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(54) **STERILIZATION WRAPS AND METHODS FOR STERILIZING ARTICLES**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

There is provided an improved sterilization wrap and a method for using the improved sterilization wrap to sterilize an article. The wrap is made of at least one sheet, and preferably two sheets, of sterilization material and in some embodiments, includes an additional sheet which may be made of an absorbent material. The sheet of absorbent material may have a smaller perimeter than at least one sheet of sterilization material. One side of at least one sheet of sterilization material includes a central portion. The absorbent material may be attached to the central portion of at least one sheet of sterilization material. The article to be sterilized is placed on the sterilization wrap and is then wrapped. The absorbent material provides sterility protection for the article in addition to the at least one sheet of sterilization material and also wicks moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place. A visual indicator may be provided to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

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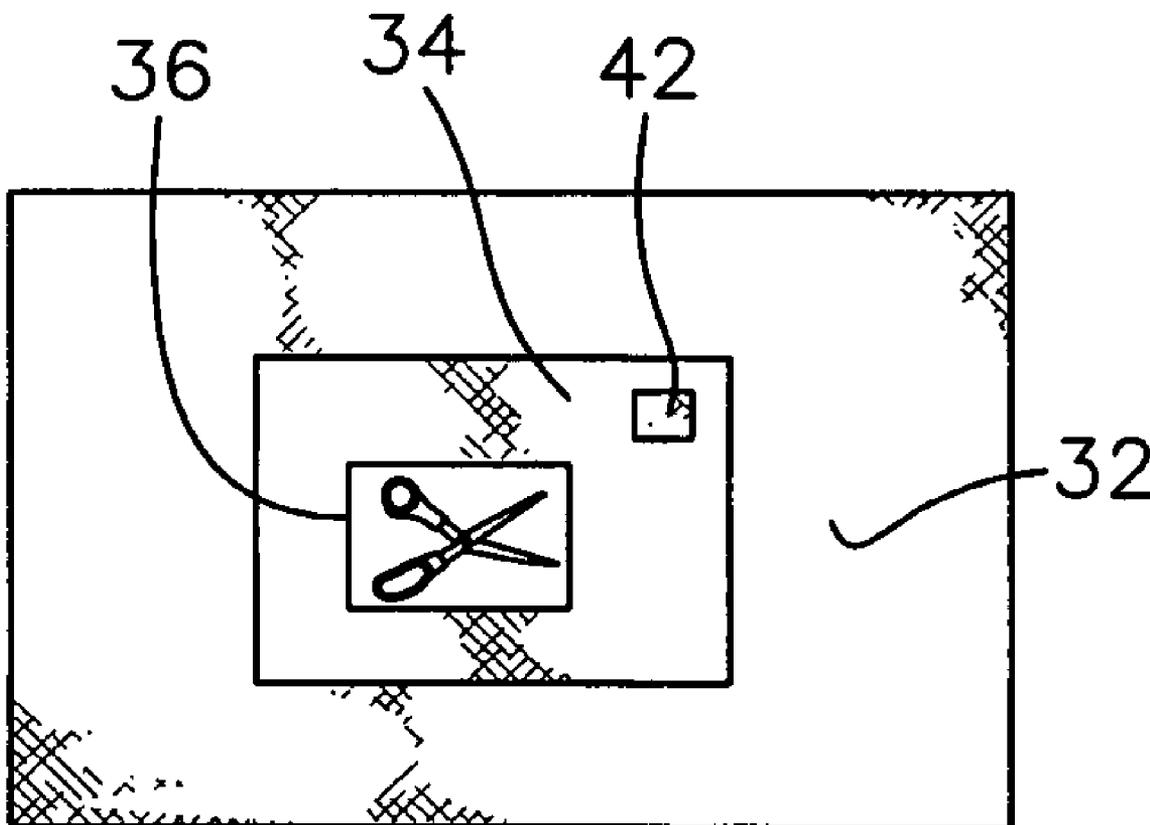
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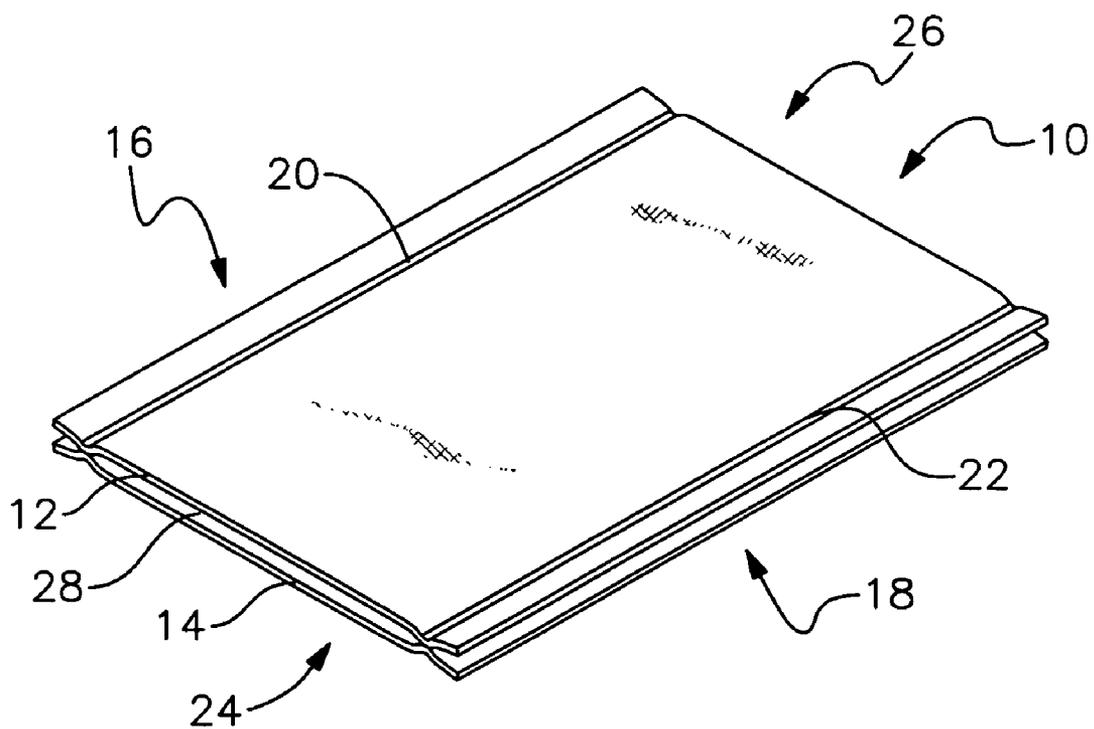
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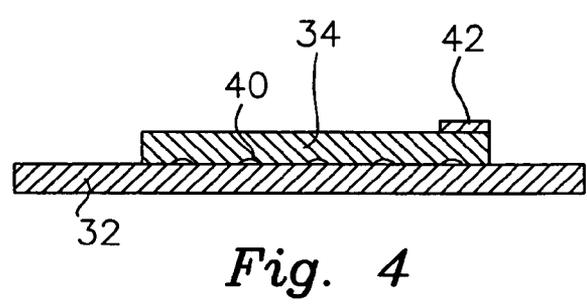
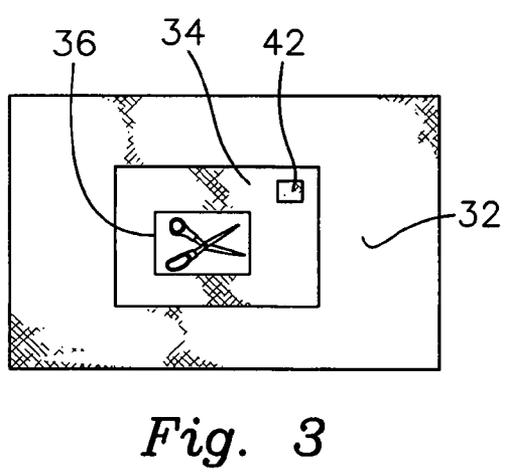
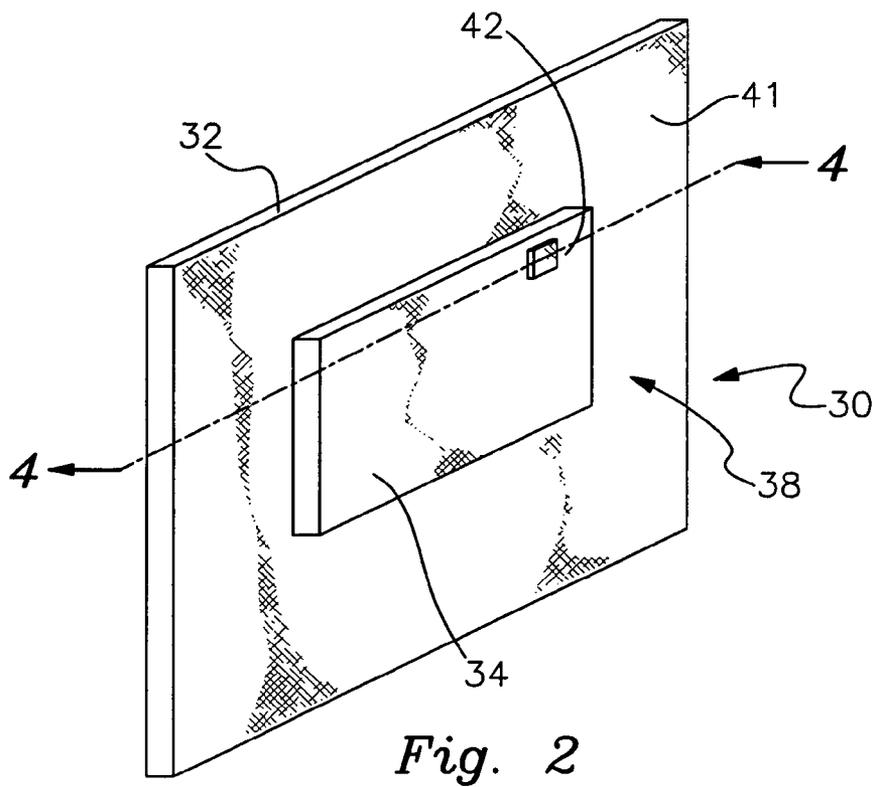
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*Fig. 1 PRIOR ART*



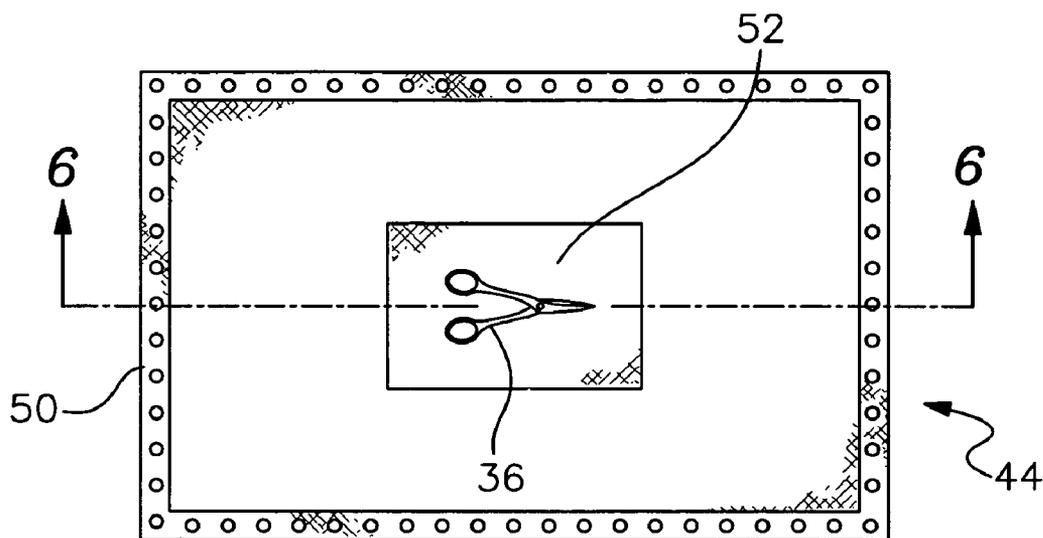


Fig. 5

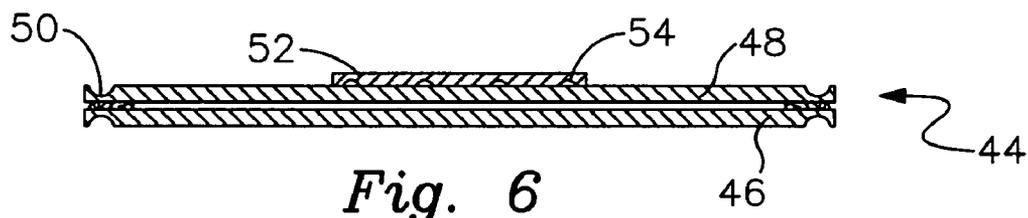


Fig. 6

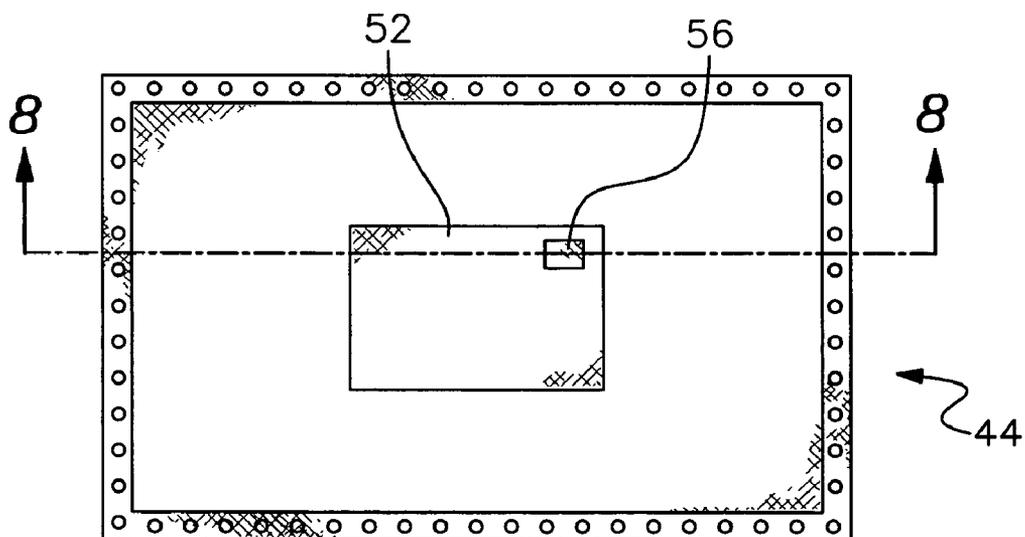
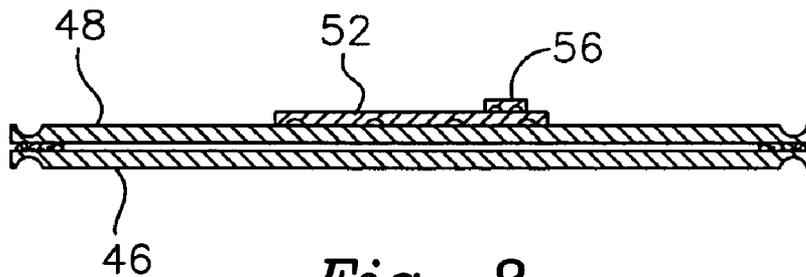
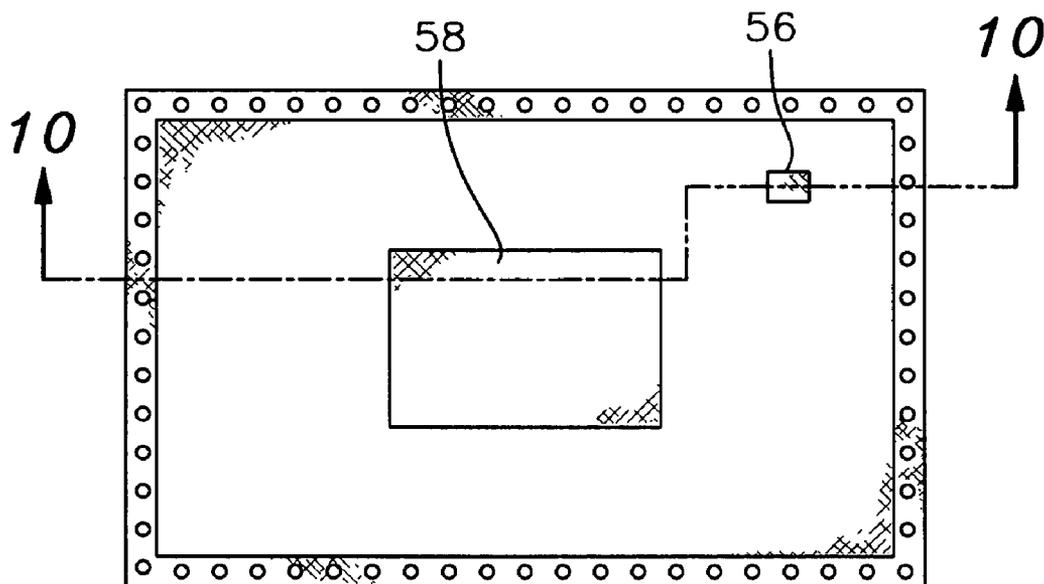


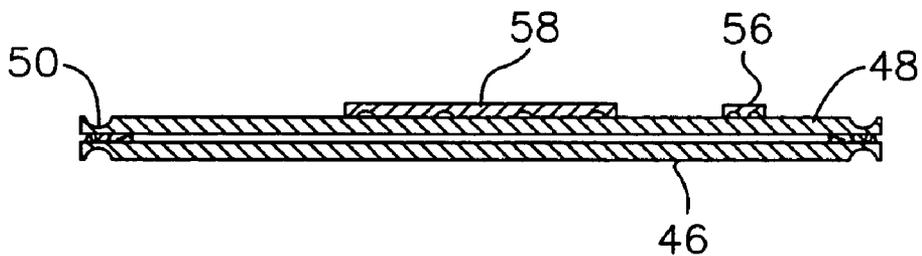
Fig. 7



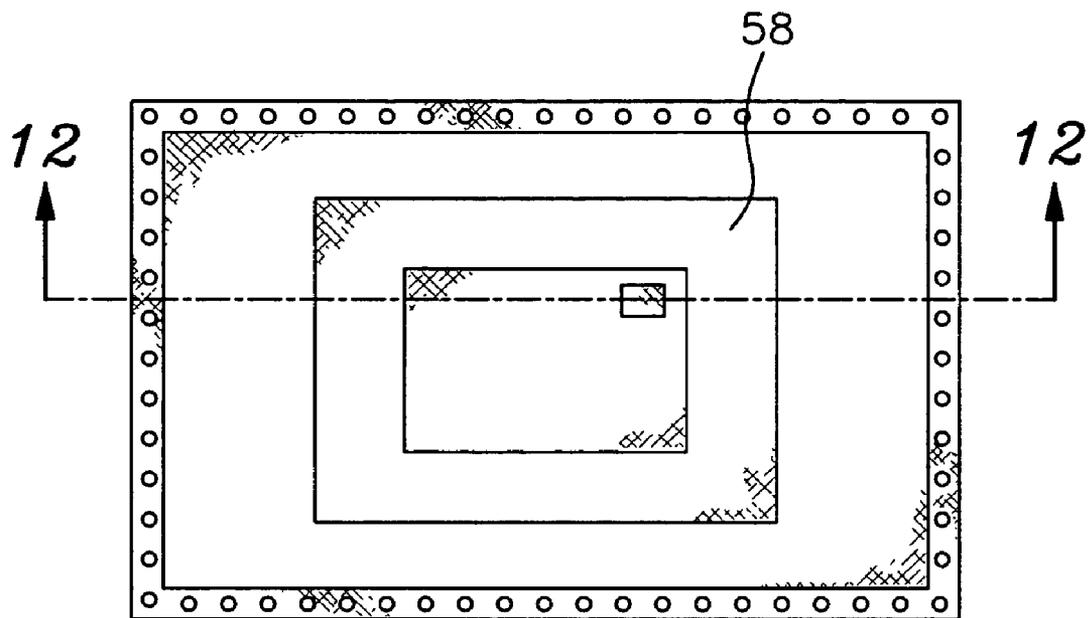
*Fig. 8*



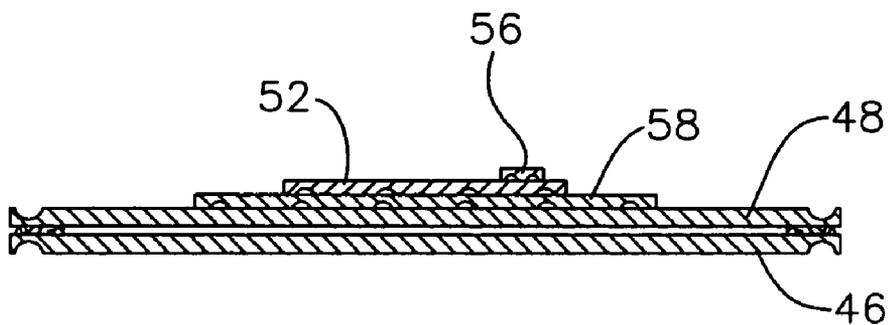
*Fig. 9*



*Fig. 10*



*Fig. 11*



*Fig. 12*

## STERILIZATION WRAPS AND METHODS FOR STERILIZING ARTICLES

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to sterilization wrap. More particularly, it relates to sterilization wrap utilizing two layers or sheets of material.

[0002] Reusable medical instruments must be sterilized prior to each use. Normally, these instruments are exposed to a sterilant to achieve sterilization. As used herein, the term sterilant is meant to refer to the sterilization effectors that are conventionally utilized with sterilization wrap, sterilization techniques, including but not limited to steam, ethylene-oxide, plasma, or the like. In order for the instruments to remain sterile after the sterilization procedure, the instruments must be wrapped in a material called sterilization wrap prior to the sterilization procedure.

[0003] The most common type of sterilization wrap is a three-ply laminate consisting of a layer of melt blown polypropylene sandwiched between two layers of spun bond polypropylene. The wrap includes bond points all across the face of the material so that the material is held together, i.e., laminated. This three-ply material is commonly referred to as "SMS", which is short for spun bond-melt blown-spun bond. Most hospitals specify SMS as the sterilization wrap to be used because SMS is sufficiently porous to permit steam, ethylene-oxide and other sterilization materials to penetrate through the material to the surgical instruments, but has filtration properties sufficient to prevent the passage of most pathogens therethrough so as to maintain sterility after the sterilization process. The wrap also protects articles during sterilization, and acts as a filtration medium for the sterilant.

[0004] In most hospitals, there is a protocol which requires surgical instruments to be wrapped with two separate sheets of material so that if one sheet becomes torn, there is a redundancy which will maintain the sterility of the surgical instruments. The wrapping of surgical instruments with two separate sheets of sterilization wrap obviously is labor intensive in that the clinician must first place the instruments on one sheet of sterilization material and wrap the instruments, and then place the wrapped package on another sheet of sterilization material and again wrap the package containing the instruments.

[0005] In an attempt to reduce the labor required to provide dual wrapping of surgical instruments, Kimberly-Clark Corporation has developed a product called "One Step® Sterilization Wrap." One Step® Sterilization Wrap is made by bonding two separate sheets of sterilization wrap together near two of the edges of the adjacent sheets. The Kimberly-Clark One Step® product is described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,635,134 and 5,688,476.

[0006] FIG. 1 herein shows one of the Kimberly-Clark One Step® products described in these Kimberly-Clark patents. Sterilization wrap 10 includes a top sheet 12 made of SMS and a bottom sheet 14 also made of SMS. The lengths and widths of top sheet 12 and bottom sheet 14 are identical and the outside edges of each layer align with one another. The two layers of SMS are bonded together near two opposing edges 16 and 18, as illustrated by bond lines 20 and 22. The method of bonding the two sheets together

may be ultrasonic bonding. The other two opposing edges 24 and 26 are not bonded together so there is a visible gap 28 between sheets 12 and 14 so that the user of the sterilization wrap visually distinguishes the fact that there are, indeed, two sheets. Apparently the purpose for ensuring that the two sheets are visually distinguishable as separate sheets is so that the user knows with certainty that the item to be sterilized has two sheet protection. However, because of this gap 28, debris could enter the region between the two sheets. With two of the edges being unbonded, it is possible that the sheets become misaligned so that if a sharp object penetrates both sheets, the resulting holes in each sheet could also become misaligned, thus reducing ones ability to determine whether or not there is a hole through both sheets. In addition, since edges 24 and 26 are not bonded and bond lines 20 and 22 are somewhat removed from edges 16 and 18, fibers from those edges could become released from the wrap. Also, since the edges 24 and 26 are not bonded, the two sheets might be pulled apart by mistake during use. Furthermore, since the wrap shown in FIG. 1 is not sealed right to the edges 16 and 18, the user might perceive that there could be contamination between the sheets.

[0007] Recently Cardinal Health has introduced a new two sheet sterilization wrap called Simul-Wrap® which overcomes the problems of the Kimberly-Clark One Step® product described above. The Simul-Wrap® product is made of two identical sheets of SMS sterilization material which are bonded together along all four edges. The Cardinal Health Simul-Wrap® product is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,517,916. However, both the One Step® product and the Simul-Wrap® product have certain drawbacks. Neither product is specifically engineered to wick moisture away from the article to be sterilized after sterilization takes place. In addition, neither product provides an indication that adequate sterilization has been achieved.

### OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is, therefore, one object of this invention to provide an improved sterilization wrap which utilizes two layers of material.

[0009] It is another object of this invention to provide a sterilization wrap made with two layers of material which is easy to use.

[0010] It is still another object of this invention to provide a method for sterilizing an article utilizing an improved sterilization wrap.

[0011] It is further another object of this invention to provide a sterilization wrap which will wick moisture from the sterilized article.

[0012] It is yet another object of this invention to provide a sterilization wrap which is less costly to manufacture than conventional sterilization wrap.

[0013] It is another object of this invention to provide a sterilization wrap which includes a chemical visual indicator showing that the wrapped article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

[0014] It is another object of this invention to provide a two layer sterilization wrap which includes a chemical visual indicator to distinguish the sterile field from the non-sterile field when the wrap has been opened.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0015] In accordance with one form of this invention, there is provided a sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized. At least one sheet, and preferably two sheets, of sterilization material and a sheet of absorbent material are provided. The sheet of absorbent material is bonded to a sheet of sterilization material. The sheet of absorbent material is adapted to receive the article to be sterilized. The sheet of absorbent material (a) provides sterility protection for the article in addition to the sheet of sterilization material, and (b) wicks moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place. The sheet of absorbent material may be made of cellulose or other absorbent matter which is capable of being formed into a sheet or layer. Preferably, the sheet of absorbent material is smaller than the sheet of sterilization material. Also, preferably, one side of the sheet of sterilization material has a central portion and the sheet of absorbent material is bonded to the central portion of the sheet of sterilization material. The sheet of sterilization material may be a different color from the sheet of absorbent material so that the user may readily differentiate between the two sheets and thus distinguish where to place the article being packaged. Also, preferably, the sheet of absorbent material is thicker or heavier than the sheet of sterilization material. In addition, a chemical visual indicator which changes color in the presence of a sterilant, such as steam, may be attached to either sheet near the article to be sterilized to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

[0016] In accordance with another form of this invention, there is provided a sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized. At least one sheet, and preferably two sheets, of sterilization material, and a sheet of reinforcement material are provided. The sheet of reinforcement material is bonded to a sheet of sterilization material. The sheet of reinforcement material is adapted to receive the article to be sterilized. The sheet of reinforcement material is preferably made of SMS and preferably has a higher basis weight than the sheet or either of the sheets of sterilization material.

[0017] In accordance with another form of this invention, there is provided a sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized in which at least one sheet, and preferably two sheets bonded together at their outer peripheries, of sterilization material are provided. The first sheet has an outer periphery and a central portion. Also provided is an additional sheet of reinforcement material that is bonded to the central portion of the first sheet of sterilization material. The perimeter of the reinforcement sheet is smaller than the perimeter of the first sheet.

[0018] In accordance with another form of this invention, there is provided a sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized, including at least one sheet of sterilization material and a sheet of absorbent material attached to the sheet of sterilization material. The sheet of absorbent material is adapted to contact the article to be sterilized. The sheet of absorbent material is also capable of wicking moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

[0019] In accordance with another form of this invention, there is provided a sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized, including at least one sheet, and preferably two sheets bonded together, of sterilization material, and a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of ster-

ilant. The chemical visual indicator will indicate whether the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

[0020] In accordance with another form of this invention, there are provided methods for sterilizing an article, including the steps of providing an article to be sterilized, and wrapping the article to be sterilized with the sterilization wraps described above, and applying sterilant to the wrapped article.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] The subject matter which is regarded as the invention is set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, together with further objects and advantages thereof may be better understood in reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0022] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a prior art sterilization wrap;

[0023] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the sterilization wrap, in accordance with one embodiment of the subject invention;

[0024] FIG. 3 is a plan view of the sterilization wrap of FIG. 2 with an article to be sterilized received thereon;

[0025] FIG. 4 is a sectional view of the sterilization wrap of FIG. 2 taken through section line 4-4.

[0026] FIG. 5 is a plan view of another embodiment of the sterilization wrap in accordance with the subject invention.

[0027] FIG. 6 is a sectional view of the sterilization wrap of FIG. 5 taken through section lines 6-6.

[0028] FIG. 7 is a plan view of yet another embodiment of the sterilization wrap in accordance with the subject invention.

[0029] FIG. 8 is a sectional view of the sterilization wrap of FIG. 7 taken through section lines 8-8.

[0030] FIG. 9 is a plan view of yet another embodiment of the sterilization wrap in accordance with the subject invention.

[0031] FIG. 10 is a sectional view of the sterilization wrap of FIG. 9 taken through section lines 10-10.

[0032] FIG. 11 is a plan view of yet another embodiment of the sterilization wrap in accordance with the subject invention.

[0033] FIG. 12 is a sectional view of the sterilization wrap of FIG. 11 taken through section lines 12-12.

[0034] The thicknesses of the materials shown in the drawings have been exaggerated for illustrative purposes and for ease of understanding.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0035] Referring now more particularly to FIG. 2, there is provided sterilization wrap 30 having a first sheet or layer 32 and a second layer or sheet 34. Preferably, the first layer 32, which is the outside layer, is made of SMS. The first layer 32 is sometimes referred to herein as a sheet of sterilization material. The second layer 34, which is the inside layer, may be made of cellulose or some other absorbent material,

which absorbs liquids and aids in drying and which also permits a sterilant, such as steam or ethylene-oxide, to pass therethrough, but inhibits pathogens from passing therethrough. Other absorbent materials could include, but are not limited to, absorbent synthetics such as hydrophillic spun-melt polyolefins, polyester, nylon, as well as polyrayons and bicomponent fibers. The second layer **34** is sometimes referred to herein as a sheet of absorbent material. In order to reduce the cost of the sterilization wrap **30** while not reducing its effectiveness, the second or inside layer **34** has a smaller perimeter than the first or outside layer **32**. It is preferred that the perimeter of the inside layer **34** be at least 25% less than the outside layer **32**.

[0036] As can be seen from **FIG. 3**, the inside layer **34** receives the article to be sterilized **36** thereon. Often the article to be sterilized is a tray containing surgical instruments. While inside layer **34** has a smaller perimeter than outside layer **32**, it should be large enough so that when the article to be sterilized **36** is wrapped by sterilization wrap **30**, both the bottom and sides of the article to be sterilized **36** is covered by inside layer **34**.

[0037] Outside layer **32** includes a central portion **38**. Inside layer **34** is adhered to the central portion **38** by means of gluing, ultrasonic bonding or some other form of adherence. Glue spots **40** are illustrated in **FIG. 4**. Alternatively, inside layer **34** may be made of SMS which does not have the liquid absorbent properties of cellulose. The structure of inside layer **34** when it is made of SMS is discussed below in reference to **FIG. 9**. In any event, this inside layer provides abuse resistance and containment properties over the prior art sterilization wrap described above.

[0038] By reinforcing the area of direct contact under the article to be sterilized **36**, the primary point of potential damage to the wrap has been addressed. The method by which trays are wrapped yield several layers of material folds on the top of the article to be sterilized **36**. In the event that wrapped articles get stacked on top of one another, thicker and/or heavier inside layer **34** protects the underside of the article **36** while the multiple folds are responsive to contact on the top side of article **36**.

[0039] As noted, also the inner layer **34** may be made of a moisture absorbent material, such as cellulose, which provides an enhanced moisture absorption function. After the article to be sterilized **36** has been sterilized, in particularly through a steam sterilization process, moisture often remains on the article to be sterilized **36**. This moisture enhances the growth of pathogens which may not have been killed during the sterilization process. By using an absorbent material, i.e., absorption material, as the material for layer **34**, this moisture tends to be wicked away from the article to be sterilized **36** and more effectively dried. Thus the chances of pathogen growth on or around the article to be sterilized is greatly reduced.

[0040] It is preferred that outer layer **32** be of a different color from inner layer **34**. Since inner layer **34** is always within the sterile field, this color differential will inform the sterile clinician that it is okay to touch any portion of the sterile field formed by the inside surface of outer layer **32** and inside layer **34**.

[0041] It is also preferred that a sterilization chemical visual indicator **42**, which may also be an integrator or

emulator, be adhered to inside layer **34** or to the inside surface **41** of outside layer **32** in the vicinity of inside layer **34**. The sterilization indicator could be of a chemistry which meets or exceeds the requirements of Class 1-Class 6 chemical indicators as defined by ISO-11140-1. The sterilization indicator turns color in the presence of steam or ethylene-oxide or other sterilant and will remain at that color after sterilization has taken place. This informs the clinician that the article to be sterilized has, indeed, been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions at the time that the clinician opens the wrapped article.

[0042] Sterilization indicators are known and two such indicators are described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,514,361 issued to Hirsch and U.S. Pat. No. 2,889,799 issued to Korpman, which are hereby incorporated herein by reference. Sterilization integrators are known and one such integrator is described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,448,548, which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

[0043] The sterilization wrap described above can be manufactured using conventional equipment and techniques readily available to those skilled in the medical fabric field.

[0044] The sterilization wrap described above may be used as set forth below. The article to be sterilized **36**, as shown in **FIG. 3**, is placed on the outside surface of inner layer **34**. The article to be sterilized **36** is then wrapped utilizing standard sterilization wrapping techniques so that a portion of the inside layer **34** covers the bottom and sides of the article to be sterilized **36**, and a portion of the outside layer **32** also covers the top of the article to be sterilized **36**. The wrapped package is then exposed to a sterilization process. The wrapped package is subjected to sterilants, such as steam, ethylene-oxide or plasma, for a predetermined period of time so that substantially all of the pathogens which may be present on the article to be sterilized **36** are killed. The package is then stored for usage. When it is time to use the article to be sterilized **36**, the package is unwrapped by the clinician. The sterile clinician will know it is all right to touch the sterile field formed by the inner layer **34** because the inner layer **34** and the outside layer **32** are different colors. The clinician will then observe the status of sterilization indicator, integrator, or emulator **42** to determine whether or not the article **36** has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions. The article to be sterilized **36** may then be used.

[0045] The above-described improved sterilization wrap provides the two layers of protection and ease of use associated with Kimberly-Clark's One Step® and Cardinal Health's Simul-Wrap®, while having the added features of increased protection in the central area adjacent to the article to be sterilized and further providing an ability to wick moisture away from the article to be sterilized, particularly in the case of steam sterilization, and in addition, visually informs the clinician that the inside of the wrap is the sterile field and visually informs the clinician that the article has, indeed, been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

[0046] While **FIGS. 2 through 4** show absorbent layer **34** attached to a single sheet of sterilization material, it is preferred that two (2) layers of sterilization material are utilized.

[0047] Referring now more particularly to **FIGS. 5 and 6**, two-layer sterilization wrap **44** is provided and includes

outside layer **46** and inside layer **48**, each made of SMS. The two layers **46** and **48** each have four edges **49**, **51**, **53** and **55** and are bonded together at the four edges about their outer peripheries **50**, preferably by heat and pressure. The bonded two-layer sterilization material **44** may be the Simul-Wrap® product which is commercially available from Cardinal Health (1500 Waukegan Road, McGaw Park, Ill. 60085) and which is described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,517,916, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference. Absorbent layer **52**, which may be made of cellulose or another moisture absorbing substance, is bonded to the outside of inner layer **48** by gluing or another bonding technique, as illustrated by bond sites **54**. Alternatively, layer **52** may be made of SMS as discussed in reference to **FIGS. 2 and 9**.

**[0048]** Referring now more particularly to **FIGS. 7 and 8**, a sterilization indicator device **56** is attached to absorbent layer **52**.

**[0049]** Referring now more particularly to **FIGS. 9 and 10**, the absorbent layer **52** has been replaced with a reinforcement panel **58** made of SMS. Panel **58** has an equal to or higher basis weight than either layer **46** or **48**. The basis weight of panel **58** may range from 1.0 ounces per square yard (osy) to 3.0 osy. The basis weight for each of layers **46** and **48** may range from 0.75 osy to 2.9 osy. While reinforcement panel **58** does not provide the moisture wicking function of absorption layer **52**, it provides additional protection for the article to be sterilized **36** as shown in **FIG. 5**, which is to be placed on reinforcement panel **58**. The embodiment shown in **FIGS. 9 and 10** results in a more cost effective product than the use of two full sheets of SMS, but is equal functionally, since less material is used. **FIG. 9** also shows a sterilization indicator **56** having been placed on the outside surface of inner panel **48**.

**[0050]** The embodiment of **FIGS. 11 and 12** represents a combination of the embodiments of **FIGS. 7 and 9**. That is, reinforcement panel **58** is attached to inside SMS layer **48**. Absorbent layer **52** is, in turn, attached to reinforcement layer **58**. Chemical visual indicator **56** is attached to absorbent layer **52**. Alternatively, indicator **56** may be attached to reinforcement layer **58** or to inside layer **48**. In addition, in the embodiment of **FIGS. 11 and 12**, outside SMS layer could be eliminated.

**[0051]** From the foregoing description of the preferred embodiments of the invention, it is apparent that many modifications may be made therein. It should be understood, however, that these embodiments of the invention are exemplifications of the invention only and that the invention is not limited thereto. It is to be understood, therefore, that it is intended in the appended claims to cover all modifications as fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

1. A sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized comprising:

- at least a first sheet of sterilization material; and
- a sheet of absorbent material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material;
- said sheet of absorbent material adapted to receive the article to be sterilized thereon; said sheet of absorbent material (a) providing sterility protection for the article in addition to said first sheet of sterilization material,

and (b) wicking moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

2. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 1 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material.

3. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2 wherein each of said first and second sheets of sterilization material includes four edges about their peripheries; said four edges of said first sheet of sterilization material being bonded to said four edges of said second sheet of sterilization material.

4. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, wherein said sheet of absorbent material is made of cellulose.

5. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, wherein said sheet of absorbent material is made of an absorbent synthetic.

6. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 5, wherein said absorbent synthetic is taken from the group consisting of hydrophilic spunmelt polyolefins, polyester, and nylon, and polyrayons and bicomponent fibers.

7. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, wherein the perimeter of said sheet of absorbent material is smaller than the perimeter of said first sheet of sterilization material.

8. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 7, wherein the perimeter of said sheet of absorbent material is at least 25% less than the perimeter of said first sheet of sterilization material.

9. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 7, wherein said first sheet of sterilization material has two sides; one side of said first sheet of sterilization material having a central portion; said sheet of absorbent material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material at said central portion.

10. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, wherein said first and second sheets of sterilization material are made of SMS.

11. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, wherein said sheet of absorbent material is bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material by glue.

12. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, wherein said sheet of absorbent material is bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material by heat and pressure.

13. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, wherein the color of said first sheet of sterilization material is different from the color of said sheet of absorbent material so that a sterile field may be readily identified.

14. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 2, further including a chemical visual indicator; said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said wrap so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

15. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 14, wherein said chemical visual indicator is attached to said absorbent material.

16. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 14, wherein said chemical visual indicator changes color after having been exposed to steam.

17. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 14, wherein said chemical visual indicator meets the requirements of ISO 11140-1.

18. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 1 further including a chemical visual indicator; said visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and

being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said visual indicator being attached to said sterilization wrap to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

19. A method for sterilizing an article comprising the steps of:

- providing an article to be sterilized;
- wrapping the article to be sterilized with a sterilization wrap which comprises:
- at least a first sheet of sterilization material; and
- a sheet of absorbent material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material; said sheet of absorbent material adapted to receive the article to be sterilized thereon; said sheet of absorbent material (a) providing sterility protection for the article in addition to said sheet of sterilization material, and (b) wicking moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place; and
- applying sterilant to the wrapped article.

20. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 19 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material.

21. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 20, wherein each of said first and second sheets of sterilization material includes four edges about their peripheries; said four edges of said first sheet of sterilization material being bonded to said four edges of said second sheet of sterilization material.

22. A method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said sheet of absorbent material is made of cellulose.

23. A method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said sheet of absorbent material is made of an absorbent synthetic.

24. A method as set forth in claim 23, wherein said absorbent synthetic is taken from the group consisting of hydrophillic spunmelt polyolefins, polyester, and nylon, and polyrayons and bicomponent fibers.

25. A method as set forth in claim 20, wherein the perimeter of said sheet of absorbent material is smaller than the perimeter of said first sheet of sterilization material.

26. A method as set forth in claim 25, wherein the perimeter of said sheet of absorbent material is at least 25% less than the perimeter of said first sheet of sterilization material.

27. A method as set forth in claim 25, wherein said first sheet of sterilization material has two sides; one side of said first sheet of sterilization material having a central portion; said sheet of absorbent material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material at said central portion.

28. A method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said first and second sheets of sterilization material are made of SMS.

29. A method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said sheet of absorbent material is bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material by heat and pressure.

30. A method as set forth in claim 20, wherein the color of said first sheet of sterilization material is different from the color of said first sheet of absorbent material so that a sterile field may be readily identified.

31. A method as set forth in claim 20, further including a chemical visual indicator; said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said wrap so as

to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

32. A method as set forth in claim 31 further including an additional sheet attached to said first sheet of sterilization material and to said sheet of absorbent material.

33. A method as set forth in claim 31, wherein said chemical visual indicator is attached to said sheet of absorbent material.

34. A method as set forth in claim 31, wherein said chemical visual indicator changes color after having been exposed to steam.

35. A method as set forth in claim 31, wherein said chemical visual indicator meets the requirements of ISO 11140-1.

36. A method as set forth in claim 20, further including a chemical visual indicator, said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said sterilization wrap to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

37. A sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized, comprising:

- at least a first sheet of sterilization material; said first sheet having an outer periphery and a central portion; and

an additional sheet of material being bonded to the central portion of said first sheet; the perimeter of said additional sheet being smaller than the perimeter of said first sheet.

38. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 37 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material.

39. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 38, wherein the second sheet of sterilization material includes an outer periphery; said outer periphery of said first sheet of sterilization material being bonded to the outer periphery of said second sheet of sterilization material.

40. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 39 further including a chemical visual indicator, said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said wrap so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

41. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 37 further including a chemical visual indicator, said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said wrap so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

42. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 41 further including an absorbent sheet attached to said additional sheet.

43. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 40, wherein said chemical visual indicator is a color change indicator.

44. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 40, wherein said chemical visual indicator meets the requirements of ISO 11140-1.

45. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 40, wherein said chemical visual indicator is attached to said additional sheet.

46. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 39, wherein said first and second sheets of sterilization material and said additional sheet are made of SMS.

47. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 40, wherein the basis weight of said additional sheet is equal to or greater than the basis weight of said first sheet of sterilization material.

48. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 47, wherein the basis weight of said first sheet is in the range from 0.75 osy to 2.9 osy and the basis weight of said absorbent sheet is in the range from 1.0 osy to 3.0 osy.

49. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 39, wherein said additional sheet is SMS.

50. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 49 further including an absorbent sheet attached to said additional sheet.

51. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 50 further including a chemical visual indicator; said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said wrap so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

52. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 37 further including an absorbent sheet attached to said additional sheet.

53. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 50, wherein the perimeter of said absorbent sheet is smaller than the perimeter of said additional sheet.

54. A sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized comprising:

at least one sheet of sterilization material; and

a sheet of absorbent material attached to said sheet of sterilization material; said sheet of absorbent material adapted to contact the article to be sterilized; said sheet of absorbent material enabled to wick moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

55. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 54 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

56. A sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized comprising:

at least one sheet of sterilization material having a central portion; and

a panel attached to said central portion of said sheet of sterilization material; the basis weight of said panel being higher than the basis weight of said sheet of sterilization material.

57. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 56 further including a sheet of absorbent material attached to said panel; said sheet of absorbent material enabled to wick moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

58. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 57 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

59. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 56 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

60. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 56, wherein said panel is absorbent; said panel enabled to wick moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

61. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 60 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

62. A sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized comprising:

at least one sheet of sterilization material; and

a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

63. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 62 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material bonded to said first sheet.

64. A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 63, wherein said chemical visual indicator is attached to said second sheet.

65. A method for sterilizing an article comprising the steps of:

providing an article to be sterilized;

wrapping the article to be sterilized with a sterilization wrap which comprises:

at least a first sheet of sterilization material; said first sheet having an outer periphery and a central portion; and

an additional sheet of material being bonded to the central portion of said first sheet; the perimeter of said additional sheet being smaller than the perimeter of said first sheet; and

applying sterilant to the wrapped article.

66. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 65 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material.

67. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 66, wherein the second sheet of sterilization material includes an outer periphery; said outer periphery of said first sheet of sterilization material being bonded to the outer periphery of said second sheet of sterilization material.

68. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 67 further including a chemical visual indicator, said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said wrap so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

69. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 65 further including a chemical visual indicator, said chemical visual indicator being in one visual state prior to exposure to sterilant and being in another visual state after exposure to sterilant; said chemical visual indicator being attached to said wrap so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

70. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 68, wherein said chemical visual indicator meets the requirements of ISO 11140-1.

71. A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 68, wherein said chemical visual indicator is attached to said first sheet of sterilization material.

**72.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 68, wherein said chemical visual indicator is attached to said additional sheet.

**73.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 67, wherein said first and second sheets of sterilization material and said additional sheet are made of SMS.

**74.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 73, wherein the basis weight of said additional sheet is equal to or greater than the basis weight of said first sheet of sterilization material.

**75.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 74, wherein the basis weight of said first sheet is in the range from 0.75 osy to 2.9 osy and the basis weight of said absorbent sheet is in the range from 1.0 osy to 3.0 osy.

**76.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 67, wherein said additional sheet is SMS.

**77.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 76 further including an absorbent sheet attached to said additional sheet.

**78.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 65 further including an absorbent sheet attached to said additional sheet.

**79.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 78 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

**80.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 78, wherein the perimeter of said absorbent sheet is smaller than the perimeter of said additional sheet.

**81.** A method for sterilizing an article comprising the steps of:

- providing an article to be sterilized;
- wrapping the article to be sterilized with sterilization wrap which comprises:
  - at least one sheet of sterilization material; and
  - a sheet of absorbent material attached to said sheet of sterilization material; said sheet of absorbent material adapted to contact the article to be sterilized; said sheet of absorbent material enabled to wick moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place; and
- applying sterilant to the wrapped article.

**82.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 81 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

**83.** A method for sterilizing an article comprising the steps of:

- providing an article to be sterilized;
- wrapping the article to be sterilized with sterilization wrap which comprises:
  - at least one sheet of sterilization material having a central portion; and
  - a panel attached to said central portion of said sheet of sterilization material; the basis weight of said panel being higher than the basis weight of said sheet of sterilization material; and
- applying sterilant to the wrapped article.

**84.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 83 further including a sheet of absorbent material attached to said panel; said sheet of absorbent material enabled to wick moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

**85.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 84 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

**86.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 83 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

**87.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 83 wherein said panel is absorbent; said panel enabled to wick moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

**88.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 87 further including a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions.

**89.** A method for sterilizing an article comprising the steps of:

- providing an article to be sterilized;
- wrapping the article to be sterilized in sterilization wrap which comprises:
  - at least one sheet of sterilization material; and
  - a chemical visual indicator responsive to the presence of sterilant so as to indicate whether or not the article has been exposed to adequate sterilization conditions; and
- applying sterilant to the wrapped article.

**90.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 89 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material bonded to said first sheet.

**91.** A method for sterilizing an article as set forth in claim 90, wherein said chemical visual indicator is attached to said second sheet.

**92.** A method as set forth in claim 89 further including a sheet of absorbent material attached to said sheet of sterilization material; said sheet of absorbent material adapted to contact the article to be sterilized; said sheet of absorbent material enabled to wick moisture away from the article after sterilization has taken place.

**93.** A sterilization wrap for wrapping an article to be sterilized comprising:

- a first sheet of sterilization material; said first sheet of sterilization material having an outer periphery and a central portion;
- an additional sheet of material; said additional sheet being bonded to said first sheet; a substantial portion of said additional sheet being adjacent to the central portion of said first sheet; the perimeter of said additional sheet being smaller than the perimeter of said first sheet.

**94.** A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 93 wherein said additional sheet of material includes spun-bond polypropylene.

**95.** A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 93 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material being bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material.

**96.** A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 95 wherein the second sheet of sterilization material includes an outer periphery; said outer periphery of said first sheet of sterilization material being bonded to said outer periphery of said second sheet of sterilization material.

**97.** A sterilization wrap as set forth in claim 95 wherein said first and second sheets of sterilization material are made of SMS.

**98.** A method for sterilizing an article comprising the steps of:

providing an article to be sterilized;

wrapping said article to be sterilized with a sterilization wrap which comprises:

a first sheet of sterilization material; said first sheet of sterilization material having an outer periphery and a central portion;

an additional sheet of material; said additional sheet being bonded to said first sheet; a substantial portion of said

additional sheet being adjacent to the central portion of said first sheet; the perimeter of said additional sheet being smaller than the perimeter of said first sheet;

applying sterilant to the wrapped article.

**99.** A method as set forth in claim 98 wherein said additional sheet of material includes spun-bond polypropylene.

**100.** A method as set forth in claim 98 further including a second sheet of sterilization material; said second sheet of sterilization material being bonded to said first sheet of sterilization material.

**101.** A method as set forth in claim 100 wherein the second sheet of sterilization material includes an outer periphery; said outer periphery of said first sheet of sterilization material being bonded to the outer periphery of said second sheet of sterilization material.

**102.** A method as set forth in claim 101 wherein said first and second sheets of sterilization material are made of SMS.

**103.** A method as set forth in claim 98 further including the step of placing said article to be sterilized on said additional sheet.

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