A convenient, portable, combination “all-in-one” container has a first compartment for holding liquid food products and a second compartment for holding dry food products. The first compartment may be completely divided from the second compartment. The first compartment includes a cover/valve that controls flow so that liquids cannot spill from the compartment when a lid is in place. The second compartment has a removable cover with an access area which allows a child to push his/her hand through the access area in the cover to grasp and remove dry food. The removable cover may prevent the dry food from spilling out of the compartment when the container is tilted. The container may include at least one handle to assist the child to hold the container in their hands.
COMBINATION SPILL-PROOF DRINK CUP AND SPILL-PROOF FOOD CUP

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/393,363, filed May 4, 2010, the contents of which are herein incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to spill-proof cups and, more particularly, to a spill-proof cup that includes a first compartment for a liquid (drink) and a second compartment for a dry/solid (food) combined into a single container.

[0003] Often, parents carry containers for storing a child’s drink and snack items. Typically, parents need to carry one container for a drink and one container for snacks. Parents may also need to give the child a drink from one container, take that container back from the child and give them the snack container. This requires the parent to give the child back their drink container when needed. Optionally, the parent may give the child both containers at once, however, the child may, for example, tip over or lose the container not in the child’s hands.

[0004] As can be seen, there is a need for a container that may include one compartment for storing liquid products and another compartment for storing dry food items.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In one aspect of the present invention, a combination container comprises a first compartment adapted to contain a liquid product; a second compartment adapted to contain a solid product; a first compartment lid covering the first compartment; at least one hole in the first compartment lid adapted to permit the liquid in the first compartment to flow therethrough; a valve adapted to prevent unintentional flow of the liquid through the hole; a second compartment lid adapted to cover the second compartment; and an access area formed in the lid, the access area adapted to permit a user to access an interior of the second compartment.

[0006] In another aspect of the present invention, a combination container comprises a first compartment adapted to contain a liquid product; a second compartment adapted to contain a solid product, the second compartment connected to the first compartment; a first compartment lid covering the first compartment; at least one drinking hole in the first compartment lid adapted to permit the liquid in the first compartment to flow therethrough; at least one air hole in the first compartment lid adapted to permit air to enter the first compartment; a valve adapted to prevent unintentional flow of the liquid through the drinking hole and the air hole; a second compartment lid adapted to cover the second compartment; an access area formed in the lid, the access area adapted to permit a user to access an interior of the second compartment; and at least one handle on an exterior of the combination container.

[0007] These and other features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with reference to the following drawings, description and claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0008] FIG. 1 is a front view of a combination container according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;
[0009] FIG. 2 is a liquid container-side view of the combination container of FIG. 1;
[0010] FIG. 3 is a back view of the combination container of FIG. 1;
[0011] FIG. 4 is a dry container-side view of the combination container of FIG. 1;
[0012] FIG. 5 is a top view of the combination container of FIG. 1;
[0013] FIG. 6 is a bottom view of a liquid container-side lid, according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;
[0014] FIG. 7 is a front view of the liquid container-side lid of FIG. 6;
[0015] FIG. 8 is a side view of the liquid container-side lid of FIG. 6;
[0016] FIG. 9 is a top view of the liquid container-side lid of FIG. 6;
[0017] FIG. 10 is a top view of a valve for the liquid container-side lid of FIG. 6;
[0018] FIG. 11 is a side view of the valve of FIG. 10;
[0019] FIG. 12 is a bottom view of the valve of FIG. 10;
[0020] FIG. 13 is a back view of the combination container of FIG. 1, without its lid; and
[0021] FIG. 14 is a top view of the combination container of FIG. 1, without its lid.

The following detailed description is of the best currently contemplated modes of carrying out exemplary embodiments of the invention. The description is not to be taken in a limiting sense, but is made merely for the purpose of illustrating the general principles of the invention, since the scope of the invention is best defined by the appended claims.

Various inventive features are described below that can each be used independently of one another or in combination with other features.

Broadly, an embodiment of the present invention provides a convenient, portable, combination “all-in-one” container that has a first compartment for holding liquid food products and a second compartment for holding dry food products. The first compartment may be completely divided from the second compartment. The first compartment includes a cover/valve that controls flow so that liquids cannot spill from the compartment when a lid is in place. The second compartment has a removable cover with an access area which allows a child to push his/her hand through the access area in the cover to grasp and remove dry food. The removable cover may prevent the dry food from spilling out of the compartment when the container is tilted. The container may include at least one handle to assist the child to hold the container in their hands.

Referring to FIGS. 1 through 5, a combination container may include a first compartment 12 and a second compartment 14. The first compartment 12 may be adapted to contain a liquid product, such as a liquid food product, such as a drink. The second compartment 14 may be adapted to hold a dry product, such as a dry food product. A first compartment lid 16 may cover an open end 18 (see FIG. 13) of the first compartment 12. A second compartment lid 20 may cover an open end 22 (see FIG. 13) of the second compartment 14. In some embodiments of the present invention, at least one handle 25 may be disposed on the combination container 10. In some embodiments, two handles 25 may be disposed on opposite sides of the combination container 10, as shown in
FIG. 1. In still other embodiments, the handles 25 may not be present, allowing the user to hold the combination container directly by either or both of the first and second compartments.

[0026] The first compartment lid 16 may include a protrusion 24 extending from a top surface thereof. The protrusion 24 may be adapted to fit into a user's mouth. One or more holes 26 may be disposed on a distal end of the protrusion 24 to permit fluid communication between the inside of the first compartment 12 and the outside of the combination container 10. An air hole 28 may be disposed in the first compartment lid 16. Typically, the air hole 28 is formed in the top surface of the lid 16. The air hole 28 may permit air to flow into the first compartment 12 to replace fluid that is removed through the holes 26 during use of the combination container 10.

[0027] In some embodiments of the present invention, in place of the protrusion 24 and holes 26, various other means may be disposed for removal of fluid from the combination container 10. For example, a flip spout or a pop-up spout may be disposed in the lid, wherein the spout may be configured similar to conventional drinking bottle flip or pop-up spouts. In some embodiments, the flip spout may move from a closed position, typically with the flip spout disposed flat against the lid 16, to an open position, typically with the flip spout extending from the top of the lid 16. In the open position, the user may remove fluid from inside the container 12 via the spout.

[0028] In other embodiments of the present invention, in place of the protrusion 24 and holes 26, a straw may be removably inserted into a straw hole in the lid 16. The straw hole may have flexible protrusions extending therein to help hold the straw securely in the straw hole. In some embodiments, the straw may pass through a sealing member adapted to seal around the straw to prevent leaking out of the straw hole if the container is tipped over.

[0029] The second compartment lid 20 may include an access area 30 to allow a user to insert their hands or fingers to remove items from the second compartment 14. In some embodiments, the access area 30 may include a central opening 32 with a plurality of slits 34 extending from the central opening 32. The slits 34 may be cut in various patterns or shapes. In some embodiments, the material of the access area 30 may overlap the slits 34 so that even small items do not fall out through the access area 30. The lid 20 may be made of a resilient material that may flex as the user inserts their hand or fingers. The resilient material may flex back into its original position (see FIG. 5) after the user removes their hand or fingers. The access area 30 may allow the user to access the dry product in the second compartment 14, yet may prevent the dry product from spilling out of the second compartment 14 when the combination container 10 is tipped.

[0030] The first compartment lid 16 and the second compartment lid 20 may be removably attached to the first compartment 12 and the second compartment 14, respectively. In some embodiments, the lids 16, 20 may snap over the openings 18, 22, respectively. In other embodiments, the lids 16, 20 may threadably engage with the openings 18, 22. For example, threads 36 (see FIGS. 13 and 14) of the first container 12 may mate with threads 38 of the first container lid 16.

[0031] A liquid measurement scale 40 may be disposed on the first container 12 to approximate the amount of liquid disposed in the container 12. A dry measurement scale 42 may be disposed on the second container 14 to approximate the amount of dry food product in the container 14.

[0032] Referring to FIGS. 6 through 12, a sipping valve 46 may be disposed to prevent liquid in the first compartment 12 to leak out therethrough. The sipping valve 46 may allow liquid to flow therethrough when the user provides suction out through the holes 26 of the protrusion 24. The sipping valve 46 may be made, for example, of a resilient rubber or silicone material having a slit 48 cut therein. In some embodiments, the sipping valve 46 may frictionally fit into the protrusion 24 on a bottom side of the lid 16. In other embodiments, a cylindrical extension 56 may extend from the bottom side of the lid 16. The cylindrical extension 56 may provide an opening into which the sipping valve 46 may be frictionally inserted therein. This design may allow the removal of the sipping valve 46 and may aid in cleaning of the lid 16.

[0033] An air valve 50 may be disposed to prevent liquid in the first compartment 12 to leak out therethrough. The air valve 50 may allow air to flow therethrough when the user removes liquid through the holes 26 of the protrusion 24. The air valve 50 may be made, for example, of a resilient rubber or silicone material having a slit 52 cut therein. In some embodiments, the air valve 50 may frictionally fit into a cylindrical extension 58 may extend from the bottom side of the lid 16. The cylindrical extension 58 may provide an opening into which the air valve 50 may be frictionally inserted therein. This design may allow the removal of the air valve 50 and may aid in cleaning of the lid 16. In some embodiments, the sipping valve 46 and the air valve 50 may be formed as a single valve unit 54.

[0034] The combination cup 10 may be made of various suitable materials. Typically, the combination cup 10 may be made from a plastic material. The color of the combination cup 10 may vary according to user preference. In some embodiments, the first and second compartments 12, 14 may be made of a transparent plastic material, allowing a user to see the contents inside each compartment.

[0035] While the Figures show a particular size and shape for the combination container 10, other sizes and shapes may be within the scope of the present invention. For example, the compartments 12, 14 may be shaped with different cross section shapes.

[0036] It should be understood, of course, that the foregoing relates to exemplary embodiments of the invention and that modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:
1. A combination container comprising:
   a first compartment adapted to contain a liquid product;
   a second compartment adapted to contain a solid product;
   a first compartment lid covering the first compartment;
   at least one hole adapted to permit the liquid in the first compartment to flow through the first compartment lid;
   a valve adapted to prevent unintentional flow of the liquid through the hole;
   a second compartment lid adapted to cover the second compartment;
   an access area formed in the lid, the access area adapted to permit a user to access an interior of the second compartment;

2. The combination container of claim 1, further comprising at least one air hole in the first compartment lid.
3. The combination container of claim 1, wherein the first compartment is connected to the second compartment.

4. The combination container of claim 3, further comprising a first handle on the first compartment and a second handle on the second compartment.

5. The combination container of claim 1, further comprising at least one handle.

6. The combination container of claim 1, wherein the first compartment lid threadably engages with the first compartment.

7. The combination container of claim 1, wherein the second compartment lid is removably attachable to the second compartment.

8. The combination container of claim 1, further comprising a protrusion extending from a top side of the first compartment lid, the at least one hole being formed at a distal end of the protrusion.

9. The combination container of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of slits cut in the second compartment lid to provide the access area.

10. The combination container of claim 2, wherein the valve includes a sipping valve disposed between the at least one hole and an inside of the first container.

11. The combination container of claim 10, wherein the valve includes an air valve disposed between the air hole and the inside of the first container.

12. The combination container of claim 11, wherein the sipping valve and the air valve are connected into a single unit.

13. A combination container comprising:
   - a first compartment adapted to contain a liquid product;
   - a second compartment adapted to contain a solid product,
     the second compartment connected to the first compartment;
   - a first compartment lid covering the first compartment;
   - at least one drinking hole adapted to permit the liquid in the first compartment to flow through the first compartment lid;
   at least one air hole in the first compartment lid adapted to permit air to enter the first compartment;
   - a valve adapted to prevent unintentional flow of the liquid through the drinking hole and the air hole;
   - a second compartment lid adapted to cover the second compartment;
   - an access area formed in the lid, the access area adapted to permit a user to access an interior of the second compartment; and
   - at least one handle on an exterior of the combination container.

14. The combination container of claim 13, further comprising a first handle on the first compartment and a second handle on the second compartment.

15. The combination container of claim 13, wherein the first compartment lid threadably engages with the first compartment.

16. The combination container of claim 13, wherein the second compartment lid is removably attachable to the second compartment.

17. The combination container of claim 13, further comprising a protrusion extending from a top side of the first compartment lid, the at least one drinking hole being formed at a distal end of the protrusion.

18. The combination container of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of slits cut in the second compartment lid to provide the access area.

19. The combination container of claim 13, wherein the valve includes a sipping valve disposed between the at least one hole and an inside of the first container and an air valve disposed between the air hole and the inside of the first container.

20. The combination container of claim 19, wherein the sipping valve and the air valve are connected into a single unit.

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