CLOSABLE CONTAINER FOR PERSONAL ITEMS

Inventors: Michael Circosta, Valhalla, NY (US); Goeran Jerstroem, Glen Ridge, NJ (US); Richard Whitehall, New York, NY (US); Jonathan Cedar, New York, NY (US)

Correspondence Address:
SEYFARTH SHAW LLP
131 S. DEARBORN ST., SUITE 2400
CHICAGO, IL 60603-5803

Assignee: Helen of Troy Limited

Appl. No.: 11/657,968

Filed: Jan. 25, 2007

Publication Classification

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.
B65D 8/14 (2006.01)
B65D 25/04 (2006.01)
B65D 43/16 (2006.01)

U.S. Cl. 220/8, 220/529; 220/810

ABSTRACT

A container for storing personal items, such as toothbrushes, cotton swabs, make-up applicators, and the like, is disclosed. The container has a body made from at least two telescoping walls, and a lid for closing an open end of the body. The lid is connected to the telescoping walls in a manner which provides better access to the stored items when the lid is opened. The container may be embodied such that the innermost wall of the body is raised to expose the stored items, or such that the outermost wall of the body is retracted to expose the stored items.
CLOSABLE CONTAINER FOR PERSONAL ITEMS

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present device relates to containers for storing personal items, such as toothbrushes, cotton swabs, and the like. Particularly, the present device relates to closable containers for storing personal items to maintain some level of a hygienic condition.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] In general, many people keep personal items, such as a toothbrush, cotton swabs, razors, make up brushes, and the like, in a bathroom. Unfortunately, bathrooms, as a result of warm and humid conditions, can often be ideal breeding grounds for bacteria and viruses. The specific uses of such personal items can also be a contributing factor to these breeding conditions. That is, toothbrushes and razors are often stored in a wet condition.

[0003] Further, many prior art containers designed to store these personal items will either be uncovered or have covers which require two hands to remove, such as screw caps, snap-fit lids, and the like. These prior art containers may even require that they be held by a user while being opened. Obviously, each of these scenarios has serious drawbacks with regard to hygiene and ease of use.

[0004] The present invention overcomes these and many other disadvantages of previous devices. Disclosed is a closable container which is decorative, yet functional; versatile as a container for storing any number of personal items; and is easy to open with a single downward movement.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] There is disclosed herein an closable container for storing personal items, such as a toothbrush, cotton swabs, combs, brushes, and the like, in a hygienic condition which avoids the disadvantages of prior devices while affording additional structural and operating advantages.

[0006] In a first embodiment the holder for storing personal items comprises a body having telescoping walls which define a cavity open on at least one end, the walls being capable of extension and retraction movement, a lid hingedly connected to a wall of the body, the lid being capable of moving between a first position covering an open end of the cavity, and a second position uncovering the open end of the cavity, and a lift mechanism having first and second ends, wherein the first end connects to a telescoping wall of the body and the second end connects to the lid such that extension and retraction movement of the telescoping body walls operates to move the lid between the first position and the second position and vice versa.

[0007] In a particular embodiment, the body is comprised of two telescoping walls, wherein the innermost telescoping wall comprises an extension, and the lid is hingedly connected to the extension of the innermost telescoping wall.

[0008] In another particular embodiment the holder comprises a first body having an outer wall defining a cavity, a second body having an outer wall surrounding at least a portion of the first body and capable of sliding movement thereabout, a lid hingedly connected to the first body and capable of moving between a first open position and a second closed position, and a lift mechanism having a first end connected to the second body and a second end connected to the lid, wherein movement of the second body moves the lid between the first open position and the second closed position.

[0009] These and other aspects of the invention may be understood more readily from the following description and the appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] For the purpose of facilitating an understanding of the subject matter sought to be protected, there are illustrated in the accompanying drawings embodiments thereof, from an inspection of which, when considered in connection with the following description, the subject matter sought to be protected, its construction and operation, and many of its advantages should be readily understood and appreciated.

[0011] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present container in an open position;

[0012] FIG. 2 is another perspective view of the container shown in FIG. 1 as it about halfway between an open position and a closed position;

[0013] FIG. 3 is still another perspective view of the container of FIG. 1, shown in a closed position;

[0014] FIG. 4 is an exploded view of the container of FIG. 1;

[0015] FIG. 5 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 illustrating the opening and closing motion;

[0016] FIG. 6 is front view of the container of FIG. 5;

[0017] FIG. 7 is rear view of an embodiment of the container of the present invention in a closed position;

[0018] FIG. 8 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 7;

[0019] FIG. 9 is a top view of an embodiment of the present container showing a divider within the container cavity;

[0020] FIG. 10 is another top view of an embodiment of the present container;

[0021] FIG. 11 is a cross-section of another embodiment of the present container showing the device in an closed position; and

[0022] FIG. 12 is a cross-section of the embodiment of FIG. 11 showing the device in an open position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0023] While this invention is susceptible of embodiments in many different forms, there is shown in the drawings and will herein be described in detail a preferred embodiment of the invention with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention and is not intended to limit the broad aspect of the invention to embodiments illustrated.

[0024] Referring to FIGS. 1-12, there is illustrated multiple embodiments of a closable container, generally designated by the numeral 10. The container 10 is described herein as usable for the purpose of storing a toothbrush (not shown). However, it should be understood that the present container 10 is also suitable for storing in a closed environment other personal bathroom-type items, such as razors, cotton swabs, cotton balls, hair combs, hair pins, make-up brushes, nail files, medicine droppers, and the like. Additionally, hygienic solutions, such as alcohol, peroxide, and mouthwash, to name but a few, can be added to the cavity to help maintain a more aseptic environment for the stored items.

[0025] The container 10 has a body 12, preferably comprised of at least two telescoping walls 14 which define a
cavity 20, a lid 22, a bottom 24 and a joint or lift mechanism 28 connecting the lid 22 to a telescoping wall 14. A divider 30 may be included to fit within the cavity 20.

[0026] The body 12 is shown in FIGS. 1-3 to include two telescoping walls 14, cylindrical in shape. The cross-sectional shape of these walls is almost without limit, and includes circular, oval, triangular, rectangular, square, as well as other geometric configurations. For ease of operation and manufacture, cylindrical walls are preferred.

[0027] In the embodiment shown, the innermost wall 16 is open at both ends, but preferably comprises bottom 24 to close off one end of the defined cavity 20. The bottom 24 may be integral or removable for ease of cleaning the cavity 20. The open end of the innermost wall 16 preferably comprises an extension 26. This extension 26 serves to move the pivot point of the hingedly attached lid a distance above the rim of the innermost wall 16. This length of the extension 26 should be at least approximately equal to the travel of the second or outermost telescoping wall 18, though it is preferably slightly longer.

[0028] The outermost wall 18 is open at both ends and fits about the outer surface of the innermost wall 16. Outermost wall 18 should frictionally engage the innermost wall 16, but should allow the two telescoping walls to slide freely against one another with only minimal work. A rib 32 may be provided on one of the walls (shown in FIG. 4) with a corresponding groove 34 in the other wall. By aligning the rib 32 and groove 34 feature, the two walls will be prevented from turning—and possibly binding—within one another. Other tracking or indexing mechanisms (not shown) may be used to facilitate operation of the opening and closing of the container 10.

[0029] At the end of the extension 26, a hinge portion 40, along with a hinge pin (not shown) connects the lid 22 to the innermost wall 16. The hinge portion 40 is comprised of a protrusion 42 having a pin channel (not shown) passing therethrough. The lid 22 is comprised of a corresponding fixed hinge portion 40 which affixes to the protrusion of the hinge portion 40 via the hinge pin (not shown). Certainly other configurations would be suitable for hingely attaching the lid 22.

[0030] The lid 22 is shown to be cylindrical and closed at the top end. As shown in FIG. 3, the lid 22 accounts for approximately 25 percent of the container 10 height. However, it is contemplated that the lid 22 could be a taller (perhaps as much as 50% of the container height) or a substantially flat, planar lid (not shown) with little sidewall height.

[0031] The lid 22 is also connected to the outermost wall 18 of container 10 via joint or lift mechanism 28. The lift mechanism 28 is preferably a flat, somewhat bendable member with a first end which is configured to connect to the outermost wall 18 and a second end configured to connect to the lid 22. In the embodiment shown, the connections of the lift mechanism 28 to the wall 18 and lid 22 are accomplished by hooked ends 38 on the lift mechanism 28 which each engage a different slotted opening on the two components.

[0032] A divider 30 may be used to fit within the cavity of the telescoping walls. Such a divider may include a plurality of dividing walls 31 of various heights. A small handle 33 to facilitate removal of the divider 30 may be provided as well. Preferably, the dividing walls 31 are no higher than the innermost wall 16 when placed within the cavity 20. However, the dividing walls 31 may be as high as the extension 26 without interfering with the opening and closing of the lid 22. The dividing walls 31, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 4, create separate, but not necessarily equal, compartments within the container 10.

[0033] In use, with reference to FIG. 5, as the outermost telescoping wall 18 is slid downward about the innermost telescoping wall 16, lift mechanism 28 is also pulled downward. The lift mechanism 28 imparts motion to the lid 22, which motion is translated into a rotational movement of the lid 22 about the pin of the hinge portion 40 on the extension 26 of innermost wall 16. As the lid 22 cannot move downward, it is forced to pivot about the hinge point. The lift mechanism 28 will then begin to displace from the sliding outermost wall 18 and may bow slightly. As the motion of the outermost wall 18 continues, the lid 22 traces an arc of approximately 90 degrees until it is fully open. The motion may be discontinued at any point, whereby the friction between the two walls will preferably hold such position.

[0034] Further, as the outermost wall 18 moves downward it exposes the extension 26 of the innermost wall 16. This configuration provides additional access to the cavity and any items stored therein.

[0035] To close the container 10, the outermost wall 18 may be raised. The lift mechanism 28 reverses the rotational travel of the lid 22 discussed above by applying a force at the connection point, preferably proximate the upper end of the lid 22. The joint or lift mechanism 28 is sized such that the lid 22 returns to the closed position exactly as the outermost wall 18 reaches the height of the extension 26, thereby meeting with the lid 22.

[0036] It should be noted that while the above-description details movement of the outermost wall 18 to open the lid 22 of container 10, it is more likely that the user will open the lid 22 to thereby move the outermost wall 18 and expose the items within. Due to the travel of the outermost wall 18 across the center-point of the container 10, the latter scenario is preferred and more effective for some uses. Likewise, closing the container 10 by upward movement of the outermost wall 18, as also described above, may be more effectively accomplished by closing the lid 22 to move the outermost wall 18 upwards. Those skilled in the art would understand the nuances and benefits of the design and operational differences for various uses.

[0037] In an alternate embodiment, shown in FIGS. 11 and 12, the outermost wall 118 is stationary, while the innermost wall 116 extends upward. The outermost wall 118 of this embodiment is preferably longer than in the embodiment of FIG. 1. However, all other connections are substantially similar to those described above. The difference in operation is a result of the fixed, lengthier outermost wall 118 and the slideable configuration of innermost wall 116. A tracking channel 50 is provided on the interior surface of the outermost wall 118 such that it engages the extension of the innermost wall 116. As the lid 122 is opened, lift mechanism 128 applies a downward force to the fixed outermost wall 118. Because the outermost wall 118 is stationary, the lid 122 lifts upward on the innermost wall 116 at the hinge portion 140 connected to the extension 126. The slideable innermost wall 116 moves upward within the outermost wall 118. The innermost wall 116, which preferably has a closed bottom end, elevates its contents as well.

[0038] The matter set forth in the foregoing description and accompanying drawings is offered by way of illustration only and not as a limitation. While particular embodiments have been shown and described, it will be apparent to those skilled
in the art that changes and modifications may be made without departing from the broader aspects of applicants' contribution. The actual scope of the protection sought is intended to be defined in the following claims when viewed in their proper perspective based on the prior art.

What is claimed is:

1. A holder for storing personal items comprising:
a body having telescoping walls which define a cavity open on at least one end, the walls being capable of extension and retraction movement;
a lid hingably connected to a wall of the body, the lid being capable of moving between a first position covering an open end of the cavity, and a second position uncovering the open end of the cavity; and
a lift mechanism having first and second ends, wherein the first end connects to a telescoping wall of the body and the second end connects to the lid such that extension and retraction movement of the telescoping body walls operates to move the lid between the first position and the second position and vice versa.

2. The holder of claim 1, wherein extension movement of the telescoping walls operates to move the lid to the first position and vice versa.

3. The holder of claim 1, wherein retraction movement of the telescoping walls operates to move the lid to the first position and vice versa.

4. The holder of claim 1, further comprising a divider for the cavity.

5. The holder of claim 1, wherein the body is comprised of two telescoping walls.

6. The holder of claim 1, wherein the body is comprised of at least two telescoping walls.

7. The holder of claim 3, wherein the lid is connected to an innermost telescoping wall.

8. The holder of claim 1, wherein the lid is connected to an innermost telescoping wall.

9. The holder of claim 1, wherein the first end of the lift mechanism connects to an outermost telescoping wall.

10. The holder of claim 6, wherein the first end of the lift mechanism connects to an outermost telescoping wall.

11. The holder of claim 6, wherein the innermost telescoping wall comprises an extension, wherein the lid is hingably connected to the extension of the innermost telescoping wall.

12. The holder of claim 9, wherein the telescoping walls extend a length approximately equal to the extension of the innermost telescoping wall.

13. The holder of claim 1, wherein an innermost telescoping wall moves upward within an outermost telescoping wall.

14. The holder of claim 1, wherein an outermost telescoping wall moves downward about an innermost telescoping wall.

15. A holder for personal items comprising:
a first body having an outer wall defining a cavity;
a second body having an outer wall surrounding at least a portion of the first body and capable of sliding movement thereabout;
a lid hingably connected to the first body and capable of moving between a first open position and a second closed position; and
a lift mechanism having a first end connected to the second body and a second end connected to the lid, wherein movement of the second body moves the lid between the first open position and the second closed position.

16. The holder of claim 11, further comprising an extension attached to the first body and wherein the lid is hingably connected to the extension.

17. The holder of claim 12, wherein the extension is integral to the first body.

18. The holder of claim 11, further comprising a divider within the cavity of the first body.

19. The holder of claim 14, wherein the divider is removable from the cavity.

20. The holder of claim 11, wherein the first body has a cross section selected from the group of geometric shapes consisting of circular, square, rectangular, oval, triangular, and variations thereof.

21. The holder of claim 16, wherein the second body has a cross section similar to that of the first body.

* * * * *