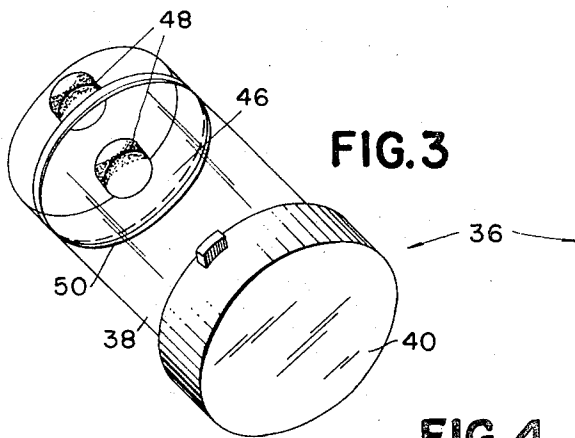


FIG. 3

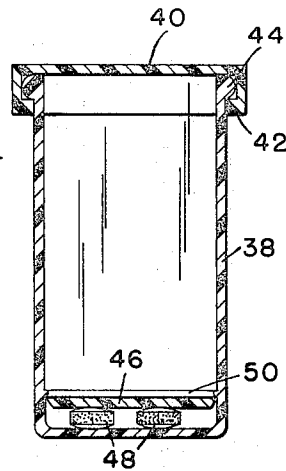


FIG. 4

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MEDICATION CONTAINER PACKAGE
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The present invention relates to improvements in a container package for medication pills, tablets, capsules and the like, characterized by provisions for encasing within a transparent cap or body portion of the container one or more such tablets or capsules, at the time the description is originally filled, so that when the container is returned for re-filling, with the thus encased pill or pills intact, the pharmacist may easily and quickly identify the prescription, and re-fill the same with confidence without need to refer to written prescription records.

I am aware that it has previously been proposed to place in a small compartment of a larger container, some amount of a material or substance corresponding to what is packaged in the latter. In some cases the small sample is used before the main contents are consumed. In other instances, the substance in the supplemental container is to be added to the main contents, or the auxiliary member is to be used in some way or another independently of the main receptacle. In others, the auxiliary content must be freed or removed before the main compartment is entered.

However, the present invention contemplates a composite container or receptacle, in which the content of an auxiliary compartment is originally supplied by the pharmacist, when filling the prescription, and is then covered or enclosed by the pharmacist, to remain closed until the container is returned for re-filling of the prescription, aided by visual inspection of the auxiliary content, as mentioned above. For the user or patient to remove the auxiliary sample would defeat the purpose of the present invention; and the compartmented container is intended to be returned repeatedly for re-fill prescription without disturbing the sample.

In one embodiment of the invention, the auxiliary receptable portion is provided in a removable container cap which, if not wholly transparent, has a transparent cover disc across the space therein in which the sample pill, tablet or capsule is housed. In another embodiment, the supplemental enclosure is defined at the bottom of the main container or receptacle member, as by a transparent disc thrust down into the latter adjacent the bottom thereof to seal off the sample content. In either of these adaptations, it is the intent of the invention that the identifying auxiliary content be visible from the exterior of the container proper, and preferably be permanently or semi-permanently held in place against removal by the user.

In general, it is an object of the invention to provide a medication package including a container body, proper, and a preferably transparent, supplemental disc-like or equivalent member applied either on or in the body, or a closure for the latter, to at least in part define an auxiliary compartment in which a sample or specimen of a non-liquid medication is at least semi-permanently enclosed.

As a further consideration, in the event that a patient finds it desirable, or necessary to maintain the medication container on his person, the container, even though empty other than as to its sub-compartmented specimen, serves as a physical means for identifying the carrier. Thus, in the event of incapacity due to accident or attack, his name is made known by the container label to a doctor or hospital or ambulance personnel, and the nature of the medication which he requires. The container is also of use in continuing the re-filling of prescriptions in the event of a change of doctors by the user, or in any other comparable event.

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The foregoing as well as other objects will become more apparent as this description proceeds, especially when considered in connection with the accompanying drawing illustrating the invention, wherein:

5 FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the improved medication container, shown partially inverted, in which the supplemental or auxiliary sample compartment is a part of a cap or closure for the receptacle, proper;

10 FIG. 2 is a view in diametral, axially extending cross section through the container of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view, also partially inverted, in which the sample sub-receptacle is incorporated in the main container adjacent the bottom of the latter; and

15 FIG. 4 is a view in axially extending, diametral cross section through the container of FIG. 3.

As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, a first embodiment of the container of the invention, generally designated by the reference numeral 10, comprises a main cylindrical container body 12, which may be of a transparent, translucent or opaque plastic material, shaped in conventional fashion to provide a beaded neck 14 of somewhat lesser diameter than the body, the internal throat of which is frictionally engaged and sealed by a cylindrical intermediate portion 16 of a plastic cap or closure, generally designated 18. These parts, plus an additional component of closure 18, constitute the entirety of container 10.

This closure may have a frustoconical inner nose 20 facilitating application to container neck 14, the nose being spanned by an integral inner wall 22. Closure 18, like the body 12, may be molded in a conventional fashion from a transparent, semi-transparent or opaque plastic material, and conventionally includes an integral annular flange 24 adapted to seat downwardly upon the top bead of the container body neck 14, the flange 24 presenting an upwardly facing annular flat rim surface 26, as shown in FIG. 2.

At the time of original filling of the prescription, the pharmacist places in the internal space of cover or closure 18 one or more actual specimens 28 of the pill, tablet, capsule or other medication of the original prescription, of course filling the body 12 randomly and in bulk with the amount of such prescription desired.

The pharmacist then selects a transparent plastic circular disc 30 from a supply of different sizes for different sizes and shapes of container closure 18, then thrusts the disc down into the annular upright wall 32 of closure 18 surrounding its rim surface 26. As thus engaged downwardly on that surface, frictional engagement of the disc with the wall 32 may be relied on to hold disc 30 in place. In the alternative, an adhesive may be employed or, by preference, the wall 32 may be formed to provide a small circular, radially inwardly projecting retainer bead 34, beneath which the disc 30 will snap into place and be held against removal, save possibility by distortion or destruction of the disc. As is clear from the above description, the specimen medication piece 28 remains sealed within the closure 18, for quick visual identification of its composition by the pharmacist when the otherwise empty container 10 is returned for filling.

FIGS. 3 and 4 illustrate an alternative embodiment of the container improvement, generally designated by the reference numeral 36, in which the body 38 is truly cylindrical internally throughout its entire axial length, being covered by a snap-on type closure 40 having an annular flange 42 engaging beneath the top annular bead 44 surrounding the container mouth. As before, container body 38 and closure 40 may be molded conventionally of a transparent, semi-transparent or opaque plastic material.

In this modification, a transparent plastic retainer disc 46 is thrust downwardly in frictional engagement with the

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cylindrical container wall into place over one or more specimen medication pieces 48 resting on the bottom of the container body; and, if desired or necessary, may be held in place by an annular internal bead 50 of the container wall, past which the disc snaps into place. Alternative holding means are contemplated; and the mode of use of the receptacle or container 36 is exactly the same as in the first embodiment 10, the sample or samples 48 being originally encased and covered by disc 46, to remain so-encased throughout the intended life of the container, with the latter constituted in its entirety by body 38, disc 46 and closure 40.

It is seen that the invention affords embodiments in which sub-compartment defining means, in both cases including a transparent disc, are assembled in a similar fashion for use in common, though specifically, different ways. The cost of the improved units is minimal, considering the fact that factory assembly of the closure discs 30 or 46 is not involved; the production costs thus represent normal molding material and molding equipment factors; and pharmacists will welcome the ability to promptly, easily and reliably re-fill the prescription without consultation of written prescription records.

As indicated above, the improved container, even though carried empty on the person of the user, will serve to identify him to a doctor or to hospital, ambulance or pharmacy personnel in the event of a disabling accident, or some other such contingency.

What I claim as my invention is:

1. A refillable medication package, comprising a container affording a main space, a quantity of non-liquid medication pieces disposed randomly and in bulk in said main space, said container including a body member and a removable closure member for said body member, means coacting with said container to at least in part define a closed supplemental space wholly within one of said members the interior of which is visible from the container

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exterior, said means, body member and closure member constituting the entirety of the container, and at least one non-liquid specimen piece identical to said pieces in said main space, said specimen piece being at least semi-permanently enclosed in said supplemental space and visible from the exterior thereof to identify the nature of pieces to be refilled in said main space upon depletion of the latter, said specimen piece being wholly confined in said supplemental space, hence proof against unintended or inadvertent removal therefrom, whether or not said closure is removed from said body.

2. A package in accordance with claim 1, in which said closure member affords said supplemental space, said closure member having a member separate therefrom and fixedly applied thereto to cover said supplemental space.

3. A package in accordance with claim 1, in which said closure member is hollow to afford said supplemental space, said closure member having a transparent member separate therefrom and fixedly applied thereto from the outer side thereof to cover said supplemental space.

4. A package in accordance with claim 1, in which said supplemental space is within said container body member above a transverse bottom wall of the latter, said supplemental space being covered from above by a transparent closure disc.

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