April 24, 1956 J. R. BEAUDRY ET AL 2,742,898

DEVICE FOR PREVENTING THUMB-SUCKING

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FIG. 1

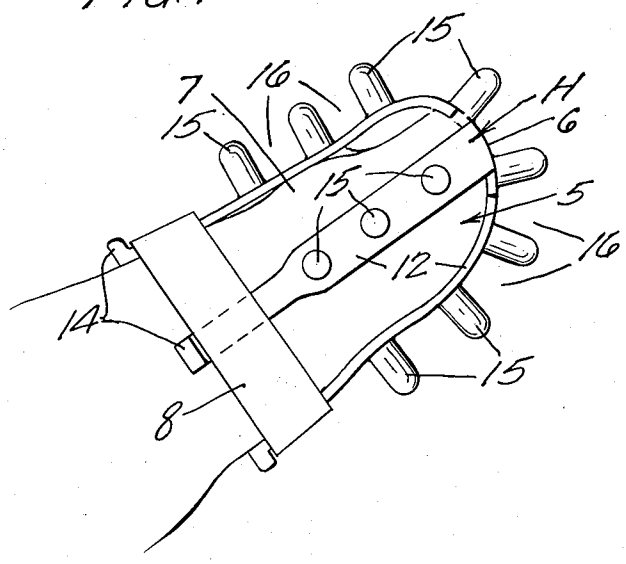


FIG. 2

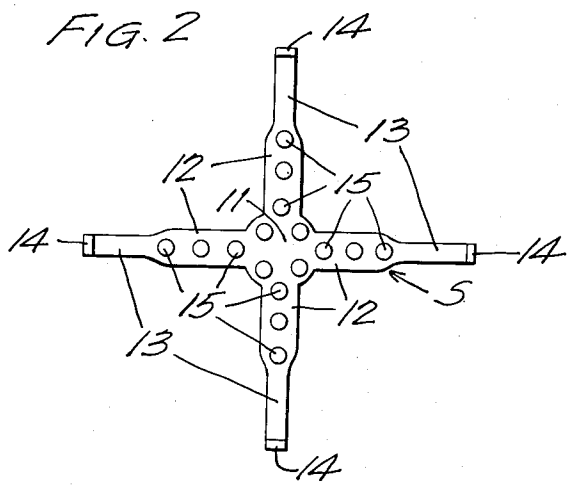
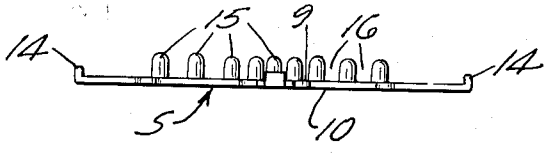


FIG. 3



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DEVICE FOR PREVENTING THUMB-SUCKING

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This invention relates to devices for the prevention of thumb-sucking. More particularly it relates to devices designed for attachment to a child's thumb to discourage the child from engaging in the habit of thumb-sucking and thus over an extended period to break the child of the habit.

Thumb sucking is a habit which has been prevalent among babies throughout the history of mankind. Many devices and attempted cures have been designed to break this habit but none have proved sufficiently practical and inexpensive to be successful. Either they have been ineffective, are too costly, loosen and subsequently become lost, are unsanitary, or are unsatisfactory for one or more other reasons. Our invention is directed toward substantially diminishing or completely overcoming all of these disadvantages.

It is a general object of our invention to provide a novel and improved device for the prevention of thumb sucking which is of inexpensive and simple construction.

A more specific object is to provide a novel and improved device for discouraging thumb sucking which is highly effective, can be manufactured in large numbers from very small amounts of material, and hence very inexpensively, and can be applied quickly and easily.

Another object is to provide a novel and improved device for preventing thumb sucking which can quickly, easily and inexpensively be attached to the thumb of a child without danger of the same subsequently becoming loose and dropping off.

Another object is to provide a novel device for preventing thumb-sucking constructed to enable the user to more effectively attach the same to a child's thumb in order to preclude its loss.

Another object is to provide a novel device for preventing thumb-sucking constructed to enable a more sanitary and effective means of attachment to the child's thumb upon which it is to be used and hence being more desirable from the standpoint of the health of the child.

Another object is to provide a novel device for the prevention of thumb-sucking which is so simple in construction as to obviate any possible detrimental effects upon the child from the attachment means utilized and to preclude against the possibility of the child disengaging the attachment means.

These and other objects and advantages of our invention will more fully appear from the following description made in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein like reference characters refer to similar parts throughout the several views and in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing one embodiment of our invention secured to a child's thumb in the preferred manner;

Fig. 2 is a top plan view of our invention as an article of manufacture; and

Fig. 3 is a side elevational view of the same.

Our device may consist as shown in Fig. 1 of a casing or harness member indicated generally as H which

when applied surrounds the child's thumb in the preferred manner shown. When so applied the harness member H extends across the end of the thumb indicated generally as 5 as at 6 and is secured at one end behind the knuckle 7 of the thumb by a band of moistureproof adhesive tape 8. The casing or harness member H, as shown, is in the nature of a casing framework. This harness member H when secured as shown in Fig. 1 in effect provides a casing for the thumb though it is open between portions thereof so that the adhesive tape 8 may register firmly with the skin of the thumb for positive engagement thereof.

As an article of manufacture our device for preventing thumb sucking is preferably integrally formed in a single die operation. As shown, it is formed of a thin flat sheet S of Vinylite and it has opposite surfaces 9 and 10 as well as a centrally located portion 11. Extending outwardly from the central portion 11 are four radially outwardly extending arms 12. As best shown in Fig. 2 these arms extend in opposite directions and their outer end portions are restricted in width as at 13. Each of the arms 12 carries at its outer end an upstanding ear or abutment member 14.

Extending upwardly from the surface 9 of the sheet S is a plurality of spaced short projections or teats 15. Since these teats 15 are spaced they create therebetween air passages 16 so that air may pass freely between the adjacent teats. These teats or guard elements 15 are at least semi-rigid in nature preferably and since the preferred material is Vinylite they are sufficient in diameter so as to have at least that much rigidity.

To utilize our device the central portion 11 is applied to the end of the child's thumb 5. The respective arms 12 are then bent rearwardly along the thumb and on opposite sides thereof as best shown in Fig. 1 so as to extend substantially normal to the central portion 11. The teats 15 carried by the central portion 11 will then extend forwardly while the teats 15 of the arms or side portions of the casing or harness H extend outwardly and laterally from the harness. The outer end portions of the arms 12 are then secured fixedly to the thumb 5 by applying a strip of moistureproof adhesive tape around the restricted portions 13 and in position so that the rearward edge of the tape lies immediately along the upstanding ears 14. The portions 13 which are restricted in width insure that the tape will engage the skin of the thumb therebetween over a maximum area and the positioning of the tape relative to the ears 14 prevents the device from sliding forwardly off the thumb and becoming disengaged.

After the device has been applied as described in the preceding paragraph the parent need not concern himself about the tendency of the child to suck his thumb. If the child inserts his thumb in his mouth preparatory to sucking the same and attempts to suck thereon, air will rush inwardly into his mouth through the passages 16 which are disposed between the teats 15. A child enjoys sucking his thumb only if no air can enter and since our device is so constructed so as to insure that air will enter when the child begins to suck his thumb, the child quickly becomes discouraged and uninterested in further indulging in this habit. Since a habit depends upon repetition the child will soon be broken of the thumb-sucking habit and thereafter the device need no longer be used.

It will be noted that because of the unique construction of our device the child wearing the device cannot remove or loosen it because it is impossible for the child to get at the adhesive bandage with his teeth. The ears 14 prevent the child from gaining access to the bandage and at the same time prevent the device from working forwardly from under the adhesive. Therefore the device will remain fast, this despite the presence of water or

saliva and it will not twist in the manner well known that other devices for this purpose which are attached to the wrist.

Our device has a number of very distinct advantages. The primary advantage, of course, is that our device is more effective than devices previously known and is so because it takes the enjoyment out of the habit for the child for the simple reason that the child does not enjoy the thumb-sucking action if air enters his mouth while indulging in it. Another advantage is that the device is substantially more sanitary than other devices such as those which are connected to the wrist by a bandage, string or other securing devices. The smooth outer surface of the moistureproof adhesive substantially reduces possible contamination and collection of germs on the securing means for holding the device upon the child's thumb.

Another advantage of our device is that it is extremely simple and easy to apply to the child's thumb and it can just as readily be removed without any substantial amount of inconvenience. In addition, it may be used repeatedly as desired and may be washed or boiled for sterilization of the same.

Another advantage of our device is that once it has been attached to the child's thumb it is less likely to become insecure or detached for it will be held in the desired position more effectively as a result of the construction of the device. It should be noted that it cannot be sucked off the thumb as is the case with many such devices for the simple reason that air enters into the child's mouth through the passages **16** during any attempt to suck upon the device.

Another advantage of our device is that there is ready access of air to the various portions of the thumb. This avoids the formation of rashes, etc. which are so oftentimes experienced in children when portions of their skin are prevented from being exposed to the air.

An additional advantage of our device is that it is substantially safer than other types of devices for preventing thumb-sucking. There is no possibility of a portion of this device becoming loose or detached with subsequent danger of the child swallowing all or a part thereof as is the case with the bandage type of device or securement. Also there is no danger of the child choking upon any loose or detached segments of the device because it will be securely attached to the thumb and no portion thereof will become disengaged as a result of normal activities of the child.

It should also be noted that our device can be manufactured very simply and in large numbers from a minimum of materials. It should be noted that each device can be manufactured as a result of a single die operation and that the material used is relatively inexpensive. As a result these devices can be manufactured very inexpensively and, of course, can be sold to the public at a very low cost.

It will, of course, be understood that various changes may be made in the form, details, arrangement and proportions of the parts without departing from the scope of our invention which consists of the matter shown and described herein and set forth in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A device for the prevention of thumb-sucking comprising a casing member adapted to be fixedly secured to a child's thumb in surrounding relation and having an outer surface at each of the opposite sides of the thumb when so secured, and a plurality of spaced teat-like projections carried by said casing member and extending outwardly from the outer surface of said member at at least three of the sides of the thumb when so secured whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said projections when the child places the thumb surrounded by said casing member into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

2. A device for the prevention of thumb-sucking comprising a casing member adapted to be fixedly secured to a child's thumb in surrounding relation and having an outer surface at each of the opposite sides of the thumb when so secured, and a plurality of spaced teats carried by said casing member and extending outwardly and laterally from the outer surface thereof at each of the opposite sides of the thumb when so secured whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said teats when the child places the thumb surrounded by said casing member into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

3. A device for the prevention of thumb-sucking comprising a casing member adapted to be fixedly secured to a child's thumb in surrounding relation and having forward and rearward end portions and side portions, and a plurality of spaced elongated guard elements carried by said casing member and extending outwardly and laterally from each of the side portions thereof, each of said elements extending primarily normal to said casing member whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said guard elements when the child places the thumb surrounded by said casing member into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

4. A device for the prevention of thumb-sucking comprising a casing member having forward and rearward end portions and having side portions, said casing member being adapted at its rearward end portion to be fixedly secured to a child's thumb in surrounding relation, and a plurality of spaced teat-like projections some of which extend forwardly from the forward end portion of said casing member and some of which extend laterally outwardly from each of the side portions of said casing member whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said projections when the child places the thumb surrounded by said casing into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

5. A device for the prevention of thumb-sucking comprising a casing framework having forward and rearward end portions and having a plurality of side portions spaced from each other, said casing framework being adapted to be fixedly secured by its rearward end portions to a child's thumb in surrounding relation, and a plurality of at least semi-rigid spaced teats carried by said spaced side portions and extending outwardly therefrom whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacing between said teats when the child places the thumb surrounded by said casing framework into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

6. A device for the prevention of thumb-sucking comprising a harness adapted to be secured to the thumb of a child in thumb surrounding relation, said harness having an inner surface and an outer surface, and a plurality of spaced teats carried by said harness and extending outwardly from the outer surface thereof whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said teats when the child places the thumb surrounded by said harness into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

7. In an article of manufacture, a sheet of tough material having a central portion, a plurality of arms carried by said central portion and extending outwardly therefrom and being swingable to a position where they extend substantially normal to the plane of said central portion of said sheet, said arms having opposed surfaces and having their outer end portions adapted to be fixedly secured to a child's thumb when said sheet is placed in surrounding relation thereto, and a plurality of spaced teats carried by said arms and extending outwardly from one of the opposed surfaces of said arms whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said teats when the child places the thumb surrounded by said sheet into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

8. In an article of manufacture, a flexible sheet having a central portion, a plurality of arms radiating outwardly from said central portion, and a plurality of at least semi-rigid spaced teats carried by said arms and

extending away from one surface of said arms, the outer end portions of said arms being adapted to be fixedly secured to a child's thumb when said sheet is applied thereto in surrounding relation with said teats extending outwardly relative to the thumb whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said teats when the child places the thumb so surrounded by said flexible sheet into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

9. In an article of manufacture, a thin flexible sheet of tough material, said sheet having a central portion and having a plurality of arms carried by said central portion and extending outwardly therefrom and being swingable to a position where they extend substantially normal to the plane of the sheet when said central portion is applied to the end of the thumb of a child, the outer end portions of said arms being adapted to be fixedly secured to a child's thumb in surrounding relation, and a plurality of spaced teats carried by said central portion and said arms except for the outer end portions of the latter and extending outwardly therefrom whereby air will enter the child's mouth through the spacings between said teats when the child places the

thumb surrounded by said sheet into his mouth and attempts to suck it.

10. In an article of manufacture, a flexible sheet of tough material having a central portion and having a plurality of arms carried by said central portion, said arms extending outwardly from said central portion in opposite directions and being swingable to a position where they may extend substantially normal to the plane of the central portion of said sheet when said central portion is applied to the end of the thumb of a child and having outer end portions restricted in size, said outer end portions having outwardly extending ears at their outer ends whereby said sheet member may be more effectively secured to the thumb of a child by the application of a piece of adhesive tape surrounding said outer end portions and the thumb of the child at a point behind the knuckle of the thumb.

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