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WO-A1-2010/012036
GB-A- 2 319 508
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DESCRIPTION

[0001] This invention relates to labels for attachment to an article such as a container, the label providing a leaflet that can be accessed by a user. WO9747465A is considered the closest prior art and discloses all the features of the preamble of claim 1.

[0002] According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a label having a lengthwise direction and a transverse direction, the label comprising:

a back sheet having adhesive on its rear surface;

a leaflet having a front sheet which extends from a first transverse edge to a second transverse edge spaced from said first transverse edge in said lengthwise direction, the leaflet being secured with respect to the front surface of the back sheet;

a laminate layer having an adhesive on its rear surface secured to and covering the front sheet, the laminate layer having an extended part projecting beyond the front sheet in the lengthwise direction away from said second transverse edge to a free edge, the extended part of the laminate layer having a transverse line of weakening which is adjacent but spaced from said second transverse edge and which is spaced from the free edge of the laminate layer by a lengthwise distance at least the length between the first and second transverse edges.

[0003] Preferably, the back sheet has an extension which projects a short lengthwise distance beyond the first transverse edge in a direction opposite to the second transverse edge and often a second free edge of the laminate layer opposite the free edge of the extended part of the laminate layer coincides with the edge of the back sheet extension. In many arrangements the transverse line of weakening comprises at least one line of perforations extending from one transverse edge of the extended part of the laminate layer to its opposite transverse edge and usually but not always the line of weakening is substantially straight and perpendicular to the lengthwise direction.

[0004] In preferred embodiments a widened portion of the laminate layer adjacent the laminate free edge has a transverse width greater than the transverse width of the leaflet front sheet, said widened portion extending in the lengthwise direction for a distance greater than the length of the leaflet front sheet. Often said distance is greater than the length of the leaflet front sheet and the back sheet extension. Conveniently, said widened portion of the laminate layer comprises upper and lower widened sections at opposite transverse sides, the widened sections extending transversely beyond imaginary lines aligned with respective upper and lower edges of the leaflet front sheet.

[0005] Usually the leaflet comprises a number of sheets, the second transverse edge of the front sheet extending slightly beyond the other sheets. Optionally, any or all of (i) the first

transverse edge, (ii) the free edge of the extended part of the laminate layer, (iii) the second free edge of the laminate layer, and (iv) the edge of the back sheet extension are substantially straight and perpendicular to the lengthwise direction. In some arrangements the second transverse edge of the leaflet front sheet has a portion which is substantially straight and perpendicular to the lengthwise direction and has a projecting tab portion. Normally that part of the laminate layer between the second transverse edge of the leaflet front sheet and the line of weakening, in use, constitutes a peelable and re-attachable tab to enable access to the leaflet.

[0006] Sometimes the leaflet is adhesively secured to the back sheet or is foldably connected to the back sheet, preferably at a location adjacent the first transverse edge of the front sheet. Usually the label is releasably attached to a carrier strip by means of the back sheet adhesive and that part of the laminate layer adhesive not secured to the front sheet and/or back sheet and this enables a number of labels to be carried conveniently on a roll prior to subsequent use.

[0007] According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a labelled container comprising a container and a label as described above, the back sheet being applied to a cylindrical exterior periphery of the container and the laminate extension continuing circumferentially around the container such that it overlaps and is adhered to the laminated front sheet of the label, the free edge of the extended part of the laminate layer being disposed between the second transverse edge of the leaflet front sheet and the line of weakening in the extended part of the laminate layer.

[0008] Often a portion of the laminate layer covering the leaflet front sheet is overprinted with information prior to attachment to the container and the laminate layer extension overlies that overprinted portion after the label has been attached to the container.

[0009] The invention will now be described in more detail with reference by way of example to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a front perspective view of a label according to the present invention,

Figure 2 is a lengthwise section through the label of figure 1 showing layers in exaggerated form,

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the label of figure 1 being attached to a container,

Figure 4 is a perspective view similar to figure 3 with the label fully attached,

Figure 5a is a radial section through the figure 4 assembly,

Figure 5b is a radial section similar to figure 5A but with the label just opened,

Figure 6 is a front view of an alternative label according to the present invention,

Figures 7 and 8 are opposite side perspective views showing the label of figure 6 being attached to a container,

Figures 9 and 10 correspond to the views shown in figures 7 and 8 with the label fully attached,

Figure 11 and 12 correspond to figures 9 and 10, but show the assembly as access to the leaflet is being obtained, and

Figure 13 is a front view of a further alternative label similar to that shown in figure 6.

Figures 1 to 5 show a first embodiment of the present invention. There is provided a label 10 which, in use, is attached to an article 11 which in the illustrated embodiment is a generally cylindrical container such as a cylindrical bottle for medicines. Other articles and containers are, of course, suitable for use with such a label 10. Until the label 10 is to be applied to the article, it is preferably attached to a carrier strip 12 in such a way that it is readily removed from the carrier strip. This may be achieved, for example, by the carrier strip 12 having a suitable release coating as is well known in the art. In practice a series of labels 10 can be stored on a continuous carrier strip such that a multitude of labels 10 can be stored on a roll prior to use.

[0010] Each label 10 comprises a back sheet 15 which has an adhesive coating 16 on its rear surface. On the front surface of the back sheet 15 is provided a leaflet 17. The leaflet 17 has a front sheet 18 which has a first transverse edge 19 and a second transverse edge 20 which are spaced in a lengthwise direction of the label 10. The leaflet 17 is connected to the back sheet 15 by means of an adhesive strip 21 in this embodiment. The adhesive strip 21 is located adjacent the first transverse edge 19 of the leaflet front sheet 18. Other attachment means are possible and it is also possible that the leaflet 17 is a folded extension of the back sheet 15. Also in the illustrated embodiment, the back-sheet 15 has a short extension 22 extending in the lengthwise direction away from the leaflet front sheet 18 and terminating in a free-edge 23.

[0011] It will be appreciated by the skilled reader that the term 'leaflet' used throughout can be any arrangement of folded sheets or could also be in the form of a booklet having a series of sheets folded or glued or stapled at one lengthwise end in the region of the first transverse edge 19.

[0012] The front sheet 18, and also the back sheet extension 22 are covered by a clear laminate layer 30 which has an adhesive 31 on its rear surface. In figure 2 it is shown how the laminate layer 30 overlies and is adhered to the front sheet 18 and the extension 22, one free edge 32 of the laminate layer 30 coinciding in this embodiment with the free edge 23 of the back sheet extension 22. The opposite end of the laminate layer 30 is provided with an extended part 33 which projects beyond the second transverse edge 20 of the front sheet 18 of the leaflet 17. The extended part 33 is also releasably adhered to the carrier strip 12 prior to the label 10 being applied to the article/container and is shown in truncated form for ease of illustration.

[0013] The extended part 33 of the laminate layer is provided with a transverse line of

weakening 35 at a location adjacent but spaced from the second transverse edge 20 of the leaflet front sheet 18. The line of weakening 35 may comprise one or more lines of perforations through the laminate layer 30.

[0014] The length X of the extended part 33 of the laminate layer 30 beyond the line of weakening 35 to a free edge 36 of the extended part 33 in the lengthwise direction of the label is at least the same as the length Y of the combined front sheet 18/back sheet extension 22 (if provided). This is not apparent in figure 2 due to the truncated illustration of the extended part 33.

[0015] The label 10 is shown being applied to an article in the form of a container 11. Typically such a container has a cylindrical surface to which the label 10 is attached. The back sheet 15 is attached to the container 11 and the extended part of the laminate layer 30 continues around the container 11 in a circumferential direction thereby to overlap the already laminated leaflet front sheet 18 and back sheet extension 22 (if provided). The label dimensions are chosen for the particular container dimensions such that the free edge 36 of the extended part 33 of the laminate layer 30 is disposed between the line of weakening 35 and the second transverse edge 20 of the label front sheet.

[0016] Once applied to the container 11, access to the inside of the leaflet 17 is not possible, although the front sheet is visible through the laminate layer. However, severing the line weakening 35 leaves only a small part 40 of the laminate layer adjacent the front sheet 18 secured to the container 11. This small part 40 can be peeled from the container 11 to gain access to the leaflet 17. After viewing the leaflet 17 the leaflet can be re-closed by resealing the adhesive part 40 to the container. In the illustrated embodiment the front sheet has a short tab extension 41 extending towards the line of weakening and this makes it easier to unpeel the small part 40 of laminate layer 30 from the container 11.

[0017] One particular benefit of this type of label is where additional or customised information 50 is printed on to the laminated label 10 after manufacture, but before application to the article/container. For example, in the pharmaceutical/medical industries the labels may be overprinted with information such as batch-codes, expiry dates, unique product identifiers, serial numbers. However, this overprinted information is susceptible to damage and can be in danger of being rubbed off. The present label 10, however, laminates over that overprinted area 50, thereby protecting it from damage.

[0018] Figures 6 to 12 illustrate a preferred and further advantageous embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment most features correspond to those of the embodiment shown in figures 1 to 5 and have, therefore, been given like reference numerals. Indeed the cross-sectional views 2 and 5 also relate directly to the figures 6 to 12 embodiment.

[0019] In figures 6 to 12, the extended part 33 of the laminate layer 30 has a widened portion 60. This widened portion 60 has a transverse width which is greater than the transverse width of the leaflet front sheet 18 by virtue of upper and lower widened sections 61, 62. The widened

portion 60 extends in the lengthwise direction from the free edge 36 to a position adjacent the line of weakening 35.

[0020] When this label is applied to the article container in the manner described earlier, the upper and lower widened sections 61, 62 are not aligned with the upper/lower edge of the leaflet 17, but overhang the upper/lower edges of the leaflet 17. This is shown clearly in figures 8 and 9, the widened sections 61, 62 serving to fully enclose the leaflet, thereby protecting the upper and lower edges of the leaflet from damage and from any possible fluid ingress.

[0021] Whilst there are shown upper and lower widened sections 61, 62 it will be understood that only one could be provided in certain circumstances, i.e. an upper or a lower widened section. For example, the additional protection may only be required above (or below) the label. One such situation could be when the label is applied directly above (or below) an annular bead around the container/article.

[0022] Figure 13 illustrates a modified version of the figures 6 to 12 construction. In this modified version the upper and lower widened sections are defined by lengthwise extending lines of perforations 65, 66. These lines of perforations 65, 66 extend from the free edge 36 of the extended part 33 of the laminate and assist when opening the label. Preferably, and as illustrated, these perforations are aligned with the upper and lower edges of the leaflet such that, on opening the label, the upper and lower widened sections 61, 62 of the laminate remain adhered to the container after the lines of perforations 65, 66 are severed.

[0023] In the arrangements discussed above, the leaflet 17 is directly secured to the back sheet 15 by means of an adhesive strip 21 and the earlier description states that the adhesive strip may not be necessary in embodiments where the leaflet 17 and its front sheet 18 are folded extensions of the back sheet 15. In other arrangements the leaflet and its front sheet may not be physically connected to the back sheet and may be secured in position relative to the back sheet by means of the laminate layer 30 being adhered to the leaflet front sheet and to the container/and or back sheet extension 22. In other words, the adhesive strip 21 shown in figure 2 (and other views) would simply be omitted.

[0024] In the illustrated embodiments the overall label shape and the leaflet shape are generally rectangular. In such embodiments it is simplest, although not essential, for the transverse edges to be generally straight and perpendicular to the lengthwise direction of the label/extended part of the laminate layer. It is also possible for the leaflet part to be non-rectangular and in such embodiments the extended part of the laminate may be suitably shaped to overlap and cover the leaflet part when secured to the article/container. However, it is also possible for the extended part to be shaped only so that it overlies the overprinted part of the already laminated part of the label. Also in the illustrated embodiments, the front sheet 18 is shown as extending beyond other pages 24 of the leaflet at the end remote from the first transverse edge of the leaflet, but this is not essential and all pages could be co-terminus in the lengthwise direction.

[0025] Additionally, the laminate layer 30 is preferably transparent, but could have different degrees of transparency and/or various colouration in predetermined areas or entirely.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

Cited references

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Patent documents cited in the description

- WO9747465A [0001]

PATENTKRAV

1. Etiket (10) med en længderetning og en tværgående retning, hvor etiketten omfatter:
 - et bagsideark (15) med klæbemiddel (16) på sin bagside;
 - en folder (17) med et forsideark (18), som strækker sig fra en første tværgående kant (19) til en anden tværgående kant (20) i afstand fra den første tværgående kant i længderetningen, hvor folderen (17) er fastgjort i forhold til forsiden af bagsidearket (15);
 - et laminatlag (30) med et klæbemiddel (31) på sin bagside, hvor laminatlaget er fastgjort til og dækker forsidearket, hvor laminatlaget (30) har en forlænget del (33), der rager ud over forsidearket i længderetningen væk fra den anden tværgående kant (20) til en fri kant (36),
 - kendetegnet ved at
 - den forlængede del (33) af laminatlaget har en tværgående svækkelseslinje (35), som er ved siden af, men med afstand fra den anden tværgående kant (20), og som er adskilt fra den frie kant af laminatlaget med en afstand i længderetningen på mindst længden mellem den første og anden tværgående kant (19, 20).
2. Etiket ifølge krav 1, hvor bagsidearket (15) har en forlængelse (22), som rager en kort afstand i længderetningen ud over den første tværgående kant (19) i en retning modsat den anden tværgående kant (20).
3. Etiket ifølge krav 2, hvor en anden fri kant (32) af laminatlaget modsat den frie kant (36) af den forlængede del (33) af laminatlaget falder sammen med kanten (23) af forlængelsen (22) af bagsidearket.
4. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 3, hvor den tværgående svækkelseslinje (35) omfatter mindst én perforeringslinje, der strækker sig fra en langsgående kant af den forlængede del (33) af laminatlaget til dets modsatte langsgående kant, og hvor svækkelseslinjen (35) fortrinsvis er i det væsentlige lige og vinkelret på længderetningen.
5. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 4, hvor en udvidet del (60) af laminatlaget (30) ved siden af den frie kant (36) af laminatet har en tværgående bredde, der er større end den tværgående bredde af folderens forsideark (18), hvor nævnte udvidede del (60) strækker sig i længderetningen i en afstand, der er større end længden af folderens forsideark (18).
6. Etiket ifølge krav 5 i forbindelse med krav 2, hvor nævnte afstand er større end længden af folderens forsideark (18) og bagsidearkets forlængelse (22).

7. Etiket ifølge krav 5 eller krav 6, hvor den udvidede del (60) af laminatlaget (30) omfatter øvre og nedre udvidede sektioner (61, 62) ved modsatte tværgående sider, hvor de udvidede sektioner (61, 62) strækker sig på tværs ud over imaginære linjer, der flugter med respektive øvre og nedre kanter af folderens forsideark (18).

8. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 7, hvor folderen (17) omfatter et antal ark (24), hvor den anden tværgående kant (20) af forsidearket (18) strækker sig lidt ud over de andre ark (24).

9. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 8, hvor en hvilken som helst eller alle af (i) den første tværgående kant (19), (ii) den frie kant (36) af den forlængede del (33) af laminatlaget, (iii) den anden frie kant (32) af laminatlaget, og (iv) kanten (23) af forlængelsen (22) af bagsidearket er i det væsentlige lige og vinkelret på længderetningen.

10. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 9, hvor den anden tværgående kant (20) af folderens forsideark (18) har en del, der er i det væsentlige lige og vinkelret på længderetningen og har en udragende fligdel (41).

11. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 10, hvor den del af laminatlaget (30) mellem den anden tværgående kant (20) af folderens forsideark (18) og svækkelseslinjen (35), i brug, udgør en flig, der kan tages af og genmonteres, for at give adgang til folderen.

12. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 11, hvor folderen (17) er klæbende fastgjort til bagsidearket (15) eller er foldbart forbundet til bagsidearket (15), fortrinsvis på et sted ved siden af den første tværgående kant (19) på forsidearket.

13. Etiket ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 12, hvor etiketten (10) er aftageligt fastgjort til en bærestrimmel ved hjælp af bagsideklæbemidlet (16) og den del af laminatlagsklæbemidlet (31), der ikke er fastgjort til forsidearket (18) og/eller bagsidearket (15).

14. Etiketteret beholder omfattende en beholder (11) og en etiket (10) ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 12, hvor bagsidearket (15) er påført en cylindrisk ydre periferi af beholderen (11) og laminatforlængelsen (33) fortsætter rundt om beholderen (11), således at den overlapper og klæbes til det laminerede forsideark af etiketten, idet den frie kant (36) af den forlængede del (33) af laminatlaget er anbragt mellem den anden tværgående kant (20) af folderens forsideark og svækkelseslinjen (35) i den forlængede del af laminatlaget.

15. Etiketteret beholder ifølge krav 14, hvor en del (50) af laminatlaget (30), der dækker folderens forsideark (18), er overtrykt med information før fastgørelse til beholderen (11), og

hvor laminatlagets forlængelse (33) ligger over den overtrykte del (50), efter at etiketten (10) er blevet fastgjort til beholderen (11).

DRAWINGS

FIG. 1

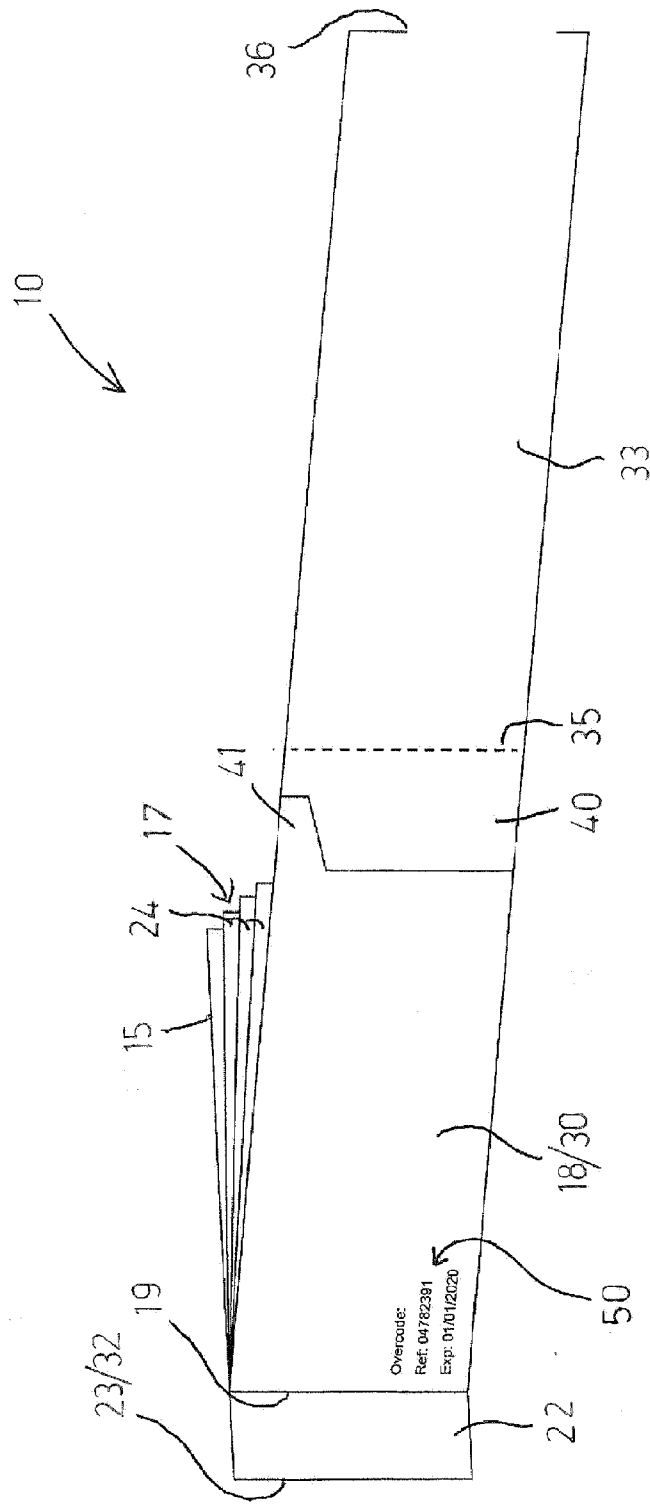


FIG. 2

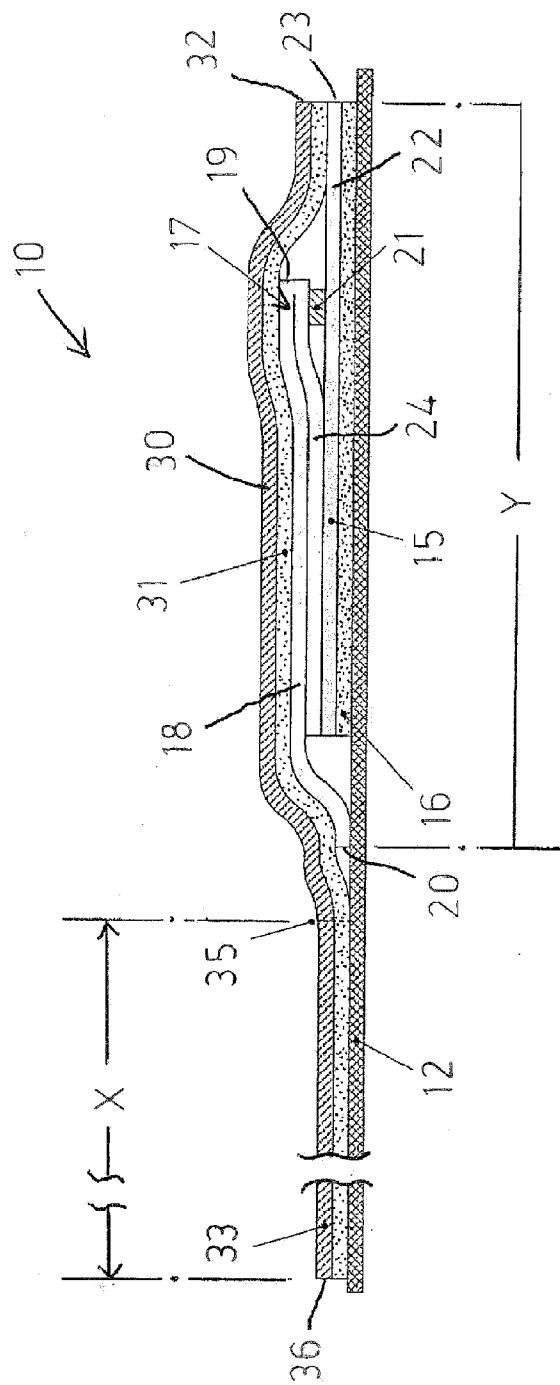


FIG. 3

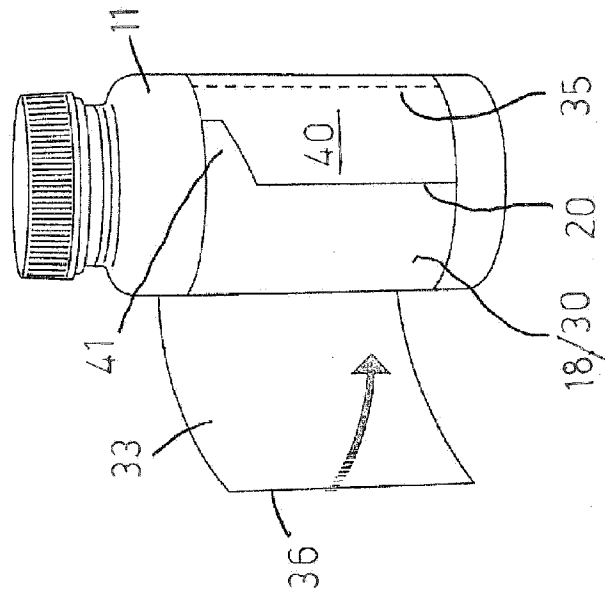


FIG. 4

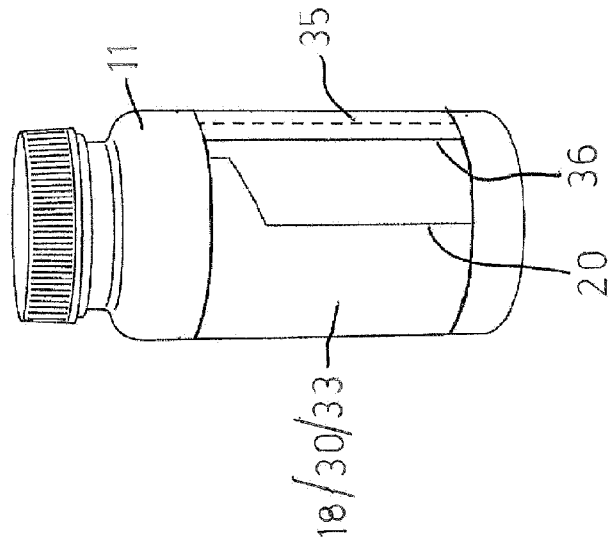
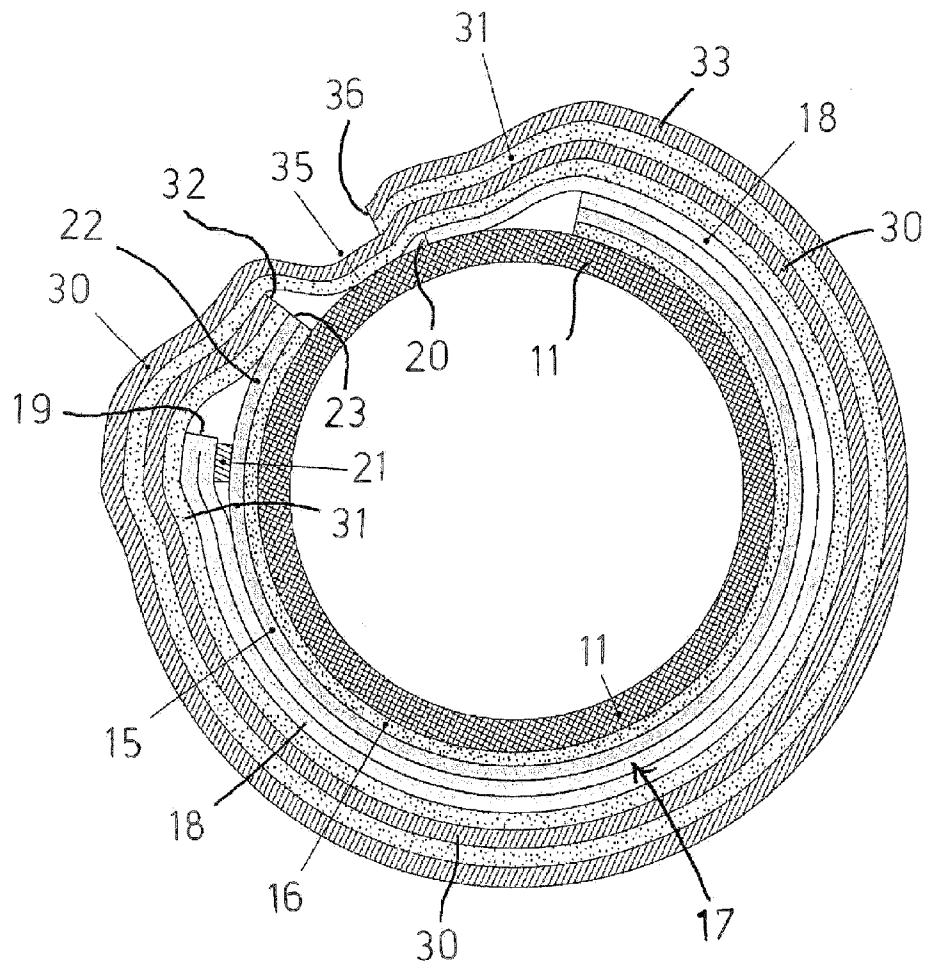


FIG. 5a



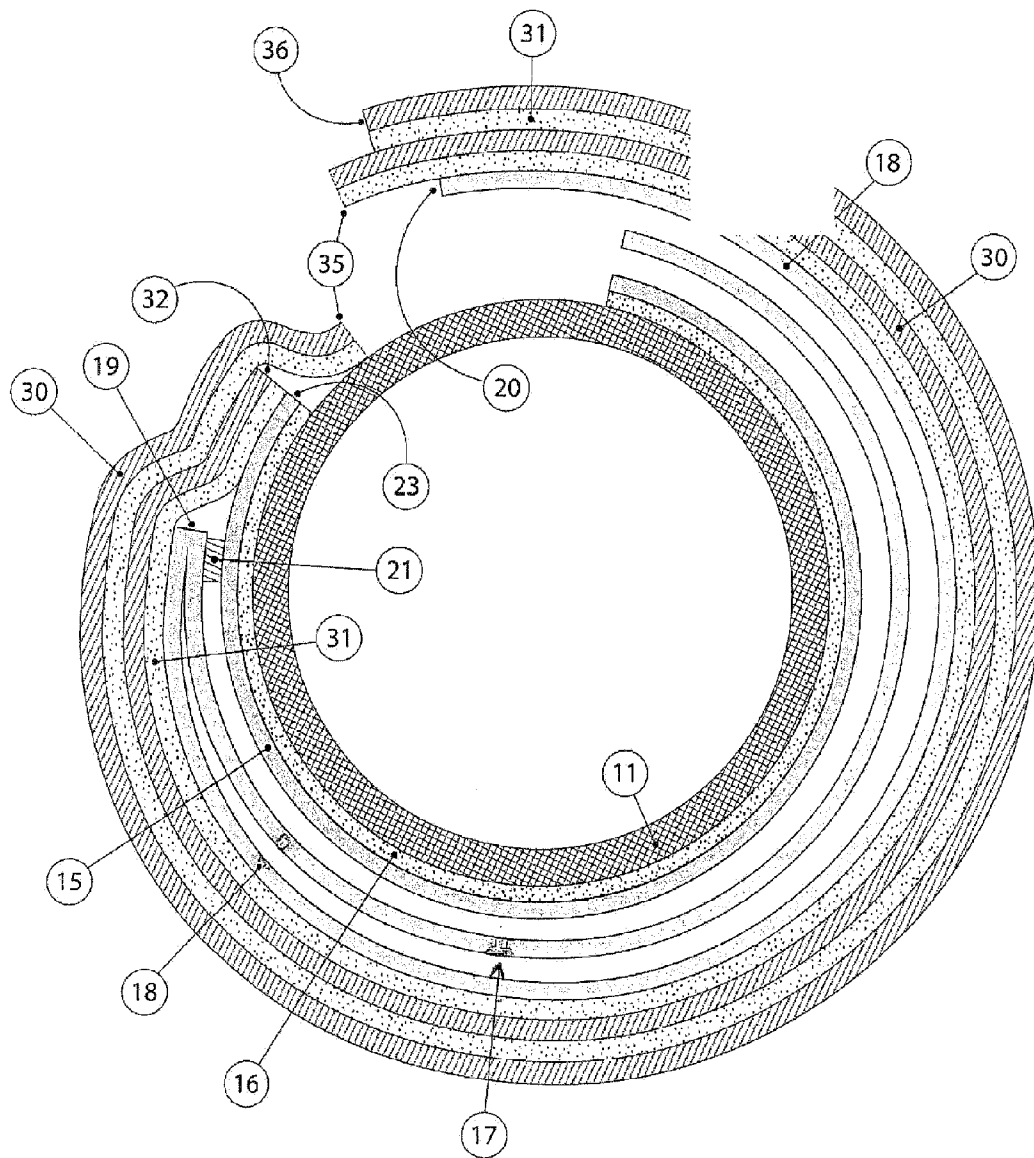


FIG. 5b

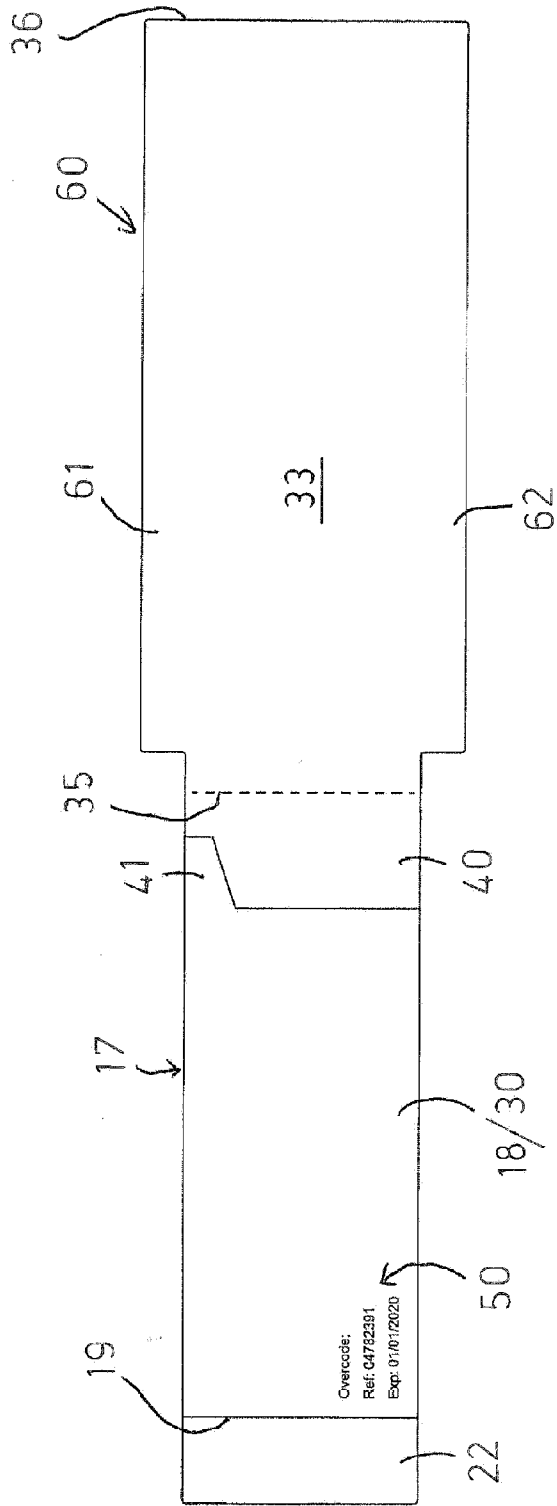


FIG. 6

FIG. 7

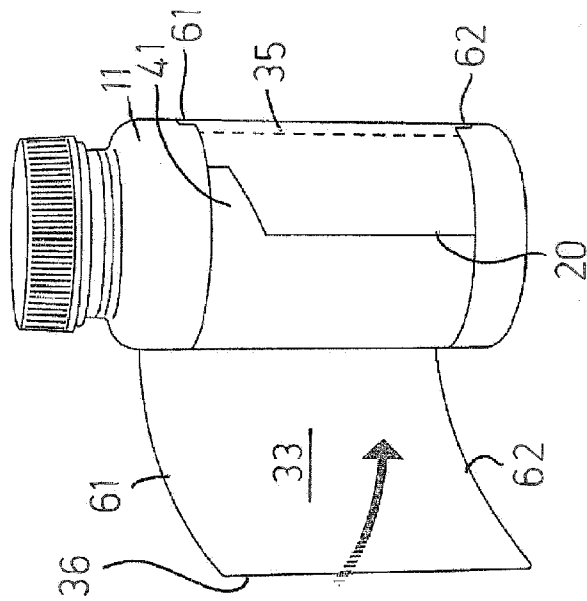


FIG. 8

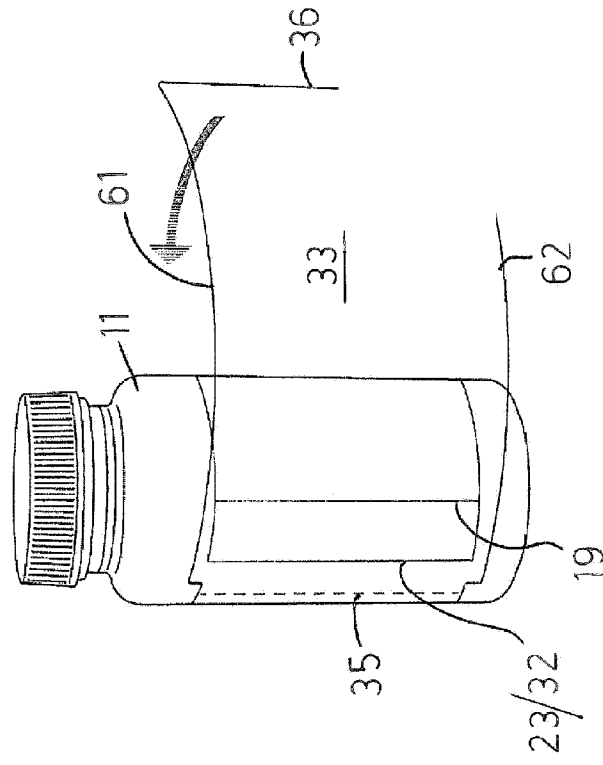


FIG. 9

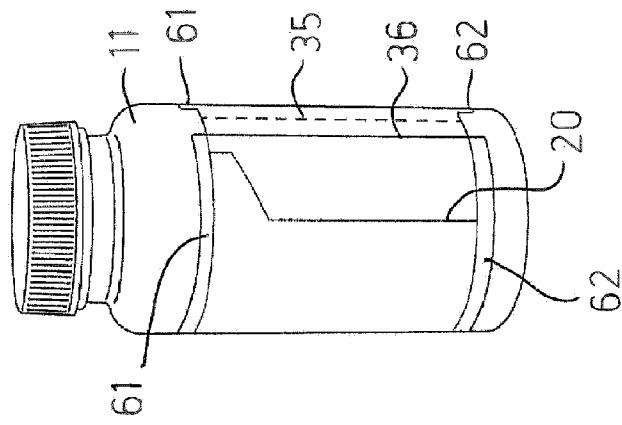
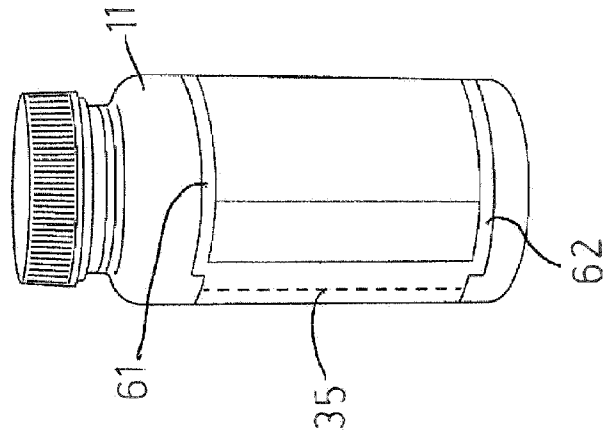


FIG. 10



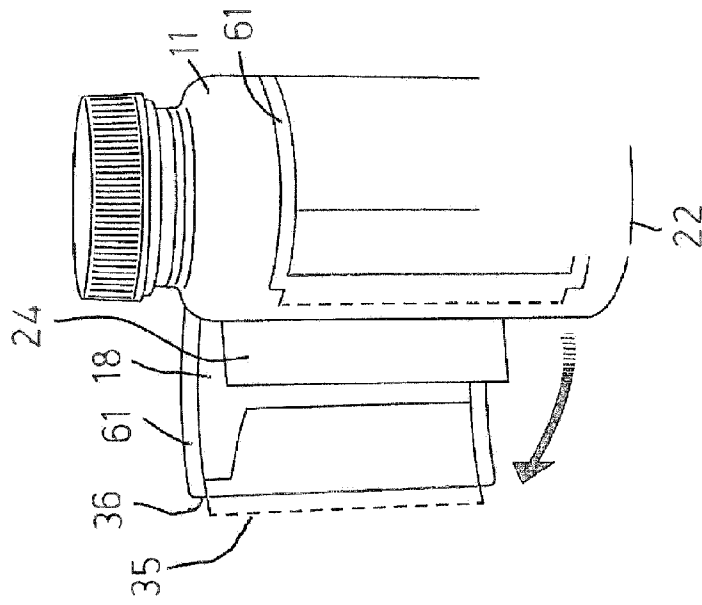


FIG. 12

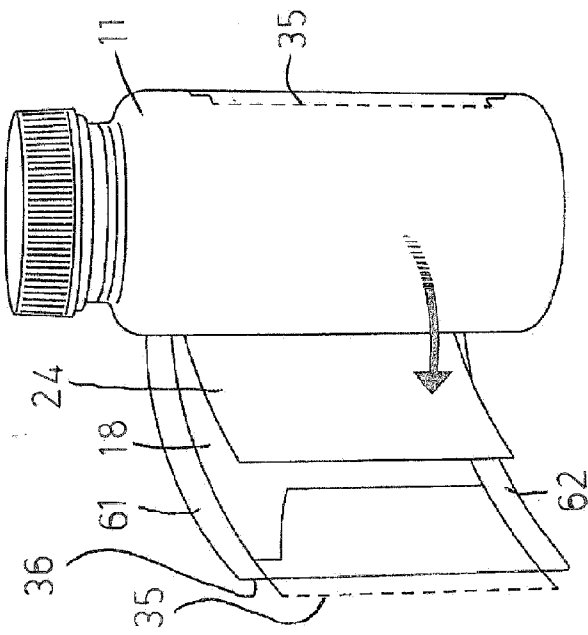


FIG. 11

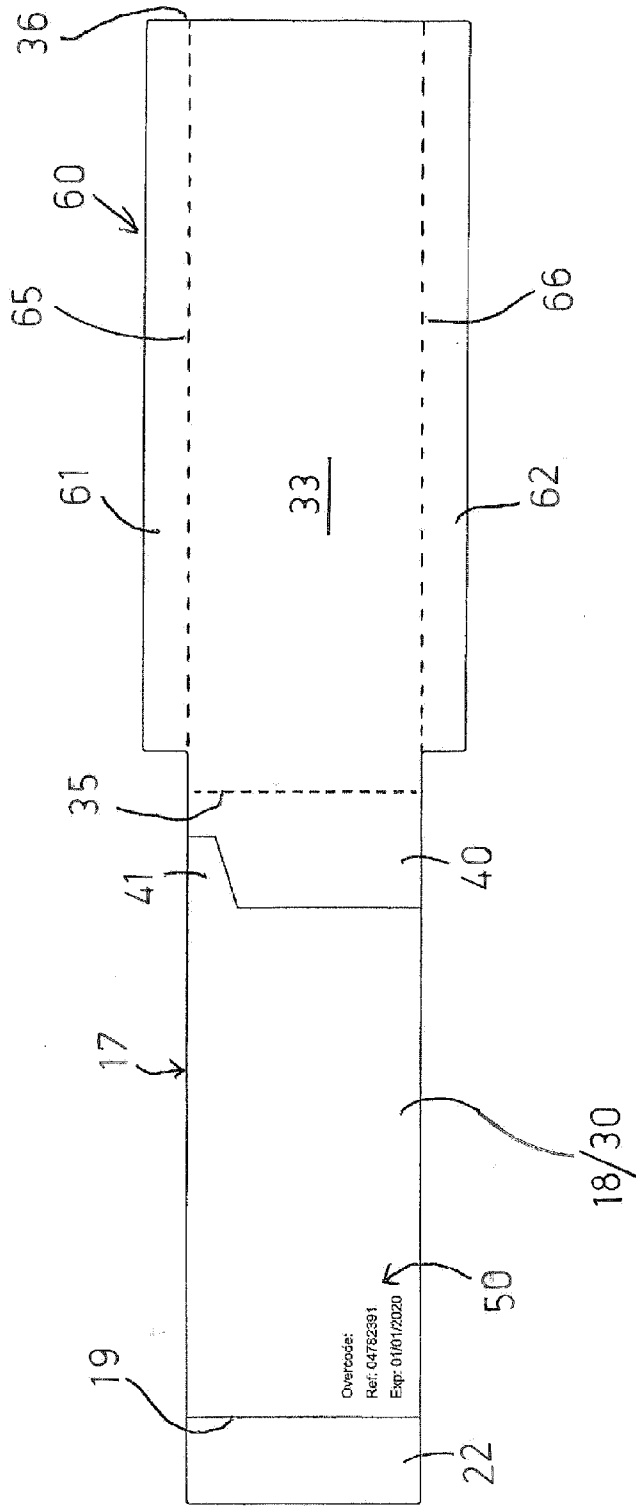


FIG. 13