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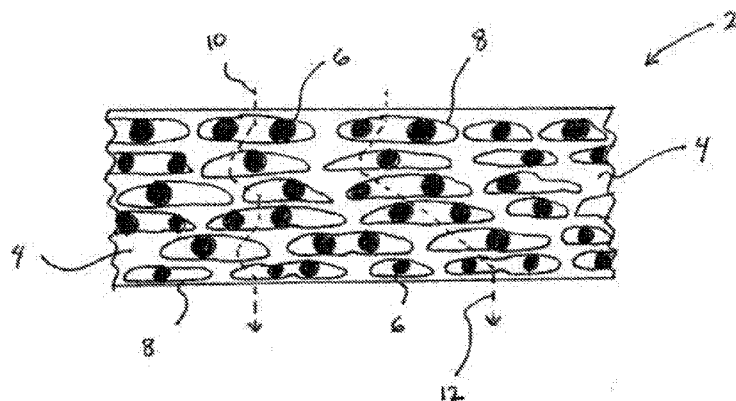


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: Microporous breathable films include a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin. Methods for forming polymeric films and articles of manufacture prepared therefrom are described.

MICROPOROUS BREATHABLE FILM AND METHOD OF MAKING THE MICROPOROUS BREATHABLE FILM

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/233,128, filed September 25, 2015, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/191,010, filed July 10, 2015. The entire contents of both of these priority documents are incorporated herein by reference, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The present disclosure relates to polymeric materials, and particularly to polymeric films. More particularly, the present disclosure relates to microporous breathable films formed from polymeric material and filler.

SUMMARY

[0003] According to the present disclosure, a microporous breathable film is made using a manufacturing process. The manufacturing process comprises the steps of extruding a composition to form a molten web, casting the molten web to form a quenched film, and stretching the quenched film to form the microporous breathable film.

[0004] In illustrative embodiments, the composition extruded to form the molten web comprises a polyolefin and an inorganic filler. The quenched film is formed by casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll using a vacuum box and/or blowing air (e.g., an air knife and/or an air blanket).

[0005] In illustrative embodiments, a microporous breathable film comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm. The microporous breathable film also has a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 75 grams.

[0006] In illustrative embodiments, a multi-layer breathable barrier film comprises at least one microporous breathable film layer according to the present

disclosure and at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer. The at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer comprises a hygroscopic polymer.

[0007] In illustrative embodiments, a personal hygiene product comprises at least one inner microporous breathable film and at least one outer non-woven layer. The at least one inner microporous breathable film is configured to contact skin and/or clothing of a user of the personal hygiene product.

[0008] Additional features of the present disclosure will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon consideration of illustrative embodiments exemplifying the best mode of carrying out the disclosure as presently perceived.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The detailed description particularly refers to the accompanying figures in which:

[0010] Fig. 1 is a diagrammatic view of a representative embodiment of a microporous breathable film that includes one layer;

[0011] Fig. 2 is a diagrammatic view of an exemplary process for machine direction (MD) stretching of a polymeric film;

[0012] Fig. 3 is a diagrammatic view of an exemplary process for cross-directional (CD) stretching of a polymeric film;

[0013] Fig. 4 is a diagrammatic view of an exemplary process for intermeshing gears (IMG) stretching of a polymeric film;

[0014] Fig. 5 is a diagrammatic view of an exemplary process for casting a molten web against a chill roll using a vacuum box;

[0015] Fig. 6 is a diagrammatic view of an exemplary process for casting a molten web against a chill roll using an air knife; and

[0016] Fig. 7 is a diagrammatic view of a representative embodiment of a multi-layer breathable barrier film that includes three layers.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] A first embodiment of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure is shown, for example, in Fig. 1. Microporous breathable film 2 includes a thermoplastic polymer 4 and a solid filler 6 dispersed in the thermoplastic polymer 4. In some embodiments, the microporous breathable film 2

includes a combination of two or more thermoplastic polymers 4 and/or a combination of two or more solid fillers 6. As shown in Fig. 1, the microporous breathable film 2 includes an interconnected network of micropores 8 formed in the thermoplastic polymer resin 4. On average, the micropores 8 are smaller in size than the size of a typical water droplet but larger in size than a water vapor molecule. As a result, the micropores 8 permit the passage of water vapor but minimize or block the passage of liquid water. Two representative pathways for the transmission of water vapor through the microporous breathable film 2 are shown by the dashed lines 10 and 12 in Fig. 1.

[0018] A precursor film containing a thermoplastic polymer 4 and a solid filler 6 dispersed in the thermoplastic polymer 4 may be produced by either a cast film process or a blown film process. The film thus produced may then be stretched by one or more stretching processes. The stretching process moves (e.g., pulls) polymeric material away from the surface of solid filler dispersed therein, thereby forming the micropores 8.

[0019] In one example, stretching may be achieved via machine direction (MD) orientation by a process analogous to that shown in simplified schematic form in Fig. 2. For example, the film 14 shown in Fig. 2 may be passed between at least two pairs of rollers in the direction of an arrow 15. In this example, first roller 16 and a first nip 20 run at a slower speed (V_1) than the speed (V_2) of a second roller 18 and a second nip 22. The ratio of V_2/V_1 determines the degree to which the film 14 is stretched. Since there may be enough drag on the roll surface to prevent slippage, the process may alternatively be run with the nips open. Thus, in the process shown in Fig. 2, the first nip 20 and the second nip 22 are optional.

[0020] In another example, stretching may be achieved via transverse or cross-directional (CD) stretching by a process analogous to that shown in simplified schematic form in Fig. 3. For example, the film 24 shown in Fig. 3 may be moved in the direction of the arrow 28 while being stretched sideways on a tenter frame in the directions of doubled-headed arrow 30. The tenter frame includes a plurality of attachment mechanisms 26 configured for gripping the film 24 along its side edges.

[0021] In a further example, stretching may be achieved via intermeshing gears (IMG) stretching by a process analogous to the one shown in simplified

schematic form in Fig. 4. For example, a film 32 may be moved between a pair of grooved or toothed rollers as shown in Fig. 4 in the direction of arrow 33. In one example, the first toothed roller 34 may be rotated in a clockwise direction while the second toothed roller 36 may be rotated in a counterclockwise direction. At each point at which one or more teeth of the rollers 34 and 36 contact the film 32, localized stresses may be applied that stretch the film 32 and introduce interconnecting micropores therein analogous to the micropores 8 shown in Fig. 1. By the use of IMG stretching, the film 32 may be stretched in the machine direction (MD), the cross direction (CD), at oblique angles to the MD, or in any combination thereof.

[0022] A precursor film containing a thermoplastic polymer 4 and a solid filler 6 dispersed in the polymer 4 that is stretched to form a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be prepared by mixing together the thermoplastic polymer 4 (or a combination of thermoplastic polymers 4), the solid filler 6, and any optional components until blended, heating the mixture, and then extruding the mixture to form a molten web. A suitable film-forming process may be used to form a precursor film en route to forming a microporous breathable film. For example, the precursor film may be manufactured by casting or extrusion using blown-film, co-extrusion, or single-layer extrusion techniques and/or the like. In one example, the precursor film may be wound onto a winder roll for subsequent stretching in accordance with the present disclosure. In another example, the precursor film may be manufactured in-line with a film stretching apparatus such as shown in one or more of Figs. 2-4.

[0023] In addition to containing one or more thermoplastic polymers and solid filler, the precursor film may also contain other optional components to improve the film properties or processing of the film. Representative optional components include, but are not limited to, anti-oxidants (e.g., added to prevent polymer degradation and/or to reduce the tendency of the film to discolor over time) and processing aids (e.g., added to facilitate extrusion of the precursor film). In one example, the amount of one or more anti-oxidants in the precursor film is less than about 1% by weight of the film and the amount of one or more processing aids is less than about 5% by weight of the film. Additional optional additives include but are not limited to whitening agents (e.g., titanium dioxide), which may be added to increase

the opacity of the film. In one example, the amount of one or more whitening agents is less than about 10% by weight of the film. Further optional components include but are not limited to antiblocking agents (e.g., diatomaceous earth) and slip agents (e.g. erucamide a.k.a. erucylamide), which may be added to allow film rolls to unwind properly and to facilitate secondary processing (e.g., diaper making). In one example, the amount of one or more antiblocking agents and/or one or more slip agents is less than about 5% by weight of the film. Further additional optional additives include but are not limited to scents, deodorizers, pigments other than white, noise reducing agents, and/or the like, and combinations thereof. In one example, the amount of one or more scents, deodorizers, pigments other than white, and/or noise reducing agents is less than about 10% by weight of the film.

[0024] Prior to stretching, the precursor film may have an initial basis weight of less than about 100 grams per square meter (gsm). In one example, the precursor film has an initial basis weight of less than about 75 gsm. The precursor film may be a monolayer film, in which case the entire precursor film comprises the thermoplastic polymer (or combination of thermoplastic polymers) and solid filler (or combination of solid fillers). In another example, the precursor film may be a multilayer film as suggested in Fig. 7.

[0025] In one example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure is formed via a blown film process. In another example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure is formed via a cast film process. The cast film process involves the extrusion of molten polymers through an extrusion die to form a thin film. The film is pinned to the surface of a chill roll with an air knife, an air blanket, and/or a vacuum box.

[0026] In illustrative embodiments, a process for making a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure includes (a) extruding a composition containing a thermoplastic polymer 4 and a solid filler 6 to form a molten web, (b) casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll using an air knife, an air blanket, a vacuum box, or a combination thereof to form a quenched film, and (c) stretching the quenched film to form the microporous breathable film 2.

[0027] It has been discovered that by using a vacuum box, blowing air (e.g., an air knife and/or an air blanket), or a vacuum box in combination with blowing air

to cast the molten web against a chill roll in accordance with the present disclosure, microporous breathable films 2 exhibiting surprisingly and unexpectedly improved properties as compared to other microporous breathable films may be prepared. As further described below, these properties may include reduced basis weight, increased Dart Impact Strength, increased strain at peak machine direction, reduced alcohol penetration as measured by Pressure Penetration Through a Fabric (PPT) testing, reduced bonding force needed to achieve a destruct bond in ultrasonic sealing, and/or the like, and combinations thereof.

[0028] In one example, the molten web is cast against the surface of the chill roll under negative pressure using a vacuum box as shown in simplified schematic form in Fig. 5. A vacuum box works by evacuating air between the film and the surface of the chill roll. For example, as shown in Fig. 5, a film 46 is extruded from an extrusion die 40 in the direction of arrow 47 and quenched from the molten state with a vacuum box 42. The vacuum box 42 draws a vacuum behind the molten web 46 in the direction of arrow 44 to draw the film 46 down onto the chill roll 38. The vacuum drawn in the direction of arrow 44 removes the entrained air between the surface of the chill roll 38 and the film 46. The vacuum box process is not subject to draw resonance for high molecular weight polymers that would tend to extrude unstable thickness in a nipped quench process due to the draw resonance phenomenon.

[0029] When a vacuum box 42 is used, the molten polymer may exit the die 40 and hit the chill roll 38 within a smaller distance than in an embossed process. For example, in some embodiments, the melt curtain is configured to hit the chill roll 38 within a distance of less than about 12 inches, 11 inches, 10 inches, 9 inches, 8 inches, 7 inches, 6 inches, 5 inches, 4 inches, 3 inches, 2 inches, or 1 inch. In illustrative embodiments, the melt curtain is configured to exit the die and hit the roll within a distance of less than about 3 inches and, in some examples, within a distance of about or less than 1 inch. One advantage of reducing the distance between the die 40 and the roll surface 38 as compared to in a nipped quench process is that smaller distances are less susceptible to the phenomenon of neck-in. Neck-in refers to a reduction in width of the molten web that occurs as the web leaves the die. By drawing the film 46 onto a surface of the chill roll 38 over a short distance as shown in Fig. 5, the

vacuum box 42 may enhance web cooling, facilitate higher line speeds, reduce film neck-in, and/or reduce drag at the lip exit.

[0030] In another example, the molten web is cast against the surface of the chill roll under positive pressure using an air knife or air blanket, as shown in simplified schematic form in Fig. 6. An air knife works to promote web quenching by gently blowing a high-velocity, low-volume air curtain over the molten film, thereby pinning the molten film to the chill roll for solidification. For example, as shown in FIG. 6, a film 54 is extruded from an extrusion die 50 in the direction of arrow 55 and quenched from the molten state with an air knife 52 blowing an air curtain over the molten film 54, thereby pinning the molten web 54 against a surface of the chill roll 48. An air blanket (a.k.a. “soft box”) works similarly to an air knife and promotes web quenching by gently blowing an air curtain over the molten film. However, in the case of an air blanket, the air curtain is low velocity and high volume.

[0031] In a further example, the molten web is cast against the surface of the chill roll under a combination of negative pressure from a vacuum box, as shown in Fig. 5, and positive pressure from an air knife, as shown in Fig. 6. In illustrative embodiments, in the casting of the molten web against a surface of the chill roll, an exit temperature of cooling fluid passing through the chill roll is between about 50 degrees Fahrenheit and about 130 degrees Fahrenheit and, in some examples, between about 75 degrees Fahrenheit and about 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

[0032] The thermoplastic polymer 4 (or combination of thermoplastic polymers 4) used to make a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure is not restricted, and may include all manner of thermoplastic polymers capable of being stretched and of forming micropores. In illustrative embodiments, the thermoplastic polymer is a polyolefin, including but not limited to homopolymers, copolymers, terpolymers, and/or blends thereof.

[0033] Representative polyolefins that may be used in accordance with the present disclosure include but are not limited to low density polyethylene (LDPE), high density polyethylene (HDPE), linear low density polyethylene (LLDPE), ultra-low density polyethylene (ULDPE), polypropylene, ethylene-propylene copolymers, polymers made using a single-site catalyst, ethylene maleic anhydride copolymers (EMAs), ethylene vinyl acetate copolymers (EVAs), polymers made using Zeigler-

Natta catalysts, styrene-containing block copolymers, and/or the like, and combinations thereof. Methods for manufacturing LDPE are described in *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Packaging Technology*, pp. 753–754 (Aaron L. Brody et al. eds., 2nd Ed. 1997) and in U.S. Patent No. 5,399,426, both of which are incorporated by reference herein, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail.

[0034] ULDPE may be produced by a variety of processes, including but not limited to gas phase, solution and slurry polymerization as described in *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Packaging Technology*, pp. 748–50 (Aaron L. Brody et al. eds., 2nd Ed. 1997), incorporated by reference above, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail.

[0035] ULDPE may be manufactured using a Ziegler-Natta catalyst, although a number of other catalysts may also be used. For example, ULDPE may be manufactured with a metallocene catalyst. Alternatively, ULDPE may be manufactured with a catalyst that is a hybrid of a metallocene catalyst and a Ziegler-Natta catalyst. Methods for manufacturing ULDPE are also described in U.S. Patent No. 5,399,426, U.S. Patent No. 4,668,752, U.S. Patent No. 3,058,963, U.S. Patent No. 2,905,645, U.S. Patent No. 2,862,917, and U.S. Patent No. 2,699,457, each of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail. The density of ULDPE is achieved by copolymerizing ethylene with a sufficient amount of one or more monomers. In illustrative embodiments, the monomers are selected from 1-butene, 1-hexene, 4-methyl-1-pentene, 1-octene, and combinations thereof. Methods for manufacturing polypropylene are described in *Kirk-Othmer Concise Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology*, pp. 1420–1421 (Jacqueline I. Kroschwitz et al. eds., 4th Ed. 1999), which is incorporated herein by reference, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail.

[0036] In illustrative embodiments, a polyolefin for use in accordance with the present disclosure includes polyethylene, polypropylene, or a combination thereof. In one example, the polyethylene includes linear low density polyethylene which, in some embodiments, includes a metallocene polyethylene. In another example, the polyethylene includes a combination of linear low density polyethylene and low density polyethylene. In a further example, the polyolefin consists essentially of only linear low density polyethylene.

[0037] In addition to thermoplastic polymer (e.g., polyolefin), a composition to be extruded in accordance with the present disclosure further includes a solid filler. The solid filler is not restricted, and may include all manner of inorganic or organic materials that are (a) non-reactive with thermoplastic polymer, (b) configured for being uniformly blended and dispersed in the thermoplastic polymer, and (c) configured to promote a microporous structure within the film when the film is stretched. In illustrative embodiments, the solid filler includes an inorganic filler.

[0038] Representative inorganic fillers for use in accordance with the present disclosure include but are not limited to sodium carbonate, calcium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, barium sulfate, magnesium sulfate, aluminum sulfate, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, alumina, mica, talc, silica, clay (e.g., non-swellable clay), glass spheres, titanium dioxide, aluminum hydroxide, zeolites, and a combination thereof. In illustrative embodiments, the inorganic filler includes an alkali metal carbonate, an alkaline earth metal carbonate, an alkali metal sulfate, an alkaline earth metal sulfate, or a combination thereof. In one example, the inorganic filler includes calcium carbonate.

[0039] In another example, the solid filler includes a polymer (e.g., high molecular weight high density polyethylene, polystyrene, nylon, blends thereof, and/or the like). The use of polymer fillers creates domains within the thermoplastic polymer matrix. These domains are small areas, which may be spherical, where only the polymer filler is present as compared to the remainder of the thermoplastic matrix where no polymer filler is present. As such, these domains act as particles.

[0040] The solid filler 6 provided in a composition to be extruded in accordance with the present disclosure may be used to produce micropores 8 of film 2, as shown in Fig. 1. The dimensions of the solid filler 6 particles may be varied

based on a desired end use (e.g., the desired properties of the microporous breathable film 2). In one example, the average particle size of a solid filler particle ranges from about 0.1 microns to about 15 microns. In illustrative embodiments, the average particle size ranges from about 1 micron to about 5 microns and, in some examples, from about 1 micron to about 3 microns. The average particle size may be one of several different values or fall within one of several different ranges. For example, it is within the scope of the present disclosure to select an average particle size of the solid filler to be one of the following values: about 0.1 microns, 0.2 microns, 0.3 microns, 0.4 microns, 0.5 microns, 0.6 microns, 0.7 microns, 0.8 microns, 0.9 microns, 1.0 microns, 1.1 microns, 1.2 microns, 1.3 microns, 1.4 microns, 1.5 microns, 1.6 microns, 1.7 microns, 1.8 microns, 1.9 microns, 2.0 microns, 2.1 microns, 2.2 microns, 2.3 microns, 2.4 microns, 2.5 microns, 2.6 microns, 2.7 microns, 2.8 microns, 2.9 microns, 3.0 microns, 3.5 microns, 4.0 microns, 4.5 microns, 5.0 microns, 5.5 microns, 6.0 microns, 6.5 microns, 7.0 microns, 7.5 microns, 8.0 microns, 8.5 microns, 9.0 microns, 9.5 microns, 10.0 microns, 10.5 microns, 11.0 microns, 11.5 microns, 12.0 microns, 12.5 microns, 13.0 microns, 13.5 microns, 14.0 microns, 14.5 microns, or 15.0 microns.

[0041] It is also within the scope of the present disclosure for the average particle size of the solid filler 6 provided in a composition to be extruded in accordance with the present disclosure to fall within one of many different ranges. In a first set of ranges, the average particle size of the solid filler 6 is in one of the following ranges: about 0.1 microns to 15 microns, 0.1 microns to 14 microns, 0.1 microns to 13 microns, 0.1 microns to 12 microns, 0.1 microns to 11 microns, 0.1 microns to 10 microns, 0.1 microns to 9 microns, 0.1 microns to 8 microns, 0.1 microns to 7 microns, 0.1 microns to 6 microns, 0.1 microns to 5 microns, 0.1 microns to 4 microns, and 0.1 microns to 3 microns. In a second set of ranges, the average particle size of the solid filler 6 is in one of the following ranges: about 0.1 microns to 5 microns, 0.2 microns to 5 microns, 0.3 microns to 5 microns, 0.4 microns to 5 microns, 0.5 microns to 5 microns, 0.6 microns to 5 microns, 0.7 microns to 5 microns, 0.8 microns to 5 microns, 0.9 microns to 5 microns, and 1.0 microns to 5 microns. In a third set of ranges, the average particle size of the solid filler 6 is in one of the following ranges: about 0.1 microns to 4.9 microns, 0.2

microns to 4.8 microns, 0.3 microns to 4.7 microns, 0.4 microns to 4.6 microns, 0.5 microns to 4.5 microns, 0.6 microns to 4.4 microns, 0.7 microns to 4.3 microns, 0.8 microns to 4.2 microns, 0.9 microns to 4.1 microns, and 1.0 microns to 4.0 microns.

[0042] In illustrative embodiments, the amount of solid filler used in accordance with the present disclosure includes from about 30% by weight to about 75% by weight of the composition to be extruded, quenched film formed from the extruded composition, and/or microporous breathable film formed from the quenched film. In further illustrative embodiments, the amount of solid filler used in accordance with the present disclosure includes from about 50% by weight to about 75% by weight of the composition to be extruded, quenched film formed from the extruded composition, and/or microporous breathable film formed from the quenched film. Although amounts of filler outside this range may also be employed, an amount of solid filler that is less than about 30% by weight may not be sufficient to impart uniform breathability to a film. Conversely, amounts of filler greater than about 75% by weight may be difficult to blend with the polymer and may cause a loss in strength in the final microporous breathable film.

[0043] The amount of solid filler 6 may be varied based on a desired end use (e.g., the desired properties of the microporous breathable film 2). In one example, the amount of solid filler 6 ranges from about 40% to about 60% by weight of the composition, quenched film, and/or microporous breathable film. In another example, the amount of solid filler 6 ranges from about 45% to about 55% by weight of the composition, quenched film, and/or microporous breathable film. The amount of solid filler 6 may be one of several different values or fall within one of several different ranges. For example, it is within the scope of the present disclosure to select an amount of the solid filler 6 to be one of the following values: about 30%, 31%, 32%, 33%, 34%, 35%, 36%, 37%, 38%, 39%, 40%, 41%, 42%, 43%, 44%, 45%, 46%, 47%, 48%, 49%, 50%, 51%, 52%, 53%, 54%, 55%, 56%, 57%, 58%, 59%, 60%, 61%, 62%, 63%, 64%, 65%, 66%, 67%, 68%, 69%, 70%, 71%, 72%, 73%, 74%, or 75% by weight of the composition, quenched film, and/or microporous breathable film.

[0044] It is also within the scope of the present disclosure for the amount of the solid filler 6 to fall within one of many different ranges. In a first set of ranges,

the amount of the solid filler 6 is in one of the following ranges: about 31% to 75%, 32% to 75%, 33% to 75%, 34% to 75%, 35% to 75%, 36% to 75%, 37% to 75%, 38% to 75%, 39% to 75%, 40% to 75%, 41% to 75%, 42% to 75%, 43% to 75%, 44% to 75%, and 45% to 75% by weight of the composition, quenched film, and/or microporous breathable film. In a second set of ranges, the amount of the solid filler is in one of the following ranges: about 30% to 74%, 30% to 73%, 30% to 72%, 30% to 71%, 30% to 70%, 30% to 69%, 30% to 68%, 30% to 67%, 30% to 66%, 30% to 65%, 30% to 64%, 30% to 63%, 30% to 62%, 30% to 61%, 30% to 60%, 30% to 59%, 30% to 58%, 30% to 57%, 30% to 56%, 30% to 55%, 30% to 54%, 30% to 53%, 30% to 52%, 30% to 51%, 30% to 50%, 30% to 49%, 30% to 48%, 30% to 47%, 30% to 46%, and 30% to 45 % by weight of the composition, quenched film, and/or microporous breathable film. In a third set of ranges, the amount of the solid filler is in one of the following ranges: about 31% to 74%, 32% to 73%, 33% to 72%, 34% to 71%, 35% to 70%, 36% to 69%, 37% to 68%, 38% to 67%, 39% to 66%, 40% to 65%, 41% to 64%, 42% to 63%, 43% to 62%, 44% to 61%, 45% to 60%, 45% to 59%, 45% to 58%, 45% to 57%, 45% to 56%, and 45% to 55% by weight of the composition, quenched film, and/or microporous breathable film.

[0045] Although filler loading may be conveniently expressed in terms of weight percentages, the phenomenon of microporosity may alternatively be described in terms of volume percent of filler relative to total volume. By way of illustration, for calcium carbonate filler having a specific gravity of 2.7 g/cc and a polymer having a specific gravity of about 0.9, 35% by weight CaCO_3 corresponds to a filler loading of about 15% by volume $\{(0.35/2.7)/(0.65/0.9 + 0.35/2.7)\}$. Similarly, the 75 weight percent upper end of the range described above corresponds to about 56% by volume of CaCO_3 . Thus, the amount of filler may be adjusted to provide comparable volume percentages for alternative solid fillers that have different (e.g., unusually low or high) specific gravities as compared to calcium carbonate.

[0046] In some embodiments, to render the solid filler particles free-flowing and to facilitate their dispersion in the polymeric material, the filler particles may be coated with a fatty acid and/or other suitable processing acid. Representative fatty acids for use in this context include but are not limited to stearic acid or longer chain fatty acids.

[0047] The type of stretching used to transform a quenched film into a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure is not restricted. All manner of stretching processes—and combinations of stretching processes—that are capable of moving (e.g., pulling) polymeric material 4 away from the surface of solid filler 6 dispersed therein in order to form micropores 8—are contemplated for use. In some examples, the stretching includes MD stretching. In other examples, the stretching includes CD IMG stretching. In further examples, the stretching includes MD IMG stretching. In still further examples, the stretching includes cold draw. In some embodiments, the stretching includes a combination of two or more different types of stretching including but not limited to MD stretching, CD IMG stretching, MD IMG stretching, cold draw, and/or the like. In some examples, the stretching includes a combination of CD IMG stretching and cold draw (which, in some embodiments, is performed subsequently to the CD IMG stretching).

[0048] In illustrative embodiments, the type of stretching used to transform a quenched film into a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure includes CD IMG stretching. In addition, in illustrative embodiments, at least a portion of the stretching is performed at a temperature above ambient temperature. In one example, at least a portion of the stretching is performed at a temperature of between about 60 degrees Fahrenheit and about 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

[0049] In illustrative embodiments, a process for making a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure further includes (d) annealing the microporous breathable film 2. In one example, the annealing is performed at a temperature of between about 75 degrees Fahrenheit and about 225 degrees Fahrenheit.

[0050] In illustrative embodiments, as noted above, a microporous breathable film 2 prepared in accordance with the present disclosure (e.g., by using a vacuum box and/or air knife to cast a molten web containing a polyolefin and an inorganic filler against a chill roll) may have reduced basis weight, increased Dart Impact Strength, increased strain at peak machine direction, reduced alcohol penetration as measured by PPT testing, and/or reduced bonding force needed to achieve a destruct bond in ultrasonic sealing, as compared to conventional microporous breathable films.

[0051] The basis weight of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be varied based on a desired end use (e.g., the desired properties and/or applications of the microporous breathable film). In one example, the basis weight ranges from about 5 gsm to about 30 gsm. In another example, the basis weight ranges from about 6 gsm to about 25 gsm. In illustrative embodiments, the basis weight is less than about 14 gsm and, in some examples, less than about 12 gsm. Although basis weights outside this range may also be employed (e.g., basis weights above about 30 gsm), lower basis weights minimize material cost as well as maximize consumer satisfaction (e.g., a thinner film may provide increased comfort to the user of a personal hygiene product that includes the film). The basis weight of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be one of several different values or fall within one of several different ranges. For example, it is within the scope of the present disclosure to select a basis weight to be one of the following values: about 30 gsm, 29 gsm, 28 gsm, 27 gsm, 26 gsm, 25 gsm, 24 gsm, 23 gsm, 22 gsm, 21 gsm, 20 gsm, 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, 8 gsm, 7 gsm, 6 gsm, or 5 gsm.

[0052] It is also within the scope of the present disclosure for the basis weight of the microporous breathable film 2 to fall within one of many different ranges. In a first set of ranges, the basis weight of the microporous breathable film 2 is in one of the following ranges: about 5 gsm to 30 gsm, 6 gsm to 30 gsm, 7 gsm to 30 gsm, 8 gsm to 30 gsm, 9 gsm to 30 gsm, 10 gsm to 30 gsm, 11 gsm to 30 gsm, 12 gsm to 30 gsm, 13 gsm to 30 gsm, and 14 gsm to 30 gsm. In a second set of ranges, the basis weight of the microporous breathable film is in one of the following ranges: about 5 gsm to 29 gsm, 5 gsm to 28 gsm, 5 gsm to 27 gsm, 5 gsm to 26 gsm, 5 gsm to 25 gsm, 5 gsm to 24 gsm, 5 gsm to 23 gsm, 5 gsm to 22 gsm, 5 gsm to 21 gsm, 5 gsm to 20 gsm, 5 gsm to 19 gsm, 5 gsm to 18 gsm, 5 gsm to 17 gsm, 5 gsm to 16 gsm, 5 gsm to 15 gsm, 5 gsm to 14 gsm, 5 gsm to 13 gsm, 5 gsm to 12 gsm, 5 gsm to 11 gsm, 5 gsm to 10 gsm, 5 gsm to 9 gsm, 5 gsm to 8 gsm, and 5 gsm to 7 gsm. In a third set of ranges, the basis weight of the microporous breathable film 2 is in one of the following ranges: about 6 gsm to 29 gsm, 7 gsm to 29 gsm, 7 gsm to 28 gsm, 7 gsm to 27 gsm, 7 gsm to 26 gsm, 7 gsm to 25 gsm, 7 gsm to 24 gsm, 7 gsm to 23 gsm, 7 gsm to 22 gsm, 7 gsm to 21 gsm, 7 gsm to 20 gsm, 7 gsm to 19 gsm, 7 gsm to 18 gsm, 7

gsm to 17 gsm, 7 gsm to 16 gsm, 7 gsm to 15 gsm, 7 gsm to 14 gsm, and 7 gsm to 13 gsm.

[0053] In illustrative embodiments, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure exhibits a greater Dart Impact Strength than conventional microporous breathable films of similar basis weight. The basis weight of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be varied based on a desired Dart Impact Strength. In one example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 50 grams. In another example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 75 grams. In a further example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 90 grams.

[0054] The Dart Impact Strength of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be one of several different values or fall within one of several different ranges. For example, for a microporous breathable film 2 having a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—it is within the scope of the present disclosure to select a Dart Impact Strength to be greater than or equal to one of the following values: about 50 grams, 51 grams, 52 grams, 53 grams, 54 grams, 55 grams, 56 grams, 57 grams, 58 grams, 59 grams, 60 grams, 61 grams, 62 grams, 63 grams, 64 grams, 65 grams, 66 grams, 67 grams, 68 grams, 69 grams, 70 grams, 71 grams, 72 grams, 73 grams, 74 grams, 75 grams, 76 grams, 77 grams, 78 grams, 79 grams, 80 grams, 81 grams, 82 grams, 83 grams, 84 grams, 85 grams, 86 grams, 87 grams, 88 grams, 89 grams, 90 grams, 91 grams, 92 grams, 93 grams, 94 grams, 95 grams, 96 grams, 97 grams, 98 grams, 99 grams, 100 grams, 101 grams, 102 grams, 103 grams, 104 grams, 105 grams, 106 grams, 107 grams, 108 grams, 109 grams, 110 grams, 111 grams, 112 grams, 113 grams, 114 grams, 115 grams, 116 grams, 117 grams, 118 grams, 119 grams, 120 grams, 121 grams, 122 grams, 123 grams, 124 grams, 125 grams, 126 grams, 127 grams, 128 grams, 129 grams, 130 grams, 131 grams, 132 grams, 133 grams, 134 grams, 135 grams, 136 grams, 137

grams, 138 grams, 139 grams, 140 grams, 141 grams, 142 grams, 143 grams, 144 grams, 145 grams, 146 grams, 147 grams, 148 grams, 149 grams, 150 grams, 151 grams, 152 grams, 153 grams, 154 grams, 155 grams, 156 grams, 157 grams, 158 grams, 159 grams, 160 grams, 161 grams, 162 grams, 163 grams, 164 grams, 165 grams, 166 grams, 167 grams, 168 grams, 169 grams, 170 grams, 171 grams, 172 grams, 173 grams, 174 grams, 175 grams, 176 grams, 177 grams, 178 grams, 179 grams, 180 grams, 181 grams, 182 grams, 183 grams, 184 grams, 185 grams, 186 grams, 187 grams, 188 grams, 189 grams, 190 grams, 191 grams, 192 grams, 193 grams, 194 grams, 195 grams, 196 grams, 197 grams, 198 grams, 199 grams, 200 grams, 201 grams, 202 grams, 203 grams, 204 grams, or 205 grams.

[0055] It is also within the scope of the present disclosure for the Dart Impact Strength of the microporous breathable film 2 to fall within one of many different ranges. In a first set of ranges, the Dart Impact Strength for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 50 grams to 250 grams, 55 grams to 250 grams, 60 grams to 250 grams, 65 grams to 250 grams, 70 grams to 250 grams, 75 grams to 250 grams, 80 grams to 250 grams, 85 grams to 250 grams, 90 grams to 250 grams, 95 grams to 250 grams, 100 grams to 250 grams, 105 grams to 250 grams, 110 grams to 250 grams, 115 grams to 250 grams, 120 grams to 250 grams, 125 grams to 250 grams, 130 grams to 250 grams, 135 grams to 250 grams, 140 grams to 250 grams, 145 grams to 250 grams, 150 grams to 250 grams, 155 grams to 250 grams, 160 grams to 250 grams, 165 grams to 250 grams, 170 grams to 250 grams, 175 grams to 250 grams, 180 grams to 250 grams, 185 grams to 250 grams, 190 grams to 250 grams, 195 grams to 250 grams, 200 grams to 250 grams, and 205 grams to 250 grams. In a second set of ranges, the Dart Impact Strength for a microporous breathable film 2 having a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 50 grams to 249 grams, 50 grams to 245 grams, 50 grams to 240 grams, 50 grams to 235 grams, 50 grams to 230 grams, 50 grams to 225 grams, 50 grams to 220 grams, 50 grams to 215 grams, and 50 grams to 210 grams. In a third set of ranges, the Dart Impact Strength for a microporous breathable film 2 having a basis

weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 51 grams to about 249 grams, 55 grams to 245 grams, 60 grams to 240 grams, 65 grams to 235 grams, 70 grams to 230 grams, 75 grams to 225 grams, 80 grams to 225 grams, 85 grams to 225 grams, 90 grams to 225 grams, 95 grams to 225 grams, 100 grams to 225 grams, 105 grams to 225 grams, 110 grams to 225 grams, 115 grams to 225 grams, 120 grams to 225 grams, 125 grams to 225 grams, 130 grams to 225 grams, 135 grams to 225 grams, 140 grams to 225 grams, 145 grams to 225 grams, 150 grams to 225 grams, 155 grams to 225 grams, 160 grams to 225 grams, 165 grams to 225 grams, 170 grams to 225 grams, 175 grams to 225 grams, and 180 grams to 225 grams.

[0056] In illustrative embodiments, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure exhibits a greater strain at peak machine direction than conventional microporous breathable films of similar basis weight. The basis weight of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be varied based on a desired strain at peak machine direction. In one example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 75%. In another example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 100%. In a further example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 125%.

[0057] The strain at peak machine direction of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be one of several different values or fall within one of several different ranges. For example, for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—it is within the scope of the present disclosure to select a strain at peak machine direction to be greater than or equal to one of the following values: about 75%, 76%, 77%, 78%, 79%, 80%, 81%, 82%, 83%, 84%, 85%, 86%, 87%, 88%, 89%, 90%, 91%, 92%, 93%, 94%, 95%,

96%, 97%, 98%, 99%, 100%, 101%, 102%, 103%, 104%, 105%, 106%, 107%, 108%, 109%, 110%, 111%, 112%, 113%, 114%, 115%, 116%, 117%, 118%, 119%, 120%, 121%, 122%, 123%, 124%, 125%, 126%, 127%, 128%, 129%, 130%, 131%, 132%, 133%, 134%, 135%, 136%, 137%, 138%, 139%, 140%, 141%, 142%, 143%, 144%, 145%, 146%, 147%, 148%, 149%, 150%, 151%, 152%, 153%, 154%, 155%, 156%, 157%, 158%, 159%, 160%, 161%, 162%, 163%, 164%, 165%, 166%, 167%, 168%, 169%, 170%, 171%, 172%, 173%, 174%, 175%, 176%, 177%, 178%, 179%, 180%, 181%, 182%, 183%, 184%, 185%, 186%, 187%, 188%, 189%, 190%, 191%, 192%, 193%, 194%, 195%, 196%, 197%, 198%, 199%, 200%, 201%, 202%, 203%, 204%, 205%, 206%, 207%, 208%, 209%, 210%, 211%, 212%, 213%, 214%, 215%, 216%, 217%, 218%, 219%, 220%, 221%, 222%, 223%, 224%, 225%, 226%, 227%, 228%, 229%, 230%, 231%, 232%, 233%, 234%, 235%, 236%, 237%, 238%, 239%, 240%, 241%, 242%, 243%, 244%, 245%, 246%, 247%, 248%, 249%, 250%, 251%, 252%, 253%, 254%, 255%, 256%, 257%, 258%, 259%, 260%, 261%, 262%, 263%, 264%, 265%, 266%, 267%, 268%, 269%, 270%, 271%, 272%, 273%, 274%, 275%, 276%, 277%, 278%, 279%, 280%, 281%, 282%, 283%, 284%, 285%, 286%, 287%, 288%, 289%, 290%, 291%, 292%, 293%, 294%, 295%, 296%, 297%, 298%, 299%, or 300%.

[0058] It is also within the scope of the present disclosure for the strain at peak machine direction of the microporous breathable film 2 to fall within one of many different ranges. In a first set of ranges, the strain at peak machine direction for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 75% to 350%, 75% to 345%, 75% to 340%, 75% to 335%, 75% to 330%, 75% to 325%, 75% to 320%, 75% to 315%, 75% to 310%, 75% to 305%, 75% to 300%, 75% to 295%, 75% to 290%, 75% to 285%, and 75% to 280%. In a second set of ranges, the strain at peak machine direction for a microporous breathable film 2 having a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 76% to 350%, 77% to 350%, 78% to 350%, 79% to 350%, 80% to 350%, 81% to 350%, 82% to 350%, 83% to 350%, 84% to 350%, 85% to 350%, 86% to 350%, 87% to 350%, 88% to 350%, 89% to 350%,

90% to 350%, 91% to 350%, 92% to 350%, 93% to 350%, 94% to 350%, 95% to 350%, 96% to 350%, 97% to 350%, 98% to 350%, 99% to 350%, 100% to 350%, 101% to 350%, 102% to 350%, 103% to 350%, 104% to 350%, 105% to 350%, 106% to 350%, 107% to 350%, 108% to 350%, 109% to 350%, 110% to 350%, 111% to 350%, 112% to 350%, 113% to 350%, 114% to 350%, 115% to 350%, 116% to 350%, 117% to 350%, 118% to 350%, 119% to 350%, 120% to 350%, 121% to 350%, 122% to 350%, 123% to 350%, 124% to 350%, 125% to 350%, 126% to 350%, 127% to 350%, 128% to 350%, 129% to 350%, 130% to 350%, 131% to 350%, 132% to 350%, 133% to 350%, 134% to 350%, 135% to 350%, 136% to 350%, 137% to 350%, 138% to 350%, 139% to 350%, 140% to 350%, 141% to 350%, 142% to 350%, 143% to 350%, 144% to 350%, 145% to 350%, 146% to 350%, 147% to 350%, 148% to 350%, 149% to 350%, 150% to 350%, 151% to 350%, 152% to 350%, 153% to 350%, 154% to 350%, 155% to 350%, 156% to 350%, 157% to 350%, 158% to 350%, 159% to 350%, 160% to 350%, 161% to 350%, 162% to 350%, 163% to 350%, 164% to 350%, 165% to 350%, 166% to 350%, 167% to 350%, 168% to 350%, 169% to 350%, 170% to 350%, 171% to 350%, 172% to 350%, 173% to 350%, 174% to 350%, 175% to 350%, 176% to 350%, 177% to 350%, 178% to 350%, 179% to 350%, 180% to 350%, 181% to 350%, 182% to 350%, 183% to 350%, 184% to 350%, 185% to 350%, 186% to 350%, 187% to 350%, 188% to 350%, 189% to 350%, 190% to 350%, 191% to 350%, 192% to 350%, 193% to 350%, 194% to 350%, 195% to 350%, 196% to 350%, 197% to 350%, 198% to 350%, 199% to 350%, 200% to 350%, 201% to 350%, 202% to 350%, 203% to 350%, 204% to 350%, 205% to 350%, 206% to 350%, 207% to 350%, 208% to 350%, 209% to 350%, 210% to 350%, 211% to 350%, 212% to 350%, 213% to 350%, 214% to 350%, and 215% to 350%. In a third set of ranges, the strain at peak machine direction for a microporous breathable film 2 having a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm—in some embodiments, less than about 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, 9 gsm, or 8 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 75% to 349%, 80% to 345%, 85% to 340%, 90% to 335%, 95% to 330%, 100% to 325%, 105% to 320%, 110% to 315%, 115% to 310%, 120% to 305%, 125% to 300%, 130% to 300%, 135% to 300%, 140% to 300%, 145% to 300%, 150% to 300%, 155% to 300%, 160% to 300%, 165% to 300%, 170% to

300%, 175% to 300%, 180% to 300%, 185% to 300%, 190% to 300%, 195% to 300%, 200% to 300%, 205% to 300%, 210% to 300%, 215% to 300%, 220% to 300%, and 225% to 300%.

[0059] In illustrative embodiments, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure exhibits reduced alcohol penetration as measured by Pressure Penetration Through a Fabric (PPT) testing. In PPT testing, the imperviousness of a film is quantified in relation to the degree to which a dye-containing alcohol penetrates the film. The amount of alcohol penetration may, in turn, be measured as the percentage of blotter paper surface area that contains red blots after a nonwoven material saturated with red dye is overlaid on a film and a weight is applied. The PPT test is further described in the Examples section below as well as in U.S. Patent No. 9,174,420 B2, the entire contents of which are incorporated by reference herein, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail.

[0060] The basis weight of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be varied based on a desired degree of alcohol penetration of the film as measured by PPT testing. In one example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 20 gsm and an alcohol penetration of less than about 12% as measured by PPT testing. In another example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 17 gsm and an alcohol penetration of less than about 12% as measured by PPT testing. In a further example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 12 gsm and an alcohol penetration of less than about 11% as measured by PPT testing.

[0061] The alcohol penetration of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure as measured by PPT testing may be one of several different values or fall within one of several different ranges. For example, for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—it is within the

scope of the present disclosure to select an alcohol penetration of less than or equal to one of the following values: about 20%, 19%, 18%, 17%, 16%, 15%, 14%, 13%, 12%, 11%, 10%, 9%, 8%, 7%, 6%, 5%, 4%, 3%, 2%, 1%, or 0%.

[0062] It is also within the scope of the present disclosure for the alcohol penetration of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure as measured by PPT testing to fall within one of many different ranges. In a first set of ranges, the alcohol penetration as measured by PPT testing for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 0% to 25%, 0% to 24%, 0% to 23%, 0% to 22%, 0% to 21%, 0% to 20%, 0% to 19%, 0% to 18%, 0% to 17%, 0% to 16%, 0% to 15%, 0% to 14%, 0% to 13%, 0% to 12%, 0% to 11%, 0% to 10%, 0% to 9%, 0% to 8%, 0% to 7%, 0% to 6%, 0% to 5%, 0% to 4%, 0% to 3%, 0% to 2%, and 0% to 1%. In a second set of ranges, the alcohol penetration as measured by PPT testing for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 0.1% to 12%, 0.2% to 12%, 0.3% to 12%, 0.4% to 12%, 0.5% to 12%, 0.6% to 12%, 0.7% to 12%, 0.8% to 12%, 0.9% to 12%, 1.0% to 12%, 1.1% to 12%, 1.2% to 12%, 1.3% to 12%, 1.4% to 12%, 1.5% to 12%, 1.6% to 12%, 1.7% to 12%, 1.8% to 12%, 1.9% to 12%, 2.0% to 12%, 2.1% to 12%, 2.2% to 12%, 2.3% to 12%, 2.4% to 12%, 2.5% to 12%, 2.6% to 12%, 2.7% to 12%, 2.8% to 12%, 2.9% to 12%, and 3.0 to 12%. In a third set of ranges, the alcohol penetration as measured by PPT testing for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—is in one of the following ranges: about 0.1% to 11%, 0.2% to 10%, 0.3% to 9%, 0.4% to 8%, 0.5% to 7%, 0.5% to 6%, 0.5% to 5%, 0.5% to 4%, 0.5% to 3%, 0.5% to 2%, and 0.5% to 1%.

[0063] In some embodiments, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure is essentially impervious to one or more of water, methyl

alcohol, ethyl alcohol, body fluids (e.g., blood, body fats and oils, saliva, menses, feces, urine, and/or the like), and surfactant-containing disinfectants. In some embodiments, the microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has an isopropyl alcohol penetration of less than about 10%, in some embodiments less than about 5%, and in some embodiments less than about 2%. In some embodiments, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure is essentially impervious to alcohol (e.g., isopropyl alcohol).

[0064] In illustrative embodiments, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure exhibits reduced bonding force to achieve a destruct bond. The “destruct bond” refers to a strong bond between two materials (e.g., a microporous breathable film 2 or multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 in accordance with the present disclosure bonded to a nonwoven layer), such that an attempt to separate the two materials (e.g., by pulling) damages one of the materials (e.g., the bonding agent is stronger than the materials that are bonded together).

[0065] The basis weight of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be varied based on a desired bonding force. In one example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 20 gsm and a bonding force less than about 1600 Newtons for a 150-mm wide horn. In another example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 17 gsm and a bonding force less than about 1500 Newtons for a 150-mm wide horn. In a further example, a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure has a basis weight of less than about 12 gsm and a bonding force less than about 1100 Newtons for a 150-mm wide horn.

[0066] The bonding force of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure may be one of several different values or fall within one of several different ranges. For example, for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—it is within the scope of the present disclosure to select a bonding force to be less than or equal to one of the following values for a 150-mm wide horn: about 2000 Newtons, 1900 Newtons, 1800 Newtons, 1700 Newtons, 1600

Newtons, 1500 Newtons, 1400 Newtons, 1300 Newtons, 1200 Newtons, 1100 Newtons, 1000 Newtons, 900 Newtons, 800 Newtons, 700 Newtons, 600 Newtons, 500 Newtons, or 400 Newtons.

[0067] It is also within the scope of the present disclosure for the bonding force of a microporous breathable film 2 in accordance with the present disclosure to fall within one of many different ranges. In a first set of ranges, the bonding force for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—is in one of the following ranges for a 150-mm wide horn: about 300 Newtons to 2200 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 2100 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 2000 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1900 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1800 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1700 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1500 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1400 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1300 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1200 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1100 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1000 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 900 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 800 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 700 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 600 Newtons, and 300 Newtons to 500 Newtons. In a second set of ranges, the bonding force for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—is in one of the following ranges for a 150-mm wide horn: about 100 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 200 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 400 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 500 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 600 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 700 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 800 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 900 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 1000 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 1100 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 1200 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, 1300 Newtons to 1600 Newtons, and 1400 Newtons to 1600 Newtons. In a third set of ranges, the bonding force for a microporous breathable film having a basis weight of less than or equal to about 20 gsm—in some embodiments, less than or equal to about 19 gsm, 18 gsm, 17 gsm, 16 gsm, 15 gsm, 14 gsm, 13 gsm, 12 gsm, 11 gsm, 10 gsm, or 9 gsm—is in one of the following ranges for a 150-mm wide horn: about 150 Newtons to 1500 Newtons, 200 Newtons to 1450 Newtons, 250 Newtons to 1400 Newtons, 300 Newtons to 1350

Newtons, 350 Newtons to 1300 Newtons, 400 Newtons to 1250 Newtons, 450 Newtons to 1200 Newtons, 500 Newtons to 1150 Newtons, 550 Newtons to 1100 Newtons, 600 Newtons to 1050 Newtons, 650 Newtons to 1000 Newtons, 700 Newtons to 950 Newtons, 750 Newtons to 900 Newtons, and 800 Newtons to 850 Newtons.

[0068] In some embodiments, as described above, the present disclosure provides a monolayer microporous breathable film 2. In other embodiments, the present disclosure also provides a multi-layer microporous breathable film (not shown). In one example, a multilayer microporous breathable film includes a core layer and one or more outer skin layers adjacent to the core layer. The core layer may resemble the film 2 shown in Fig. 1 and include a thermoplastic polymer (or combination of thermoplastic polymers) and a solid filler (or combination of solid fillers) dispersed therein, whereas the one or more outer skin layers may have either the same composition as the core or a different composition than the core. In one example, the skin layers may be independently selected from compositions designed to minimize the levels of volatiles building up on the extrusion die. Upon subsequent stretching, the core layer becomes microporous and breathable, while the skin layers may or may not be breathable depending upon whether or not they contain a solid filler. The thickness and composition of one or more skin layers in a multilayer version of a microporous breathable film are selected so that, when the precursor film is subsequently stretched, the resulting film is still breathable. In one example, a pair of skin layers sandwiching a core layer are relatively thin and together account for no more than about 30% of the total film thickness. In some embodiments, regardless of whether or not a skin layer contains a solid filler, the skin layer may still be breathable. For example, the skin layer may include one or more discontinuities that are introduced during the stretching process. The likelihood of discontinuities forming in a skin layer may increase as the thickness of the skin layer subjected to stretching decreases.

[0069] In one example, a multi-layer microporous breathable films in accordance with the present disclosure may be manufactured by feed block coextrusion. In another example, a multi-layer microporous breathable films in accordance with the present disclosure may be made by blown film (tubular)

coextrusion. Methods for feed block and blown film extrusion are described in *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Packaging Technology*, pp. 233–238 (Aaron L. Brody et al. eds., 2nd Ed. 1997), which is incorporated herein by reference, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail. Methods for film extrusion are also described in U.S. Patent No. 6,265,055, the entire contents of which are likewise incorporated by reference herein, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail.

[0070] In some embodiments, as described above, the present disclosure provides microporous breathable films (e.g., mono-layer or multi-layer). In other embodiments, the present disclosure further provides multi-layer breathable barrier films.

[0071] A multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 is shown, for example, in Fig. 7. The multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 shown in Fig. 7 includes at least one microporous breathable film layer 58 and at least one monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60. The monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 includes a hygroscopic polymer. In illustrative embodiments, the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 is a monolithic hydrophilic polymer. Monolithic hydrophilic polymers are able to transmit moisture without the additional need of fillers and stretching. The mechanism of breathability in a monolithic hydrophilic polymer is accomplished by absorption and desorption of moisture.

[0072] The at least one microporous breathable film layer 58 in Fig. 7 is analogous to the microporous breathable film 2 shown in Fig. 1, and may be prepared by a process analogous to that described above. In one example, the at least one microporous breathable film layer 58 includes a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin. In illustrative embodiments, the at least one microporous breathable film layer 58 has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams.

[0073] In illustrative embodiments, as shown in Fig. 7, the multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 further includes at least at least one additional microporous breathable film layer 62. The second microporous breathable film layer 62 may be

the same as or different than the first microporous breathable film layer 58. For example, the first microporous breathable film layer 58 and the second microporous breathable film layer 62 may differ from each other in thickness, breathability, pore size, and/or thermoplastic composition.

[0074] The at least one additional microporous breathable film layer 62—similar to the at least one microporous breathable film layer 58—is analogous to the microporous breathable film 2 shown in Fig. 1, and may be prepared by a process analogous to that described above. In one example, the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer 62 includes a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin. In illustrative embodiments, the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer 62 has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams. In illustrative embodiments, as shown in Fig. 7, the at least one monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 is disposed between the at least one microporous breathable film layer 58 and the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer 62 although other configurations may likewise be implemented.

[0075] The monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 shown in Fig. 7 provides an internal viral and alcohol barrier layer and—unlike microporous breathable film layer 58 and microporous breathable film layer 62—may be unfilled or substantially unfilled (e.g., contain an amount of solid filler that does not result in the creation of micropores as a result of stretching). In illustrative embodiments, the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 contains a hygroscopic polymer—including but not limited to the hygroscopic polymers described in International Patent Publication No. WO 2011/019504 A1. The entire contents of International Patent Publication No. WO 2011/019504 A1 are hereby incorporated by reference, except that in the event of any inconsistent disclosure or definition from the present specification, the disclosure or definition herein shall be deemed to prevail.

[0076] The monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 provides a barrier to viruses and to alcohol penetration. In one example, a tie layer (not shown) may be used to combine dissimilar layers (e.g., monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 and one or both of microporous breathable film layer 58 and microporous breathable film layer 62). In another example, an adhesive may be blended in one or

more of the adjacent dissimilar layers, thus avoiding potential loss in permeability arising from a continuous non-breathable tie layer.

[0077] In a further example, no tie resin is present in one, more than one, or any of the layers of a multi-layer film structure. While neither desiring to be bound by any particular theory nor intending to limit in any measure the scope of the appended claims or their equivalents, it is presently believed that in some embodiments, the use of a tie resin adhesive to keep layers from separating during manufacture and handling may be avoided inasmuch as unstretched lanes of a film (e.g., such as may be produced by CD IMG activation) fulfill the function of the tie resin and facilitate adjoining of layers. For embodiments in which no tie resin is present, there may be advantages in terms of cost savings since tie resins tend to be costly. In addition, tie resins are prone to gel formation during the extrusion process, which is generally undesirable.

[0078] The internal monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 may include a hygroscopic polymer. In illustrative embodiments, the hygroscopic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hygroscopic elastomers, polyesters, polyamides, polyetherester copolymers, polyetheramide copolymers, polyurethanes, polyurethane copolymers, poly(etherimide) ester copolymers, polyvinyl alcohols, ionomers, celluloses, nitrocelluloses, and/or the like, and combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the at least one monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 further includes an adhesive which, in some embodiments, includes polyethylene/acrylate copolymer, ethylene/methyl acrylate copolymer, acid-modified acrylate, anhydride-modified acrylate, ethylene vinyl acetate, acid/acrylate-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, anhydride-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, and/or the like, or a combination thereof. The monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 may be prepared from a hygroscopic polymer resin or from a combination of hygroscopic polymer resins and, optionally, from a blend of one or more hygroscopic polymer resins and one or more adhesives.

[0079] In one example, the internal monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 may constitute from about 0.5% to about 30% of the total thickness of the film 56. In another example, the barrier layer 60 may constitute from about 1 % to about 20% of the total thickness of the film 56. In a further example, the barrier layer

60 may constitute from about 2% to about 10% of the total thickness of the film 56. In some embodiments (not shown), the film 56 includes a plurality of monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60, and the above-described exemplary ranges of thickness percentages may be applied to the sum of the multiple barrier layers within the film. Multi-layer breathable barrier films 56 in accordance with the present disclosure may include one or more internal monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60, which may be contiguous with each other or with interposed microporous breathable layers such as microporous breathable layer 58 and microporous breathable layer 62. In illustrative embodiments, one or more moisture-permeable barrier layers 60 provided in a multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 in accordance with the present disclosure, are monolithic and do not contain any fillers that provide sites for the development of micropores. However, monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers may contain other additives to confer desired properties to the barrier layer.

[0080] Representative materials for the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 include but are not limited to hygroscopic polymers such as ϵ -caprolactone (available from Solvay Caprolactones), polyether block amides (available from Arkema PEBAX), polyester elastomer (such as Dupont Hytrel or DSM Arnitel) and other polyesters, polyamides, celluloses (e.g., cellulose fibers), nitrocelluloses (e.g., nitrocellulose fibers), ionomers (e.g., ethylene ionomers), and/or the like, and combinations thereof. In one example, fatty acid salt-modified ionomers as described in the article entitled "Development of New Ionomers with Novel Gas Permeation Properties" (*Journal of Plastic Film and Sheeting*, 2007, 23, No. 2, 119-132) may be used as a monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60. In some embodiments, sodium, magnesium, and/or potassium fatty acid salt-modified ionomers may be used to provide desirable water vapor transmission properties. In some embodiments, the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 is selected from the group consisting of hygroscopic elastomers, polyesters, polyamides, polyetherester copolymers (e.g., a block polyetherester copolymer), polyetheramide copolymers (e.g., a block polyetheramide copolymer), polyurethanes, polyurethane copolymers, poly(etherimide) ester copolymers, polyvinyl alcohols, ionomers, celluloses, nitrocelluloses, and/or the like, and combinations thereof. In one example, copolyether ester block copolymers are segmented elastomers having soft polyether

segments and hard polyester segments, as described in U.S. Patent No. 4,739,012. Representative copolyether ester block copolymers are sold by DuPont under the trade name HYTREL®. Representative copolyether amide polymers are copolyamides sold under the trade name PEBAX® by Atochem Inc. of Glen Rock, New Jersey. Representative polyurethanes are thermoplastic urethanes sold under the trade name ESTANE® by the B. F. Goodrich Company of Cleveland, Ohio. Representative copoly(etherimide) esters are described in U.S. Patent No. 4,868,062.

[0081] In some embodiments, the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 may include or be blended with a thermoplastic resin. Representative thermoplastic resins that may be used for this purpose include but are not limited to polyolefins, polyesters, polyetheresters, polyamides, polyether amides, urethanes, and/or the like, and combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the thermoplastic polymer may include (a) a polyolefin, such as polyethylene, polypropylene, poly(*i*-butene), poly(2-butene), poly(*i*-pentene), poly(2-pentene), poly(3-methyl-1-pentene), poly(4-methyl-1-pentene), 1,2-poly-1,3-butadiene, 1,4-poly-1,3-butadiene, polyisoprene, polychloroprene, polyacrylonitrile, polyvinyl acetate, poly(vinylidene chloride), polystyrene, and/or the like, and combinations thereof; (b) a polyester such as poly(ethylene terephthalate), poly(butylenes)terephthalate, poly(tetramethylene terephthalate), poly(cyclohexylene-1,4-dimethylene terephthalate), poly(oxymethylene-1,4-cyclohexylenemethyleneoxyterephthaloyl), and/or the like, and combinations thereof; and (c) a polyetherester, such as poly(oxyethylene)-poly(butylene terephthalate), poly(oxytetramethylene)-poly(ethylene terephthalate), and/or the like, and combinations thereof; and/or (d) a polyamide, such as poly(6-aminocaproic acid), poly(-caprolactam), poly(hexamethylene adipamide), poly(hexamethylene sebacamide), poly(11-aminoundecanoic acid), and/or the like, and combinations thereof.

[0082] In illustrative embodiments the hygroscopic polymer is a hygroscopic elastomer. A variety of additives may be added to the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 to provide additional properties such as antimicrobial effects, odor control, static decay, and/or the like. One or more monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60 is placed in the film 56 to impede the flow of liquids, liquid borne

pathogens, viruses, and other microorganisms that may be carried by a liquid challenge.

[0083] One or more of the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60, microporous breathable film layer 58, and microporous breathable film layer 62 in the multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 may include one or more adhesives for adhering the internal monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 to contiguous layers to form the multi-layer film 56. In one example, adhesive may be components suitable for adhering two or more layers together. In one example, adhesives are compatibilizing adhesives that increase the compatibility of the layers as well as adhering the layers to one another. The adhesives may be included in the resin or other extrudable material before extruding that resin into the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60. Representative compatibilizing adhesives include but are not limited to polyethylene/acrylate copolymer, ethylene/methyl acrylate copolymer, acid-modified acrylate, anhydride-modified acrylate, ethylene vinyl acetate, acid/acrylate-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, anhydride-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, and/or the like, and combinations thereof. In one example, when one of the microporous breathable layer 58, the microporous breathable layer 62 and the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 includes an adhesive, the adhesive may have a relatively high methacrylate content (e.g., a methacrylate content of at least about 20% to 25%). In some embodiments, the internal monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 may be prepared from blends including up to about 50% by weight adhesive and at least about 50% by weight hygroscopic polymer.

[0084] In some embodiments, the hygroscopic polymer may be dried before it is extruded. Feeding pre-dried hygroscopic elastomer in small amounts to an extruder has proven to be effective in avoiding moisture absorption, preventing hydrolysis of the hygroscopic elastomer, and reducing or eliminating the formation of dark blue gels and holes in web. In some higher stretch ratio cases, gels rendered holes and even web break.

[0085] A multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 in accordance with the present disclosure may contain one or a plurality of monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60, each of which may be placed in any order in the inner layers of the film structure. In illustrative embodiments, the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier

layer 60 is not placed on the outer surface of the resultant film 56 in order to avoid damage caused by foreign materials. In one example, when the film 56 contains a plurality of monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60, individual monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60 are not placed adjacent to each other inside the film in order to increase efficacy. When a plurality of monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60 is used, the individual monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers 60 may differ from each other in thickness and/or type of thermoplastic polymer.

[0086] In one example, a representative structure for a multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 contains five layers (not shown), with one monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer being in the core of the structure and four microporous breathable film layers being arranged around the core. In one example, the five-layer breathable barrier film has a A-C-B-C-A structure, wherein A represents a first microporous breathable film layer, C represents a second microporous breathable film layer that is different than or the same as the first microporous breathable film layer, and B represents a monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer.

[0087] In one example, the outermost microporous breathable film layer (A and/or C) contains Dow 5230G LLDPE or Dow PL1280 ULDPE or Dow 5630 LLDPE, and calcium carbonate. Additional antioxidants, colorants, and/or processing aids may optionally be added. The microporous breathable film layer A may differ from the microporous breathable film layer C in the amount and/or identity of solid filler present (e.g., calcium carbonate, barium sulfate, talc, glass spheres, other inorganic particles, etc.). The inner monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer B may contain a hygroscopic elastomer such as Dupont HYTREL PET and an adhesive such as Dupont BYNEL 3101 20%EVA or Dupont AC1820 acrylate, with additional antioxidants, colorants, and processing aids optionally being added. In one example, the inner monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer B contains about 50% adhesive and about 50% by weight or more of hygroscopic elastomer. Instead of a polyester elastomer, other hygroscopic polymers, such as ϵ -caprolactone, polyester block amides, polyester elastomers, polyamides, and blends thereof may be utilized as the inner monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layers.

[0088] Multi-layer breathable barrier films 56 of a type described above are not limited to any specific kind of film structure. Other film structures may achieve

the same or similar result as the three-layer film 56 shown in Fig. 7 or the five-layer structure A-C-B-C-A described above. Film structure is a function of equipment design and capability. For example, the number of layers in a film depends only on the technology available and the desired end use for the film. Representative examples of film structures that may be implemented in accordance with the present disclosure include but are not limited to the following, wherein A represents a microporous breathable film layer (e.g., 58 or 62) and B represents an alcohol and viral monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer (e.g., 60):

A-B-A

A-A-B-A

A-B-A-A

A-A-B-A-A

A-B-A-A-A

A-B-A-B-A

A-B-A-A-A-A-A

A-A-B-A-A-A-A

A-A-A-B-A-A-A

A-B-A-A-A-B-A

A-B-A-A-B-A-A

A-B-A-B-A-A-A

A-B-A-B-A-B-A

A-B-A-A-A-A-A-A

A-A-B-A-A-A-A-A

A-A-A-B-A-A-A-A

A-B-A-A-A-A-B-A.

[0089] In the above-described exemplary film structures, each of the microporous breathable film layers A may include two or more microporous breathable film layers in order to better control other film properties, such as the ability to bond to nonwovens. For example, when there are two microporous breathable film layers in one A microporous breathable film layer, and when C represents the second microporous breathable film layer, some exemplary film structures are as follows:

A-C-B-C-A

A-C-A-C-B-C-A

A-C-B-C-A-C-A

A-C-A-C-B-C-A-C-A

A-C-B-C-A-C-A-C-A

A-C-B-C-A-B-C-A

[0090] Additionally, die technology that allows production of multiple layers in a multiplier fashion may be used. For example, an ABA structure may be multiplied from about 10 to about 1000 times. The resulting 10-time multiplied ABA structure may be expressed as follows:

A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A

[0091] Representative applications using a microporous breathable film 2 and/or a multi-layer breathable barrier film 56 include but are not limited to medical gowns, diaper back sheets, drapes, packaging, garments, articles, carpet backing, upholstery backing, bandages, protective apparel, feminine hygiene, building construction, bedding and/or the like. Films in accordance with the present disclosure may be laminated to a fabric, scrim, or other film support by thermal, ultrasonic, and/or adhesive bonding. The support may be attached to at least one face of the film and or to both faces of the film. The laminate may be made using wovens, knits, nonwovens, paper, netting, or other films. Adhesive bonding may be used to prepare such laminates. Adhesive bonding may be performed with adhesive agents such as powders, adhesive webs, liquid, hot-melt and solvent-based adhesives. Additionally, these types of support may be used with ultrasonic or thermal bonding if the polymers in the support are compatible with the film surface. Laminates of the present multilayer films and nonwoven fabrics may provide surgical barriers. In one example, the fabrics are spunbonded or spunbond-meltblown-spunbond (SMS) fabrics. In another example, the fabrics may be spunlaced, airlaid, powder-bonded, thermal-bonded, or resin-bonded. The encasing of the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 protects the monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 from mechanical damage or thermal damage and allows for thermal and ultrasonic bonding of the multilayer film at extremely low thicknesses.

[0092] Multi-layer breathable barrier films 56 in accordance with the present disclosure may be used in applications in the medical field. Porous webs are used currently in the medical field for Ethylene Oxide (EtO) sterilization as the gas must be able to permeate packaging in order to sterilize the contents. These porous webs are often used as the top sheets for rigid trays and as breather films in pouches. Medical paper is commonly used for these purposes as is Tyvek (spunbond HDPE). The multi-layer breathable barrier films 56 in accordance with the present disclosure may be used to replace either of these products in such applications.

[0093] In one example, multi-layer breathable barrier films 56 in accordance with the present disclosure may be used in any application that involves a blood barrier. For example, disposable blankets, operating table covers, or surgical drapes may incorporate a multilayer breathable barrier film 56 in accordance with the present disclosure, as they represent blood barrier applications that might function more comfortably with a breathable substrate.

[0094] In some embodiments, as described above, the present disclosure provides microporous breathable films 2 (e.g., mono-layer or multi-layer) and multi-layer breathable barrier films 56. In other embodiments, the present disclosure further provides personal hygiene products containing one or more microporous breathable films (e.g., mono-layer or multi-layer) in accordance with the present disclosure, and/or one or more multi-layer breathable barrier films in accordance with the present disclosure. In illustrative embodiments, a personal hygiene product in accordance with the present disclosure includes at least one inner microporous breathable film 2 prepared by a process as described above and at least one outer non-woven layer. The at least one inner microporous breathable film 2 is configured for contacting skin and/or clothing of a user of the personal hygiene product. In some embodiments, the personal hygiene product further includes at least one monolithic moisture-permeable barrier layer 60 disposed between the at least one inner microporous breathable film 2 and the at least one outer non-woven layer.

[0095] In one example, the at least one inner microporous breathable film is bonded to the at least one outer non-woven layer without an adhesive (e.g., via heat sealing, ultrasonic welding, and/or the like). In some embodiments, each of the at least one inner microporous breathable film 2 and the at least one outer non-woven

layer comprises polypropylene and/or polyethylene. In illustrative embodiments, the inner microporous breathable film 2 includes calcium carbonate as the solid filler.

[0096] In illustrative embodiments, the personal hygiene product in accordance with the present disclosure is configured as an incontinence brief, a surgical gown, or a feminine hygiene product.

[0097] The following numbered clauses include embodiments that are contemplated and non-limiting:

[0098] Clause 1. A process for making a microporous breathable film comprising the steps of

[0099] extruding a composition comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler to form a molten web,

[00100] casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll using an air knife, air blanket, a vacuum box, or a combination thereof to form a quenched film, and

[00101] stretching the quenched film to form the microporous breathable film.

[00102] Clause 2. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises polyethylene, polypropylene, or a combination thereof.

[00103] Clause 3. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises low density polyethylene, high density polyethylene, linear low density polyethylene, ultra-low density polyethylene, or a combination thereof.

[00104] Clause 4. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene.

[00105] Clause 5. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene and the linear low density polyethylene comprises a metallocene polyethylene.

[00106] Clause 6. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises polypropylene.

[00107] Clause 7. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler comprises from about 30% to about 75% by weight of the microporous breathable film.

[00108] Clause 8. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein an average particle size of the inorganic filler is between about 0.1 microns and about 15 microns.

[00109] Clause 9. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler is selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, calcium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, barium sulfate, magnesium sulfate, aluminum sulfate, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, alumina, mica, talc, silica, clay, glass spheres, titanium dioxide, aluminum hydroxide, zeolites, and a combination thereof.

[00110] Clause 10. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler comprises an alkali metal carbonate, an alkaline earth metal carbonate, an alkali metal sulfate, an alkaline earth metal sulfate, or a combination thereof.

[00111] Clause 11. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler comprises calcium carbonate.

[00112] Clause 12. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the molten web is cast against the surface of the chill roll under negative pressure by the vacuum box.

[00113] Clause 13. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the molten web is cast against the surface of the chill roll under positive pressure by the air knife.

[00114] Clause 14. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein an exit temperature of cooling fluid passing through the chill roll is between about 50 degrees Fahrenheit and about 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

[00115] Clause 15. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the stretching comprises machine direction (MD) stretching, cross-direction (CD) stretching, intermeshing gear (IMG) stretching, cold drawing, or a combination thereof.

[00116] Clause 16. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the stretching comprises cross-directional intermeshing gear (CD IMG) stretching.

[00117] Clause 17. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the stretching comprises cross-directional intermeshing gear (CD IMG) stretching and cold draw.

[00118] Clause 18. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein at least a portion of the stretching is performed at a temperature of between about 60 degrees Fahrenheit and about 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

[00119] Clause 19. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, further comprising annealing the microporous breathable film.

[00120] Clause 20. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, further comprising annealing the microporous breathable film in which the annealing is performed at a temperature of between about 75 degrees Fahrenheit and about 225 degrees Fahrenheit.

[00121] Clause 21. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm.

[00122] Clause 22. The process of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 12 gsm.

[00123] Clause 23. A process for making a microporous breathable film comprising the steps of

[00124] extruding a composition that comprises polyethylene, polypropylene, or a combination thereof and an alkaline earth metal carbonate to form a molten web, the alkaline earth metal carbonate comprising at least about 50% by weight of the microporous breathable film,

[00125] casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll under negative pressure by a vacuum box to form a quenched film,

[00126] stretching the quenched film by cross-directional intermeshing gear (CD IMG) stretching to form the microporous breathable film, and

[00127] annealing the microporous breathable film at a temperature of between about 75 and about 225 degrees Fahrenheit.

[00128] Clause 24. A microporous breathable film comprising

[00129] a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin,

[00130] wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams.

[00131] Clause 25. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 13 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 75 grams.

[00132] Clause 26. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 13 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 100 grams.

[00133] Clause 27. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 9 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 100 grams.

[00134] Clause 28. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 8 gsm.

[00135] Clause 29. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises polyethylene, polypropylene, or a combination thereof.

[00136] Clause 30. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises low density polyethylene, high density polyethylene, linear low density polyethylene, ultra-low density polyethylene, or a combination thereof.

[00137] Clause 31. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene.

[00138] Clause 32. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin consists essentially of linear low density polyethylene.

[00139] Clause 33. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene, and the linear low density polyethylene comprises a metallocene polyethylene.

[00140] Clause 34. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the polyolefin comprises polypropylene.

[00141] Clause 35. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler comprises from about 30% to about 75% by weight of the microporous breathable film.

[00142] Clause 36. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler comprises from about 50% to about 75% by weight of the microporous breathable film.

[00143] Clause 37. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler comprises an alkali metal carbonate, an alkaline earth metal carbonate, an alkali metal sulfate, an alkaline earth metal sulfate, or a combination thereof.

[00144] Clause 38. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the inorganic filler comprises calcium carbonate.

[00145] Clause 39. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 150%.

[00146] Clause 40. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 175%.

[00147] Clause 41. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 200%.

[00148] Clause 42. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 215%.

[00149] Clause 43. A microporous breathable film comprising

[00150] linear low density polyethylene and an alkaline earth metal dispersed in the linear low density polyethylene,

[00151] wherein the alkaline earth metal comprises from about 50% to about 75% by weight of the microporous breathable film,

[00152] wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 13 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 90 grams, and

[00153] wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 90%.

[00154] Clause 44. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 125%.

[00155] Clause 45. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 150%.

[00156] Clause 46. The microporous breathable film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 200%.

[00157] Clause 47. A multi-layer breathable barrier film comprising

[00158] at least one microporous breathable film layer comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin, wherein the at least one microporous breathable film layer has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams, and

[00159] at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer comprising a hygroscopic polymer.

[00160] Clause 48. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of any other clause or combination of clauses further comprising at least one additional microporous breathable film layer, wherein the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer comprises a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin, wherein the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams, wherein the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer are the same or different, and wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer is disposed between the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer.

[00161] Clause 49. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the hygroscopic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hygroscopic elastomers, polyesters, polyamides, polyetherester

copolymers, polyetheramide copolymers, polyurethanes, polyurethane copolymers, poly(etherimide) ester copolymers, polyvinyl alcohols, ionomers, celluloses, nitrocelluloses, and a combination thereof.

[00162] Clause 50. A multi-layer breathable barrier film comprising
[00163] at least one microporous breathable film layer prepared by the process of any other clause or combination of clauses,

[00164] at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer comprising a hygroscopic polymer, and

[00165] at least one additional microporous breathable film prepared by the process of any other clause or combination of clauses,

[00166] wherein the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer are the same or different, and

[00167] wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer is disposed between the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film.

[00168] Clause 51. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the hygroscopic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hygroscopic elastomers, polyesters, polyamides, polyetherester copolymers, polyetheramide copolymers, polyurethanes, polyurethane copolymers, poly(etherimide) ester copolymers, polyvinyl alcohols, ionomers, celluloses, nitrocelluloses, and a combination thereof.

[00169] Clause 52. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer further comprises an adhesive.

[00170] Clause 53. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer further comprises an adhesive, and the adhesive comprises polyethylene/acrylate copolymer, ethylene/methyl acrylate copolymer, acid-modified acrylate, anhydride-modified acrylate, ethylene vinyl acetate, acid/acrylate-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, anhydride-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, or a combination thereof.

[00171] Clause 54. A personal hygiene product comprising

[00172] at least one inner microporous breathable film prepared by the process of any other clause or combination of clauses, the at least one inner microporous breathable film being configured for contacting skin and/or clothing of a user of the personal hygiene product, and

[00173] at least one outer non-woven layer.

[00174] Clause 55. The personal hygiene product of any other clause or combination of clauses further comprising at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer disposed between the at least one inner microporous breathable film and the at least one outer non-woven layer.

[00175] Clause 56. The personal hygiene product of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the at least one inner microporous breathable film is bonded to the at least one outer non-woven layer without an adhesive.

[00176] Clause 57. The personal hygiene product of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein each of the at least one inner microporous breathable film and the at least one outer non-woven layer comprises polypropylene.

[00177] Clause 58. The personal hygiene product of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the product is configured as an incontinence brief.

[00178] Clause 59. The personal hygiene product of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the product is configured as a surgical gown.

[00179] Clause 60. The personal hygiene product of any other clause or combination of clauses, wherein the product is configured as a feminine hygiene product.

[00180] The following examples and representative procedures illustrate features in accordance with the present disclosure, and are provided solely by way of illustration. They are not intended to limit the scope of the appended claims or their equivalents.

EXAMPLES

General

[00181] For production of the example films, an extrusion cast line with up to 3 extruders was used. The “A” and “B” extruders are 2 ½” in diameter, and the “C”

extruder is 1 3/4" in diameter. The extruders feed into a combining feedblock manufactured by Cloeren Corporation of Orange, TX, which can layer the A, B and C extruder outputs in a variety of configurations. From the feedblock, the molten polymer proceeds into a monolayer cast die (manufactured by Cloeren) that is about 36" wide. The die has an adjustable gap. For the samples described herein, the adjustable gap was maintained between 10 and 40 mils. The molten polymer drops down to a chill roll. For the samples described herein, the chill roll had an embossed pattern FST-250 which was engraved by Pamarco of Roselle, NJ as their pattern P-2739. The embossed pattern P-2739 is a square pattern (e.g., with lines nearly aligned with the Machine Direction) with 250 squares per inch and a depth of about 31 microns. The roll itself has an 18" diameter with internal water cooling. The engrave roll pattern may be replaced with other patterns that are shallow enough not to interfere with a vacuum box quench. One alternative is a 40 Ra pattern (40 micro-inch average roughness) generated by a sand-blasting process on a chrome plated roll.

Example 1 – Comparison of Conventional Embossed Film to Chill Cast Vacuum Box Film

[00182] In this experiment, microporous breathable films were made from the formulation XC3-121-2205.0 shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Composition of XC3-121-2205.0

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A	97	T994L3 (CaCO ₃)	75
		3527 (metallocene polyethylene)	15
		640 (LDPE)	10
C (split)	1.5/1.5	LD516.LN (polyethylene)	100

[00183] The molten web formed by extrusion of the composition XC3-121-2205.0 shown in Table 1 was quenched by either a conventional embossed roll process or a chill cast vacuum box process in accordance with the present disclosure

on a 250T roll (1749.9 rpm setting). The physical properties of a film made by the conventional embossed roll process and a film made by the chill cast process in accordance with the present disclosure are shown in Table 2. Table 2 further includes physical properties for a third film made by the chill cast vacuum box process, which was down-gauged to 12.21 gsm. In Table 2 and in subsequent tables, Elmendorf tear results that are below the assay range of the equipment are indicated by an asterisk and should be regarded as being for reference only.

Table 2. Comparison of Physical Properties of Microporous Breathable Film Prepared by Conventional Embossing Process vs. Chill Cast Vacuum Box Process.

Physical Property	Units	Embossed FST250	Chill Cast	Down-Gauged Chill Cast
Basis Weight	g/m ²	16.60	16.60	12.21
Emboss Depth	mil	0.90	0.70	0.60
Light Transmission	%	43.3	40.5	47.7
COF, Static - In\In	Index	0.56	0.54	0.56
COF, Static - Out\Out	Index	0.58	0.57	0.57
COF, Kinetic - In\In	Index	0.53	0.51	0.53
COF, Kinetic - Out\Out	Index	0.56	0.56	0.52
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	4109	2276	2569
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	563	695	584
Strain @ Peak MD	%	292	164	83
Force @ Break MD	g/in	563	695	581
Strain @ Break MD	%	292	164	93
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	402	624	429
Strain @ Yield MD	%	13	13	8
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	285	360	316
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	385	575	515
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	429	670	577
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	438	669	576
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	447	673	---
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	32.3*	19.2*	9.3*
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	337	334	245
Strain @ Peak TD	%	523	492	516
Force @ Break TD	g/in	337	334	245
Strain @ Break TD	%	523	492	515
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	206	228	161
Strain @ Yield TD	%	24	24	25
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	126	145	100
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	162	184	126
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	208	231	161
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	225	248	176
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	227	248	175
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	275	451	324
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4"	gf	234	282	214

(D3)				
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[00184] As shown by the data in Table 2, a microporous breathable film in accordance with the present disclosure shows substantially improved TD tear, and puncture properties as compared to a conventional embossed roll film. For example, microporous breathable films prepared by the chill cast process show greater MD tensile strength and less MD elongation as compared to the embossed film. Moreover, surprisingly, the non-embossed microporous breathable film exhibits a reduced water vapor transmission rate (WVTR) as compared to the comparable embossed film. This observation stands in contrast to the findings reported in U.S. Patent No. 6,656,581, which states that the MVTR (moisture vapor transmission rate) of a non-embossed film is greater than the MVTR of a comparable embossed film that is incrementally stretched under essentially the same conditions.

[00185] The embossed process is prone to draw resonance. As a result, microporous breathable films prepared by a conventional embossing process typically include LDPE to assist in the processing. However, for microporous breathable films prepared by a chill cast vacuum box quenching process in accordance with the present teachings, the LDPE may be omitted, thereby affording stronger films having properties that were heretofore unachievable with conventional films.

Example 2 – Microporous Breathable Films Prepared by Vacuum Box Process

[00186] Seven formulations containing a CaCO_3 -containing compound (CF7414 or T998K5) were used to prepare microporous breathable films in accordance with the present disclosure. In each of these seven formulations, the CaCO_3 -containing compound (CF7414 or T998K5) is present in 70% by weight and PPA is present in 2%. The remainder of the formulations is a polymer or polymer blend. The composition of the seven formulations, including the compositions of the polymer/polymer blend constituting the balance, is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Formulations for Microporous Breathable Films.

Formulation No.	CaCO ₃ Compound 70% (w/w)	Polymer/Polymer Blend 28% (w/w)
1	CF7414	18% EXCEED LL3527 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin, narrow MWD, density = 0.927 g/cm ³)/ 10% Dow 640 (DOW Chemical Company, low density polyethylene resin, autoclave, branched broad MWD, density = 0.922 g/cm ³)
2	CF7414	28% LL3527
3	CF7414	28% EXCEED LL3518 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin, narrow MWD, density = 0.918 g/cm ³)
4	CF7414	28% EXCEED LL1018 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin, narrow MWD, density = 0.918 g/cm ³)
5	CF7414	28% D350 (Chevron Phillips, MARFLEX linear low density polyethylene, density = 0.933 g/cm ³)
6	T998K5	18% LL3527, 10% Dow 640
7	T998K5	28% LL3527

[00187] The films made from formulations 1 and 6 were 14 gsm, whereas films made from formulations 2-5 and 7 were 12 gsm.

[00188] The composition of the CaCO₃-containing compounds CF7414 and T998K5 shown in Table 3 are specified in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Composition of CaCO₃ Compounds used in the Formulations of Table 3.

	CF7414	T998K5
Component	Amount of Component	Amount of Component
EXCEED LL3518	28	
EXCEED LL3527		26
FilmLink 500 (CaCO ₃)	60	60
TiO ₂	12	14

[00189] The seven formulations shown in Table 3 were used to make a series of microporous breathable films. The films were subjected to varying amounts of pre-stretch and, in some cases to MD IMG stretching. The physical properties of the films thus prepared are summarized in Tables 5, 6, and 7 below.

Table 5. Physical Properties of Microporous Breathable Films A-G.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Formulation	XC1-2-2251.0	XC1-2-2251.0	XC1-2-2251.0	XC1-2-2251.1	XC1-2-2251.1	XC1-2-2251.1	XC1-2-2251.2
Pre-stretch	50	70	50	50	70	50	50
MD IMG?	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Polymer/ Polymer Blend	Blend 3527/640	Blend 3527/640	Blend 3527/640	Sole 3527	Sole 3527	Sole 3527	Sole 3518
Compound	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414
Physical Property	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Basis Weight	13.60	13.61	13.07	11.32	12.19	11.63	11.31
Density	1.4052	1.4655	1.4089	1.4752	1.4010	1.4636	1.3619
Light Transmission	41.8	39.3	42.1	46.3	44.4	45.3	49.1
Gloss - In	9.5	9.2	8.8	6.7	6.9	7.2	7.0
Gloss - Out	9.1	8.7	9.1	7.0	6.9	7.3	7.1
COF, Static - In\In	0.500	0.535	0.552	0.580	0.618	0.625	0.610
COF, Static - Out\Out	0.548	0.517	0.530	0.600	0.612	0.607	0.620
COF, Kinetic - In\In	0.451	0.458	0.456	0.486	0.503	0.490	0.519
COF, Kinetic - Out\Out	0.450	0.460	0.459	0.494	0.499	0.486	0.518
WVTR 100K	4186	3652	3957	4439	3755	3719	2703
Tensile Gauge MD	0.38	0.37	0.37	0.30	0.34	0.31	0.33
Force @ Peak MD	737	1,015	806	690	887	660	861
Strain @ Peak MD	148	177	154	217	220	193	224
Force @ Break MD	694	969	746	675	844	650	844
Strain @ Break MD	154	180	158	219	222	193	225
Force @ Yield MD	665	813	712	274	250	278	210

Strain @ Yield MD	%	15	15	15	11	8	11	9
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	274	314	272	191	205	186	139
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	522	607	528	270	295	272	215
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	681	839	731	323	361	334	272
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	662	817	708	343	387	358	303
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	675	838	721	369	420	390	353
TEA MD	FtLb/ in ²	976	1,485	1,103	1,099	1,179	942	1,061
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	6.7*	6.2*	7*	13.8*	9.4*	14.2*	16.1*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.38	0.37	0.37	0.30	0.34	0.31	0.33
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	270	229	256	204	212	194	184
Strain @ Peak TD	%	403	422	468	403	407	400	445
Force @ Break TD	g/in	259	217	245	194	204	185	177
Strain @ Break TD	%	410	429	472	408	411	404	450
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	173	159	167	160	163	143	125
Strain @ Yield TD	%	21	25	26	31	31	28	27
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	99	89	88	77	79	76	72
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	135	119	124	106	108	100	95
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	180	158	166	151	153	140	123
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	182	171	179	171	176	149	137

Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	197	178	181	171	175	160	139
TEA TD	FtLb/ in ²	859	809	934	875	803	788	738
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	1,600	800	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	330	247	301	312	378	335	355
Dart Drop (26")	g	63	67	62	124	128	125	141
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	311	332	277	214	229	213	195

Table 6. Physical Properties of Microporous Breathable Films H-N.

		H	I	J	K	L	M	N
	Formulation	XC1-2- 2251.2	XC1-2- 2251.2	XC1-2- 2251.3	XC1-2- 2251.3	XC1-2- 2251.3	XC1-2- 2251.4	XC1-2- 2251.4
	Pre-stretch	70	50	50	70	50	50	70
	MD IMG?	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
	Polymer/ Polymer Blend	Sole 3518	Sole 3518	Sole 1018	Sole 1018	Sole 1018	Sole D350	Sole D350
	Compound	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414	CF7414
Physical Property	Units	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
Basis Weight	g/m ²	11.45	11.37	11.25	11.48	11.56	11.79	11.05
Density	g/cc	1.4603	1.3375	1.4667	1.3047	1.4626	1.4212	1.4600
Light Transmission	%	46.1	47.4	45.9	45.0	45.1	43.6	43.7
Gloss - In	% @ 45°	6.9	7.1	6.9	7.1	7.0	6.4	7.1
Gloss - Out	% @ 45°	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.3	7.1	7.4	7.2
COF, Static - In\In	-----	0.652	0.630	0.625	0.622	0.617	0.600	0.600
COF, Static - Out\Out	-----	0.650	0.640	0.640	0.628	0.627	0.593	0.567
COF, Kinetic - In\In	-----	0.524	0.523	0.508	0.515	0.515	0.481	0.483
COF, Kinetic - Out\Out	-----	0.526	0.535	0.521	0.524	0.522	0.484	0.479
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	2614	2574	1054	1140	1395	2807	2735
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.31	0.33	0.30	0.35	0.31	0.33	0.30
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	944	754	1,298	1,487	1,436	1,297	1,335
Strain @ Peak MD	%	202	198	153	137	148	178	150
Force @ Break MD	g/in	912	742	1,245	1,403	1,400	1,241	1,297
Strain @ Break MD	%	202	199	154	138	148	179	150
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	274	218	230	177	215	341	381

Strain @ Yield MD	%	10	10	8	6	8	10	10
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	185	143	158	161	142	201	216
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	278	222	273	294	267	339	370
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	353	285	393	450	406	468	542
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	394	318	472	560	499	508	598
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	462	373	664	882	755	628	802
TEA MD	FtLb/ in ²	1,219	902	1,173	1,041	1,176	1,350	1,351
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	14.7*	18.2*	6.4*	4.6*	5.6*	4.4*	5*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.31	0.33	0.30	0.35	0.31	0.33	0.30
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	201	201	221	199	194	254	218
Strain @ Peak TD	%	521	482	500	503	464	505	487
Force @ Break TD	g/in	189	193	207	189	189	246	210
Strain @ Break TD	%	525	485	503	505	468	508	492
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	113	122	128	115	122	174	153
Strain @ Yield TD	%	24	25	20	18	19	27	28
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	70	74	88	85	85	89	84
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	90	96	110	103	106	123	111
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	114	123	133	121	127	170	149
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	128	136	144	131	138	179	160
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	129	137	144	132	139	176	162

TD									
TEA TD	FtLb/ in²	908	818	994	779	832	1,101	1,052	
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	1,600	800	1,600	1,600	800	1,600	1,600	
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	312	320	396	364	347	417	297	
Dart Drop (26")	g	129	146	179	200	197	160	154	
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	209	208	285	283	282	296	275	

Table 7. Physical Properties of Microporous Breathable Films O-U.

		O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
	Formulation	XC1-2-2251.4	XC1-2-2251.5	XC1-2-2251.5	XC1-2-2251.5	XC1-2-2251.6	XC1-2-2251.6	XC1-2-2251.6
	Pre-stretch	50	50	70	50	50	70	50
	MD IMG?	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Polymer/ Polymer Blend	Sole D350	Blend 3527 640	Blend 3527 640	Blend 3527 640	Sole 3527	Sole 3527	Sole 3527
	Compound	CF7414	T998K5	T998K5	T998K5	T998K5	T998K5	T998K5
Physical Property	Units	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Basis Weight	g/m ²	11.37	13.24	13.67	13.59	12.23	12.19	12.20
Density	g/cc	1.4289	1.4489	1.3988	1.4491	1.4211	1.4426	1.4135
Light Transmission	%	44.4	43.0	41.2	42.4	45.5	46.1	45.2
Gloss - In	% @ 45°	7.3	8.6	8.8	8.7	6.8	6.9	6.6
Gloss - Out	% @ 45°	7.3	9.0	8.9	8.7	7.0	6.8	6.9
COF, Static - In\In	-----	0.593	0.553	0.513	0.518	0.598	0.587	0.585
COF, Static - Out\Out	-----	0.597	0.510	0.523	0.493	0.537	0.565	0.565
COF, Kinetic - In\In	-----	0.498	0.456	0.440	0.451	0.465	0.472	0.465
COF, Kinetic - Out\Out	-----	0.483	0.441	0.436	0.440	0.460	0.461	0.464
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	2610	3949	5316	5031	6446	6024	5829
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.31	0.36	0.38	0.37	0.35	0.33	---
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	1,354	854	863	891	693	715	764
Strain @ Peak MD	%	175	157	175	192	241	206	247
Force @ Break MD	g/in	1,278	797	844	865	684	685	764
Strain @ Break MD	%	176	174	177	195	241	207	247
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	357	670	614	783	304	314	310

Strain @ Yield MD	%	10	13	11	15	11	11	11
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	208	329	293	333	218	212	213
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	352	589	557	600	298	304	304
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	493	787	774	798	344	368	354
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	536	758	743	766	354	384	364
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	666	762	751	768	367	405	377
TEA MD	FtLb/ in ²	1,477	1,342	1,271	1,487	1,056	1,018	---
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	4.9*	5*	4.6*	5.4*	16.2*	13.4*	14.9*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.31	0.36	0.38	0.37	0.35	0.33	0.34
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	224	265	291	258	261	217	274
Strain @ Peak TD	%	476	449	504	445	463	402	464
Force @ Break TD	g/in	216	256	280	247	251	200	267
Strain @ Break TD	%	481	454	508	452	466	409	467
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	161	204	197	198	190	172	193
Strain @ Yield TD	%	28	27	29	27	30	30	29
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	90	102	100	102	84	81	88
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	117	143	138	141	121	113	127
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	157	199	190	194	182	164	186
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	170	217	212	213	202	186	206
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	168	211	209	208	197	183	201

Strain TD												
TEA TD	FitLb/ in ²	1,021	1,013	1,100	964	1,008	850	1,087				
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	800	1,600	1,600				
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	323	414	350	453	274	380	340				
Dart Drop (26")	g	169	64	62	59	125	124	112				
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	275	284	307	279	243	232	237				

Example 3 – Comparative Examples Showing Physical Properties of Conventional Microporous Breathable Films

[00190] Data for a series of microporous breathable films prepared by conventional methods (e.g., Windmoeller & Hoelscher blown MDO film, cast MDO films, and cast IMG films) are shown in Table 8 below. Data for a series of microporous breathable films prepared by a vacuum box process in accordance with the present teachings are shown in Table 9 below.

[00191] As shown by the data in Table 8, the blown MDO film exhibits poor strain and tear properties. Moreover, the strain at peak MD corresponding to the films in Table 9 are substantially higher than those in Table 8. In addition, the films in Table 9 exhibit excellent Dart Drop and slow puncture characteristics.

Table 8. Comparative Data for Microporous Breathable Films Prepared by Conventional Processes.

			W&H Blown MDO	XP8790C1 (Cast MDO)	XP8790C (Cast MDO)	XC5-121- 2265.0 (3518/FilmLink 500)	XC5-121- 2265.1 (3527/FilmLink 500)	XC3- 121- 2218.1M 16 gsm (Cast IMG)	XC3-121- 2224.0 16 gsm (Cast IMG) (MCA data)
Physical Property	Units								
Basis Weight	gsm			16.7	19.2	15.5	15.4	17.42	15.8
Gauge	mil		0.55	0.52				0.45	
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day		3741	6640		6963	16577	3754	3972
Force @ Peak MD	g/in		2,167	2752	2784	2510	2318	950	1111
Strain @ Peak MD	%		58	85	139	84	83	193	179
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in		487		361			388	
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in		842		616			652	
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in		1,765	1158	1023	1070	1305	734	814
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in		2,080		1441			734	
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf		2		7			7.4	
Force @ Peak TD	g/in		211	268	285	288	296	256	341
Strain @ Peak TD	%		25	394	377	215	336	458	473
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in		149		174			117	
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in		194		229			158	
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in		210	240	270	215	233	198	236
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in		202		267			202	

Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	73		126			146	
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Table 9. Physical Properties of Microporous Breathable Films V-AA.

	Stretching	50% Pre-stretch	70% Pre-stretch	50% Pre-stretch w/ MD IMG	50% Pre-stretch	70% Pre-stretch	50% Pre-stretch w/ MD IMG
	Polymer/ Polymer Blend	Sole 3518	Sole 3518		Blend 3518/ D350	Blend 3518/ D350	Blend 3518/ D350
Physical Property	Units	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA
Basis Weight	gsm	11.32	12.19	11.63	11.79	11.05	11.37
Gauge	mil	0.3	0.34	0.31	0.33	0.3	0.31
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	4439	3755	3719	2807	2735	2610
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	690	887	660	1297	1335	1354
Strain @ Peak MD	%	217	220	193	178	150	175
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	191	205	186	201	216	208
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	270	295	272	339	370	352
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	323	361	334	468	542	493
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	343	387	358	508	598	536
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	13.8	9.4	14.2	4.4	5	4.4
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	204	212	194	254	218	224
Strain @ Peak TD	%	403	407	400	505	487	476
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	77	79	76	89	84	90
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	106	108	100	123	111	117

Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	151	153	140	170	149	157
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	171	175	160	179	160	170
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	312	229	213	417	297	323
Dart Drop	g	124	128	125	160	154	169
Slow Puncture	gf	214	229	213	296	275	275

Example 4 – Skinless Microporous Breathable Films

[00192] A series of 16 skinless microporous breathable films having a structure BBBB were prepared from the formulation XC1-2-2269.0 shown in Table 10. The composition of compound CF7414 is given above in Table 4.

[00193] The 16 films were subjected to the following different processing conditions: basis weights (9 gsm vs. 12 gsm), pre-stretch (35%/35% vs. 50%/50%), depth of engagement (0.070 vs. 0.085), and post-stretch (0% vs. 30%). The physical properties of the resultant films are summarized in Table 11-12.

Table 10. Composition of Formulation XC1-2-2269.0 Used to Make BBBB Skinless Microporous Breathable Films.

	Component
B extruder (100%)	70% Heritage CF7414
	28% LL3518
	1% Ampacet 102823 PA (process aid)

[00194] In Tables 11-12, the legend W/X/Y/Z is a shorthand nomenclature signifying basis weight (gsm)/pre-stretch/depth of engagement of IMG rolls/post-stretch. For example, the designation 9/35/070/0 represents a basis weight of 9 gsm, 35%/35% pre-stretch, a depth of engagement of 70 mm, and 0% post-stretch.

Table 11. Physical Properties of Skinless Microporous Breathable Films A1-H1.

	A1	B1	C1	D1	E1	F1	G1	H1
W/X/Y/Z	9/35/070 /0	9/35/070/ 30	9/35/085 /0	9/35/085/ 30	9/50/070 /0	9/50/070/ 30	9/50/085 /0	9/50/085/ 30
Physical Properties	Units							
Gauge	mil	0.20	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.23	0.25
Basis Weight	g/m ²	7.74	8.58	8.76	9.12	8.79	8.70	9.08
Density	g/cc	1.4714	1.4226	1.4338	1.4616	1.4713	1.4658	1.4061
Emboss Depth	mil	0.37	0.30	0.37	0.27	0.30	0.30	0.33
Light Transmission	%	56.2	51.7	48.4	53.1	50.1	50.5	47.7
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /d ay	2414	4885	5837	2329	5073	4541	8367
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.21	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.23	0.25
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	687	878	566	682	747	657	988
Strain @ Peak MD	%	207	162	193	177	124	188	158
Force @ Break MD	g/in	675	878	566	682	747	657	988
Strain @ Break MD	%	207	162	193	177	124	188	158
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	186	191	171	196	181	145	205
Strain @ Yield MD	%	9	8	9	8	6	7	8
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	133	137	121	143	159	126	139
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	194	217	177	211	244	187	236
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	233	286	218	261	328	238	328

Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	259	340	245	343	294	399	273	395
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	300	455	287	447	360	573	328	533
TEA MD	FtLb/in ²	1,259	1,106	923	772	965	838	1,052	1,171
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	11.2*	5.1*	13*	9.8*	8*	5.6*	9.6*	5.7*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.21	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.23	0.25
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	161	142	172	215	155	134	183	154
Strain @ Peak TD	%	518	485	417	449	493	495	476	460
Force @ Break TD	g/in	152	142	172	215	155	134	183	154
Strain @ Break TD	%	522	485	417	448	494	494	476	459
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	116	104	116	138	112	99	117	97
Strain @ Yield TD	%	26	22	26	30	24	22	29	26
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	74	62	59	64	70	61	65	44
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	92	87	85	95	92	86	86	72
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	115	105	113	132	112	102	111	96
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	119	110	126	150	118	104	127	111
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	115	106	125	150	114	102	126	113
TEA TD	FtLb/in ²	1,112	823	836	1,091	868	795	1,013	786
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800

Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	293	246	223	215	246	239	240	240
Dart Drop (26")	g	114	105	120	124	123	100	121	104
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	134	164	149	209	164	193	173	196

Table 12. Physical Properties of Skinless Microporous Breathable Films I1-P1.

	I1	J1	K1	L1	M1	N1	O1	P1
W/X/Y/Z	12/35/07 0/0	12/35/070 /30	12/35/08 5/0	12/35/085 /30	12/50/07 0/0	12/50/070 /30	12/50/08 5/0	12/50/085 /30
Physical Properties	Units							
Gauge	mil	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.32	0.32
Basis Weight	g/m ²	11.57	11.79	11.61	12.16	11.43	12.12	11.85
Density	g/cc	1.4601	1.4345	1.4606	1.4597	1.4692	1.4277	1.4695
Emboss Depth	mil	0.43	0.43	0.50	1.07	0.57	1.00	0.63
Light Transmission	%	48.5	45.6	46.3	43.6	44.1	42.2	41.6
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	3621	6457	5037	10038	6026	5546	9365
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.31	0.32	0.32	0.32
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	892	1,121	761	1,174	972	714	984
Strain @ Peak MD	%	257	207	259	252	159	207	168
Force @ Break MD	g/in	892	1,121	761	1,160	972	714	984
Strain @ Break MD	%	257	207	259	252	159	207	168
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	229	281	232	272	296	251	285
Strain @ Yield MD	%	9	9	10	9	9	10	9
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	168	201	169	189	210	181	201
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	238	295	235	282	316	254	302
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	280	367	279	345	411	311	392

Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	303	413	300	407	377	477	344	454
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	337	489	330	494	427	595	392	558
TEA MD	FtLb/in ²	1,315	1,354	1,230	1,422	1,652	1,027	1,003	1,069
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	21.4*	8.5*	24.8*	12.5*	15.2*	7.3*	18.4*	6*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.32	0.32
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	220	185	257	208	186	188	231	185
Strain @ Peak TD	%	486	486	452	430	459	487	405	402
Force @ Break TD	g/in	220	185	256	206	186	187	231	184
Strain @ Break TD	%	486	486	452	430	461	487	406	401
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	156	134	150	142	146	138	168	127
Strain @ Yield TD	%	23	21	24	24	21	21	27	23
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	96	83	76	77	97	83	90	68
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	127	112	112	108	123	116	123	98
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	159	136	152	143	149	140	165	130
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	161	141	164	155	152	143	186	148
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	157	137	164	158	147	140	184	151
TEA TD	FtLb/in ²	964	805	964	836	833	845	872	695

Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	328	264	281	293	289	250	324	268	
Dart Drop (26")	g	141	116	144	125	160	109	153	141	
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	199	202	209	251	206	221	208	238	

Example 5 – Skinned Microporous Breathable Films

[00195] A series of 16 skinned microporous breathable films having a structure CBBBC were prepared from the formulation XC1-22-2270.0 shown in Table 13. The composition of compound CF7414 is given above in Table 4.

[00196] The 16 films were subjected to the following different processing conditions: basis weights (9 gsm vs. 12 gsm), pre-stretch (35%/35% vs. 50%/50%), depth of engagement (0.07 vs. 0.085), and post-stretch (0% vs. 30%). The physical properties of the resultant films are summarized in Table 14-15.

Table 13. Composition of Formulation XC3-22-2270.0 Used to Make CBBBC Skinned Microporous Breathable Films.

	Component
B extruder (98%)	70% Heritage CF7414
	28% LL3518
C extruder (2%)	100% MobilExxon LD516

[00197] In Tables 14-15, the legend W/X/Y/Z is a shorthand nomenclature signifying basis weight (gsm)/pre-stretch/depth of engagement of IMG rolls/post-stretch. For example, the designation 9/35/070/0 represents a basis weight of 9 gsm, 35%/35% pre-stretch, a depth of engagement of 70 mm, and 0 post-stretch.

Table 14. Physical Properties of Skinned Microporous Breathable Films A2-H2.

		A2	B2	C2	D2	E2	F2	G2	H2
W/X/Y/Z		9/35/070 /0	9/35/070/ 30	9/35/085 /0	9/35/085/ 30	9/50/070 /0	9/50/070/ 30	9/50/085 /0	9/50/085/ 30
Physical Properties	Units								
Gauge	mil	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.30	0.25	0.26
Basis Weight	g/m ²	9.27	9.01	9.13	9.10	8.90	10.88	9.07	9.45
Density	g/cc	1.4470	1.3980	1.4576	1.4211	1.4471	1.4183	1.4383	1.4182
Emboss Depth	mil	0.70	0.57	0.37	0.20	0.30	0.57	0.30	0.27
Light Transmission	%	53.9	51.6	51.0	49.2	52.3	46.0	50.6	46.4
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /d ay	2632	3545	3950	5835	3104	4424	3941	6188
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.30	0.25	0.26
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	722	882	665	661	675	1,031	611	754
Strain @ Peak MD	%	232	180	236	152	176	159	172	125
Force @ Break MD	g/in	722	882	665	661	675	1,031	611	754
Strain @ Break MD	%	232	180	236	152	176	159	172	125
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	139	201	215	258	237	252	225	171
Strain @ Yield MD	%	4	8	10	10	9	8	10	6
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	147	160	143	161	160	197	151	178
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	221	253	214	253	242	318	228	284
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	261	319	253	320	294	410	280	379

[illegible]

Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	277	246	220	262	271	225	248	233
Dart Drop (26")	g	146	124	157	122	129	131	122	120
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	152	177	158	197	167	224	182	220

Table 15. Physical Properties of Skinned Microporous Breathable Films I2-P2.

	I2	J2	K2	L2	M2	N2	O2	P2
W/X/Y/Z	12/35/07 0/0	12/35/070 /30	12/35/08 5/0	12/35/085 /30	12/50/07 0/0	12/50/070 /30	12/50/08 5/0	12/50/085 /30
Physical Properties	Units							
Gauge	mil	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.34
Basis Weight	g/m ²	12.30	12.00	11.46	12.53	12.39	11.81	12.21
Density	g/cc	1.4425	1.4087	1.4379	1.4328	1.4101	1.4478	1.4234
Emboss Depth	mil	0.50	0.33	0.43	0.57	0.30	0.43	0.57
Light Transmission	%	49.3	46.2	45.7	46.3	43.5	44.9	40.8
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	3160	4754	4917	3567	4989	5350	8575
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.34
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	945	1,067	818	1,117	1,216	1,014	1,143
Strain @ Peak MD	%	263	187	272	248	175	254	171
Force @ Break MD	g/in	945	1,066	817	1,117	1,216	1,014	1,141
Strain @ Break MD	%	263	187	272	248	175	254	171
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	280	309	270	292	364	271	264
Strain @ Yield MD	%	10	9	10	10	10	10	7
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	195	207	197	200	235	180	207
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	281	317	271	295	367	271	331
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	326	397	313	355	467	326	438

Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	350	446	335	415	387	530	356	505
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	386	541	366	479	438	652	400	626
TEA MD	FtLb/in ²	1,369	1,166	1,302	1,465	1,472	1,229	1,465	1,152
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	18.6*	8.4*	23.6*	11*	12.2*	6*	13*	5.8*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.34	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.34
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	273	235	262	254	251	203	262	206
Strain @ Peak TD	%	521	503	401	471	505	481	463	392
Force @ Break TD	g/in	273	234	262	253	251	203	262	206
Strain @ Break TD	%	521	502	402	472	505	481	463	391
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	162	160	176	144	165	146	150	141
Strain @ Yield TD	%	23	21	27	26	23	22	26	25
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	94	98	89	71	102	89	77	71
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	128	130	124	103	133	119	108	102
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	165	163	173	142	168	148	149	141
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	171	167	194	164	175	154	171	162
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	168	166	191	167	172	154	173	166
TEA TD	FtLb/in ²	1,060	1,028	879	982	1,015	821	993	715

Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	328	340	266	333	333	263	282	292	
Dart Drop (26")	g	197	159	208	164	169	150	173	143	
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	207	242	237	274	244	262	225	275	

Example 6 – Microporous Breathable Films with Exceptionally Low Basis Weights

[00198] Two microporous breathable films A3 and B3 having a structure CBBBC were prepared from the formulation XC3-22-2270.0 shown in Table 13. The physical properties of the resultant films are shown in Table 16.

[00199] In Table 16, the legend X/Y/Z is a shorthand nomenclature signifying pre-stretch/depth of engagement of IMG rolls/post-stretch. For example, the designation 50/085/0 corresponding to film A2 represents a 50%/50% pre-stretch, a depth of engagement of 85 mm, and 0% post-stretch. Surprisingly and unexpectedly, the films A2 and B2 exhibit high Dart Impact Strength (e.g., greater than 90 grams) in spite of exceptionally low basis weights (e.g., less than 9 gsm).

Table 16. Physical Properties of Skinned Microporous Breathable Films A3 and B3.

		A3	B3
X/Y/Z		50/085/0	50/085/30
Physical Properties	Units		
Gauge	mil	0.23	0.19
Basis Weight	g/m ²	8.42	7.03
Density	g/cc	1.4600	1.4288
Emboss Depth	mil	0.20	0.33
Light Transmission	%	51.1	51.9
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	4185	5426
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.23	0.19
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	723	584
Strain @ Peak MD	%	182	95
Force @ Break MD	g/in	723	584
Strain @ Break MD	%	182	95
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	214	19
Strain @ Yield MD	%	9	0
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	137	133
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	219	235
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	273	326
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	308	398
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	375	480
TEA MD	FtLb/ in ²	1,144	703
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200
Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	7.1*	3.3*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.23	0.19
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	198	107
Strain @ Peak TD	%	501	425
Force @ Break TD	g/in	198	107
Strain @ Break TD	%	501	425
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	108	68
Strain @ Yield TD	%	28	23
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	50	38
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	74	55
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	104	70
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	122	81
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	121	84
TEA TD	FtLb/ in ²	1,067	701
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	1,600	1,600

Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	203	152
Dart Drop (26")	g	102	93
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	155	154

[00200] The overall thickness of the microporous breathable film may be varied depending on the particular end use for which the film is manufactured. In illustrative embodiments, films in accordance with the present disclosure have a thickness that is less than typical thicknesses for microporous breathable films. As described above, the beneficial properties of microporous breathable films prepared in accordance with the present disclosure by using a vacuum box, air knife, and/or air blanket to cast a molten web against a chill roll may include one or more of reduced basis weight, increased Dart Impact Strength, increased strain at peak machine direction, and/or the like, and may allow the films to be used at a decreased gauge or thickness as compared to conventional microporous breathable films. However, basis weights and thicknesses may be easily adjusted to fit a desired end use.

Example 7 – Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films

[00201] Polypropylene microporous breathable films A4 through D4 having a structure A/B/A (20/60/20 layering), and polypropylene microporous breathable films E4 through H4 having a structure A/B/A (10/80/10 layering), were prepared from the formulation XC3-828-2287 shown in Table 17. The composition of compounds T1000J2 and CF7414* shown in Table 17 is specified in Table 18 below.

Table 17. Composition of XC3-828-2287 Used to Make ABA Skinned Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A (split)	40	T1000J2 (Heritage Plastics)	60
		C702-20 (Braskem, polypropylene impact copolymer)	39
		102823 (fluoroelastomer processing aid)	1
B	60	CF7414*	70
		EXCEED LL3518 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene)	30

Table 18. Composition of CaCO₃ Compounds used in the Formulation of Table 17.

	T1000J2	CF7414*
Component	Amount of Component	Amount of Component
C702-20	30	
ExxonMobil 3518P		26
FilmLink 500 (CaCO ₃)	70	60
TiO ₂		14
antioxidant	0.15	0.15

[00202] The physical properties of the resultant polypropylene films are shown in Table 19 below. The films A4, B4, E4, and F4 were not subjected to any post-stretching, whereas the films C4, D4, G4, and H4 received 30% post-stretch. The films A4, B4, C4, and D4 have a 20/60/20 A/B/A layering, whereas the films E4, F4, G4, and H4 have a 10/80/10 A/B/A layering.

[00203] As shown in Table 19, the 16-gsm film D4 exhibits an impressive force at peak MD of 1049 g/in and an impressive force at 25% strain MD of 475 g/in. The force at 25% strain MD measurement reflects the degree to which a film may be stretched

when pulled (e.g., by a consumer). In addition, as shown in Table 19, the 16-gsm film D4 also exhibits a high TEA MD of 1572 Ft·Lb/in², which is a measure of the toughness of the film (wherein higher numbers corresponding to increased robustness).

[00204] The 16-gsm film D4 shown in Table 19 was ultrasonically bonded to a 17-gsm spunbond polypropylene homopolymer material by Herrmann Ultrasonics. The film D4 was bonded to the polypropylene homopolymer using microgap control, a 20-kHz ultrasonic horn, and a bond roll having a discrete bond pattern. The ultrasonically bonded material thus formed exhibited good bonding characteristics and represents an example of how a film in accordance with the present disclosure may be bonded to a nonwoven material without the use of an adhesive. As such, a film in accordance with the present disclosure (e.g., a polypropylene film including but not limited to the film D4 shown in Table 19) may be desirable for use in forming personal hygiene products (e.g., including but not limited to incontinence briefs, adult underpads for incontinence, surgical gowns, drapes, feminine hygiene products), and Protective Apparel such as garments, aprons, gloves or the like).

†††††Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	25.1	68.12	25.7	48.56		62.28	98.12	29.6	46.88
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	5.07	0.37	0.33	0.45		0.33	0.44	0.32	0.44
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	254	395	288	414		326	472	265	433
Strain @ Peak TD	%	316	482	417	435		471	493	407	468
Force @ Break TD	g/in	246	383	281	405		324	467	261	423
Strain @ Break TD	%	339	483	420	436		472	493	409	469
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	181	233	194	276		197	268	182	258
Strain @ Yield TD	%	13	14	16	16		14	14	15	15
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	114	148	120	171		129	179	117	162
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	171	214	173	248		183	247	166	235
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	199	235	202	286		201	271	190	266
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	198	237	205	288		197	265	196	274
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	205	241	208	289		199	271	192	269
TEA TD	FtLb/ in ²	705	1303	1050	1124		1195	1292	977	1186
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	400	400	400	400		400	400	400	400
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	150.2	165.9	210.2	254.3		184.1	210.1	263.4	271.0
Dart Drop (26")	g	65	123	148	154		132	176	87	173
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	140	177	186	241		170	206	180	244

Example 8 – Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films

[00205] Polypropylene microporous breathable films I4 through L4 having a structure A/B/A (20/60/20 layering) were prepared from the formulation XC3-222-2286 shown in Table 20. The composition of compound CF7414* shown in Table 20 is specified above in Table 18.

Table 20. Composition of XC3-222-2286 Used to Make ABA Skinned Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A (split)	40	CF7414* (Heritage Plastics)	70
		C702-20 (Braskem, polypropylene impact copolymer)	29
		102823 (processing aid)	1
B	60	CF7414*	70
		EXCEED LL3518 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene)	30

[00206] The physical properties of the resultant polyethylene with blended polypropylene films are shown in Table 21 below. The films I4 and K4 were not subjected to any post-stretching, whereas the films J4 and L4 received 30% post-stretch. The films I4, J4, K4, and L4 have a 20/60/20 A/B/A layering.

Table 21. Physical Properties of Skinned Microporous Breathable Films I4-J4 Prepared from Formulation XC3-222-2286.

Properties	Units	I4	J4	K4	L4
Amount of Post-Stretching		0%	30%	0%	30%
Gauge	mil	0.33	0.32	0.43	0.43
Basis Weight	g/m ²	12.16	11.69	15.86	15.70
Density	g/cc	1.45	1.42	1.44	1.43
Light Transmission	%	52.1	49.2	47.3	42.6
WVTR	g/m ² /day	2525	4160	2935	4845
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.33	0.32	0.43	0.43
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	867	1,003	1,061	1,600
Strain @ Peak MD	%	343	276	397	337
Force @ Break MD	g/in	867	1,002	1,060	1,598
Strain @ Break MD	%	343	276	397	338
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	259	287	338	443
Strain @ Yield MD	%	7	9	8	9
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	238	225	317	357
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	269	294	343	452
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	283	338	347	495
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	292	357	351	508
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	313	396	366	543
TEA MD	FtLb/ in ²	1,643	1,627	1,762	2,238
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200	200	200
††††Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	41	16	70	40
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.33	0.32	0.43	0.43
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	310	265	590	456
Strain @ Peak TD	%	433	492	545	524
Force @ Break TD	g/in	310	265	588	456
Strain @ Break TD	%	433	492	546	524
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	227	166	308	256
Strain @ Yield TD	%	17	18	16	18
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	154	107	209	162

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Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	202	144	277	222
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	232	171	314	264
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	224	172	303	264
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	221	172	299	264
TEA TD	FtLb/ in ²	1,149	1,084	1,687	1,365
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	800	800	800	800
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	256	286	280	409
Dart Drop (26")	g	160	163	235	216
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	162	176	197	224

[00207] As shown in Table 21, the 16-gsm film L4 exhibits an impressive force at peak MD of 1,600 g/in and an impressive force at 25% strain MD of 495 g/in. In addition, as shown in Table 21, the 16-gsm film D4 also exhibits a high TEA MD of 2,238 Ft·Lb/in², which is a measure of the toughness of the film (with higher numbers corresponding to increased robustness).

[00208] Surprisingly and unexpectedly, the polyethylene-blended polypropylene film L4 manufactured from the formulation XC3-222-2286 is softer to the touch than the pure polypropylene film D4 manufactured from the formulation XC3-828-2287. Moreover, surprisingly and unexpectedly, a polyethylene-blended polypropylene film (e.g., the film L4 shown in Table 21) may exhibit better properties than a pure polypropylene film (e.g., the film D4 shown in Table 19).

[00209] The 16-gsm film L4 shown in Table 21 was ultrasonically bonded to a 17-gsm spunbond polypropylene homopolymer material by Herrmann Ultrasonics. The film L4 was bonded to the polypropylene homopolymer using microgap control, a 20-kHz ultrasonic horn with a width of 150 mm, and a bond roll having a discrete bond pattern. The ultrasonically bonded material thus formed exhibited good bonding characteristics and represents a further example of how a film in accordance with the present disclosure may be bonded to a nonwoven material without the use of an adhesive. As such, a film in accordance with the present disclosure (e.g., a polyethylene-blended polypropylene film

including but not limited to the film L4 shown in Table 21) may be desirable for use in forming personal hygiene products (e.g., including but not limited to incontinence briefs, surgical gowns, feminine hygiene products, and/or the like).

Example 9 – Pressure Penetration Through a Fabric (PPT) Testing of Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films and Comparative Polypropylene Non-Breathable Films

[00210] Pressure penetration of simulated blood was tested using the “Pressure Penetration Through a Fabric (PPT)” test. The PPT test is used to determine whether or not, and to what degree, simulated blood penetrates through a fabric or film under pressure for a specified time.

[00211] A sample is placed on a blotter paper on a flat surface and challenged by a 70% IPA/water solution containing Astrazon Red Violet dye for 3 minutes while under a 1 psi load. The number of red spots showing on the blotter paper are determined and recorded. The test solution contains 70% IPA/30% DI water with 0.1% (1 gram per liter or 0.1 gm per 100 ml) of Astrazon Red Violet 3RN liquid dye added for visibility. This method is performed in a lab at standard atmosphere for testing textiles: 70 °F (20 °C), 65% RH.

[00212] In the PPT test, the pre-marked blotter paper is laid on a hard, flat surface near a sink. A 3”x3” test specimen is placed, face side up, on the blotter on each of the 4 or 6 pre-marked lane squares. A 2”x2” piece of absorbent spun-bond non-woven fabric is placed in the center of each specimen. A pipette is filled with the test solution and the 2”x2” nonwoven is saturated with it. A cylindrical, 2.0” diameter; 3.14 lb (1.0 psi) weight is placed on top of the saturated specimen and a timer is started. After 3.0 minutes, the weights are removed and all except the blotter paper are discarded. The blotter paper is examined, and all red spots are counted. The number of red spots is recorded. A size limit may be specified for red spots to be counted. If one large red blotch is present, the result may be recorded as “99.”

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[00213] Polypropylene microporous breathable film samples A5-C5 having a structure A/B/A (20/60/20 layering) were prepared from the formulation XC3-222-2286 shown in Table 20 above. Polypropylene microporous breathable film samples D5-F5 having a structure A/B/A (20/60/20 layering) were prepared from the formulation XC3-828-2287 shown in Table 17 above. Polypropylene microporous cored film samples G5 and H5 having a structure A/B/A (20/60/20 layering) were prepared from the formulation XC3-828-2300 shown in Table 22 below. The microporous cored films have a microporous core layer, but are not breathable as they have solid skin layers surrounding the breathable core layer. The composition of compound CF7414* shown in Table 22 is specified above in Table 18.

Table 22. Composition of XC3-828-2300 Used to Make ABA Skinned Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
B	60	CF7414* (Heritage Plastics)	70
		EXCEED LL3518 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene)	30
C (split)	40	C702-20 (Braskem, polypropylene impact copolymer)	90
		LGA-105 ExxonMobil, low density polyethylene)	10

[00214] The PPT Test Data for the polyethylene-blended polypropylene microporous breathable films A5-H5 are summarized in Table 23 below.

Table 23. PPT Test Data for Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films A5-H5.

Sample	% Red Area	Formulation	Basis Weight (gsm)	Bonding Force (Newtons)	Bond Quality
A5	0	XC3-222-2286	16	600	Destruct Bond
B5	1.5	XC3-222-2286	16	1000	Destruct Bond
C5	3	XC3-222-2286	16	1400	Destruct Bond
D5	3	XC3-828-2287	16	600	Destruct Bond
E5	3	XC3-828-2287	16	1000	Destruct Bond
F5	3	XC3-828-2287	16	1400	Destruct Bond
G5	10	XC3-828-2300	9	600	Destruct Bond
H5	33	XC3-828-2300	9	1000	Destruct Bond

[00215] Additional PPT testing on films A5-H5 was performed using a 6-inch square film. The nonwoven side of the film was placed on the blotter paper, and 3 cm³ of dye was added for a duration of 30 seconds. The results of this additional testing are shown in Table 24 below.

Table 24. Additional PPT Test Data for Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Microporous Breathable Films A5-H5.

Sample	No. Red Dots	Formulation	Basis Weight (gsm)	Bonding Force (Newtons)	Bond Quality
A5	4	XC3-222-2286	16	400	Destruct Bond
B5	8	XC3-222-2286	16	1000	Destruct Bond
C5	36	XC3-222-2286	16	1400	Destruct Bond
D5	8	XC3-828-2287	16	400	Destruct Bond
E5	29	XC3-828-2287	16	1000	Destruct Bond
F5	82	XC3-828-2287	16	1400	Destruct Bond
G5	45	XC3-828-2300	9	400	Destruct Bond
H5	138	XC3-828-2300	9	1000	Destruct Bond

[00216] For comparative purposes, polypropylene-containing non-breathable film samples A6-F6 having a structure A/B/A (20/60/20 layering) were prepared from the formulation XP-1943SX shown in Table 25 below.

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Table 25. Composition of XP-1943SX Used to Make ABA Skinned Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Non-Breathable Films

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A (split)	40	Total 5724 (polypropylene impact copolymer with melt mass-flow rate = 20 g/10 min)	25
		Exxon Mobil PD3155 (polypropylene homopolymer with MFR = 36 g/10 min)	63
		LGA-105 ExxonMobil, low density polyethylene)	12
B	60	Total 5724	14
		ExxonMobil PD3155	52
		LGA105	12
		Ampacet 111017P (White PE Masterbatch)	22

[00217] The PPT Test Data for the comparative polyethylene-blended polypropylene non-breathable films A6-F6 are summarized in Table 26 below.

Table 26. PPT Test Data for Polyethylene-Blended Polypropylene Non-Breathable Films A6-D6.

Sample	% Failure	Formulation	Basis Weight (gsm)	Bonding Force (Newtons)	Bond Quality
A6	0	XP-1943SX	13	600	Slight Bond Easily Peeled
B6	5	XP-1943SX	13	1000	Destruct Bond
C6	5 to 10	XP-1943SX	13	1400	Destruct Bond
D6	0	XP-1943SX	9	600	Slight Bond Easily Peeled
E6	5	XP-1943SX	9	1000	Destruct Bond
F6	20	XP-1943SX	9	1400	Destruct Bond

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[00218] As shown by the data in Tables 23 and 24, polyethylene cored films with polypropylene containing skins in accordance with the present disclosure were able to provide a destruct bond at a low bonding force (e.g., 600 Newtons). By comparison, as shown by the data in Table 26, polyethylene-blended with polypropylene non-cavitated films were unable to provide a destruct bond at such a comparably low bonding force despite the high level of polypropylene in the formula. Moreover, while the PPT test results for the microporous breathable films A5-G5 are comparable to the PPT test results for the non-breathable films A6-E6, it is surprising and unexpected that a microporous breathable film in accordance with the present disclosure is able to provide barrier performance comparable to that of a non-breathable film while further providing breathability.

Example 10 – Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films

[00219] Four hybrid microporous-monolithic multi-layer breathable barrier films A7-D7 having polyethylene-containing microporous breathable skins, a thermoplastic copolyester elastomer core, and an A/B/C/B/A structure were prepared from the formulation XC5-22922-2301.0 shown in Table 27 below.

Table 27. Composition of XC5-22922-2301.0 Used to Make ABCBA Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films A7-D7.

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A	62.5	Heritage CF7414*	80
		EXCEED LL3527 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin)	19
		Ampacet 102823 PA (process aid)	1
B	30	Heritage CF7414*	80
		ELVALOY 1609 AC (DuPont, ethylene and 9% methyl acrylate copolymer)	20
C	7.5	ARNITEL VT3104 (DSM, thermoplastic copolyester elastomer)	90
		BYNEL 22E757 (DuPont, modified ethylene acrylate)	10

[00220] Four hybrid microporous-monolithic multi-layer breathable barrier films E7-H7 having polypropylene-containing microporous breathable skins, a thermoplastic copolyester elastomer core, and an A/B/C/B/A structure were prepared from the formulation XC5-828-2302.0 shown in Table 28 below.

Table 28. Composition of XC5-828-2302.0 Used to Make ABCBA Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films E7-H7.

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A	62.5	Heritage T1000J2	70
		C702-20 (Braskem, polypropylene impact copolymer)	29
		Ampacet 102823 PA (process aid)	1
B	30	Heritage CF7414*	70
		EXCEED LL3527 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin)	11
		ELVALOY 1609 AC (DuPont, ethylene and 9% methyl acrylate copolymer)	19
C	7.5	ARNITEL VT3104 (DSM, thermoplastic copolyester elastomer)	90
		BYNEL 22E757 (DuPont, modified ethylene acrylate)	10

[00221] Four hybrid microporous-monolithic multi-layer breathable barrier films I7-L7 having polyethylene-containing microporous breathable skins, a thermoplastic polyester elastomer core, and an A/B/C/B/A structure were prepared from the formulation XC5-22922-2306.0 shown in Table 29 below.

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Table 29. Composition of XC5-22922-2306.0 Used to Make ABCBA Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films I7-L7.

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A	62.5	Heritage CF7414*	80
		EXCEED LL3527 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin)	19
		Ampacet 102823 PA (process aid)	1
B	30	Heritage CF7414*	80
		ELVALOY 1609 AC (DuPont, ethylene and 9% methyl acrylate copolymer)	20
C	7.5	HYTREL HTR8206 (DuPont, thermoplastic polyester elastomer)	90
		BYNEL 22E757 (DuPont, modified ethylene acrylate)	10

[00222] Four hybrid microporous-monolithic multi-layer breathable barrier films M7-P7 having polypropylene-containing microporous breathable skins, a thermoplastic polyester elastomer core, and an A/B/C/B/A structure were prepared from the formulation XC5-82928-2307.0 shown in Table 30 below.

Table 30. Composition of XC5-82928-2307.0 Used to Make ABCBA Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films M7-P7.

EXTRUDER	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A	62.5	Heritage T1000J2	70
		C702-20 (Braskem, polypropylene impact copolymer)	29
		Ampacet 102823 PA (process aid)	1
B	30	Heritage CF7414*	70
		EXCEED LL3527 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin)	11
		ELVALOY 1609 AC (DuPont, ethylene and 9% methyl acrylate copolymer)	19
C	7.5	HYTREL HTR8206 (DuPont, thermoplastic polyester elastomer)	90
		BYNEL 22E757 (DuPont, modified ethylene acrylate)	10

[00223] The composition of the CaCO_3 -containing compound CF7414* shown in Tables 27-30, and the composition of the CaCO_3 -containing compound T1000J2 shown in Tables 28 and 30, are specified in Table 18 above.

[00224] The physical properties of the resultant films A7-H7 are shown in Table 31 below, and the physical properties of the resultant films I7-P7 are shown in Table 32 below. Each of films A7-P7 received 30% post-stretch. The alcohol penetration test data shown in Tables 31 and 32 represents the degree to which the monolithic layer remains intact, with values between 0 and 10 being indicative of particularly good performance.

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As shown in Tables 31 and 32, many of the films exhibit high Dart Impact Strength (e.g., greater than 90 grams) in spite of low basis weights (e.g., 12 gsm).

Table 31. Physical Properties of Skinned Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films A7-D7 Prepared from Formulation XC5-22922-2301.0 and Films E7-H7 Prepared from Formulation XC5-828-2302.0.

			XC5-22922-2301.0					XC5-828-2302.0				
			A7	B7	C7	D7	E7	F7	G7	H7		
CD IMG Depth			.08"	.08'	.100"	.100"	.08"	.08"	.100"	.100"		
Properties	Units	ASTM Test Method										
Basis Weight	gsm		12	25	12	25	12	25	12	25		
Alcohol Penetration Test	%		5	5	20	10	0	0	10	0		
Gauge	mil	D6988	0.27	0.58	0.30	0.62	0.35	0.73	0.32	0.76		
Basis Weight	g/m²	Tappi T410	11.20	23.21	12.21	24.32	12.83	25.33	12.05	27.20		
Density	g/cc	D2103	1.6177	1.5791	1.6151	1.5470	1.4256	1.3730	1.4603	1.4048		
Emboss Depth	mil	-	0.63	0.77	0.63	0.97	0.67	1.13	0.60	1.33		
Light Transmission	%	D1003	46.8	31.4	43.0	29.2	54.9	40.9	52.2	35.0		
Gloss - In	% @ 45°	D2457	5.8	6.4	6.4	7.0	4.6	5.4	5.1	6.1		
Gloss - Out	% @ 45°	D2457	5.7	6.5	6.1	7.2	4.6	5.5	5.0	5.7		
COF, Static - In\In	-----	D1894	0.550	0.505	0.533	0.497	0.750	0.610	0.702	0.625		
COF, Static - Out\Out	-----	D1894	0.510	0.492	0.567	0.495	0.712	0.573	0.728	0.605		
COF, Kinetic - In\In	-----	D1894	0.501	0.456	0.502	0.467	0.648	0.599	0.627	0.583		
COF, Kinetic - Out\Out	-----	D1894	0.495	0.473	0.494	0.452	0.633	0.557	0.675	0.579		
WVTR 100K	g/m²/day	D6701	2989	3026	3763	4211	1727	1693	2978	3304		

Tensile Gauge MD	D6988	mil	0.27	0.58	0.30	0.62	0.35	0.73	0.32	0.76
Force @ Peak MD	D882	g/in	576	1,056	706	1,083	836	1,357	732	1,220
Strain @ Peak MD	D882	%	140	251	175	283	175	296	189	276
Force @ Break MD	D882	g/in	576	1,055	706	1,083	836	1,357	732	1,219
Strain @ Break MD	D882	%	140	251	175	283	175	296	189	276
Force @ Yield MD	D882	g/in	349	573	384	597	547	845	484	799
Strain @ Yield MD	D882	%	13	14	15	15	14	13	14	12
Force @ 5% Strain MD	D882	g/in	205	358	197	384	323	601	298	605
Force @ 10% Strain MD	D882	g/in	316	513	318	526	478	791	429	767
Force @ 25% Strain MD	D882	g/in	421	649	452	663	635	922	559	878
Force @ 50% Strain MD	D882	g/in	463	712	528	742	706	980	629	939
Force @ 100% Strain MD	D882	g/in	513	782	597	794	760	1,043	677	999
Secant Modulus MD (1%)	D882	PSI	34,630	34,095	27,794	32,937	57,518	59,234	50,836	53,702
TEA MD	D882	FtLb/ in ²	887	1,272	1,182	1,382	1,311	1,613	1,376	1,345
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm		g	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200

†††††Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	D1922	4.2*	16.8*	5.8*	32.2*	4.8*	18.9*	4.2*	17.7*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	D6988	0.27	0.58	0.30	0.62	0.35	0.73	0.32	0.76
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	D882	223	368	316	553	380	604	360	769
Strain @ Peak TD	%	D882	67	121	108	345	109	156	82	311
Force @ Break TD	g/in	D882	181	354	286	548	337	584	336	769
Strain @ Break TD	%	D882	307	306	262	392	231	362	164	311
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	D882	122	271	136	442	197	387	141	653
Strain @ Yield TD	%	D882	8	15	12	33	10	14	9	29
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	D882	89	143	74	162	134	238	98	226
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	D882	135	217	121	253	204	357	161	367
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	D882	193	317	218	407	312	523	280	621
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	D882	216	348	292	494	361	586	344	701
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	D882	215	363	313	514	376	597	316	716
Secant Modulus TD (1%)	PSI	D882	14,557	16,922	13,146	11,895	20,398	19,466	16,248	14,795
TEA TD	FtLb/ in ²	D882	804	647	892	1,139	838	1,027	598	1,045

Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g		800	400	800	800	200	200	200	200
++++Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	D1922	224	313	185	295	56	124	48	122
Dart Drop (26")	g	D1709 Method A	58	100	63	126	66	107	68	126
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	D7192	167	293	186	356	225	432	216	519

Table 32. Physical Properties of Skinned Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films I7-L7 Prepared from Formulation XC5-22922-2306.0 and Films M7-P7 Prepared from Formulation XC5-82928-2307.0.

				XC5-22922-2306.0					XC5-82928-2307.0				
				I7	J7	K7	L7	M7	N7	O7	P7		
CD IMG Depth				.08"	.08'	.100"	.100"	.08"	.08"	.100"	.100"		
Properties	Units	ASTM Test Method											
Basis Weight	gsm			12	25	12	25	12	25	12	25		
Alcohol Penetration Test	%			30	40	70	20	30	5	25	10		
Gauge	mil	D6988		0.31	0.62	0.30	0.62	0.34	0.64	0.33	0.67		
Basis Weight	g/m²	Tappi T410		12.66	24.25	11.89	23.87	12.54	22.58	12.58	24.35		
Density	g/cc	D2103		1.6023	1.5391	1.5638	1.5351	1.4497	1.3810	1.4879	1.4335		
Emboss Depth	mil	-		0.47	1.07	0.43	0.80	0.73	1.13	0.80	1.37		
Light Transmission	%	D1003		44.8	29.1	43.1	31.5	53.6	42.0	50.1	36.1		
Gloss - In	% @ 45°	D2457		6.9	7.7	6.8	7.4	4.3	5.4	4.5	5.4		
Gloss - Out	% @ 45°	D2457		7.1	7.7	7.0	7.4	4.3	5.3	4.3	5.4		
COF, Static - In\In	-----	D1894		0.510	0.467	0.537	0.495	0.663	0.573	0.657	0.622		
COF, Static - Out\Out	-----	D1894		0.505	0.493	0.497	0.473	0.623	0.602	0.690	0.573		
COF, Kinetic - In\In	-----	D1894		0.461	0.451	0.474	0.453	0.619	0.571	0.607	0.568		
COF, Kinetic - Out\Out	-----	D1894		0.467	0.466	0.476	0.445	0.594	0.569	0.581	0.549		

WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	D6701	3399	5164	3990	867	3834	3953	4433	5057
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	D6988	0.31	0.62	0.30	0.62	0.34	0.64	0.33	0.67
Force @ Peak MD	g/in	D882	738	1,027	650	1,034	562	861	522	910
Strain @ Peak MD	%	D882	164	269	214	165	112	133	178	242
Force @ Break MD	g/in	D882	738	1,027	650	1,034	553	859	522	910
Strain @ Break MD	%	D882	165	269	214	165	166	150	178	242
Force @ Yield MD	g/in	D882	516	671	395	812	431	726	393	705
Strain @ Yield MD	%	D882	14	16	16	13	11	10	13	12
Force @ 5% Strain MD	g/in	D882	270	403	202	470	293	553	250	481
Force @ 10% Strain MD	g/in	D882	454	582	319	731	424	730	366	668
Force @ 25% Strain MD	g/in	D882	589	736	451	912	501	801	425	734
Force @ 50% Strain MD	g/in	D882	647	795	513	965	538	835	444	753
Force @ 100% Strain MD	g/in	D882	689	836	550	1,001	559	856	475	788
Secant Modulus MD (1%)	PSI	D882	36,432	33,636	29,191	38,151	49,001	52,989	44,211	44,802
TEA MD	FtLb/ in ²	D882	1,259	1,335	1,385	925	938	701	905	1,052

Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g		200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
†††††Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	D1922	4.8*	30.7*	7*	12*	4*	3.8*	3.7*	3.6*		
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	D6988	0.31	0.62	0.30	0.62	0.34	0.64	0.33	0.67		
Force @ Peak TD	g/in	D882	291	517	311	448	336	526	290	474		
Strain @ Peak TD	%	D882	68	361	75	154	69	76	109	102		
Force @ Break TD	g/in	D882	219	514	257	403	331	523	290	474		
Strain @ Break TD	%	D882	350	426	260	393	85	87	109	102		
Force @ Yield TD	g/in	D882	109	400	85	261	77	139	62	120		
Strain @ Yield TD	%	D882	7	33	6	13	4	4	4	6		
Force @ 5% Strain TD	g/in	D882	89	148	78	171	96	167	76	120		
Force @ 10% Strain TD	g/in	D882	139	230	124	255	150	241	115	180		
Force @ 25% Strain TD	g/in	D882	230	372	220	386	255	393	190	302		
Force @ 50% Strain TD	g/in	D882	280	464	297	439	320	499	257	418		
Force @ 100% Strain TD	g/in	D882	286	479	306	436	---	---	296	481		

Secant Modulus TD (1%)	PSI	D882	17,210	13,696	13,826	16,351	17,634	19,055	13,466	13,455
TEA TD	FtLb/ in ²	D882	937	1,130	809	910	252	205	281	205
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g		800	800	800	800	200	200	200	200
†††††Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	D1922	302	326	188	457	17.5*	18.5*	22*	28.7*
Dart Drop (26")	g	D1709 Method A	48	112	62	69	---	48	47	77
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	D7192	190	363	180	353	191	337	199	397

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[00225] As shown by the data in Tables 31 and 32, multi-layer breathable barrier films in accordance with the present disclosure are able to achieve low alcohol penetration (e.g., 0% to 10%) at low basis weights (e.g., 12 gsm).

Example 11 – Tie Resin-Free and Tie Resin-Containing Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Films

[00226] A tie resin-containing multi-layer breathable barrier film A8 having polypropylene microporous breathable skins, a thermoplastic copolyester elastomer core, and an A/B/C/B/A structure was prepared from the formulation XC5-82328-2351.6A shown in Table 33 below. The tie resin (BYNEL 22E757) is a modified ethylene acrylate.

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Table 33. Composition of Tie Resin-Containing ABCBA Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Film Made from Formulation XC5-82328-2351.6A.

Layer	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A	62.5	T1001R1	75
		C702-20 (Braskem, polypropylene impact copolymer)	24
		Ampacet 102823 PA (process aid)	1
B	30	T1001R1	75
		EXCEED LL3527 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin)	15
		BYNEL 22E757 (DuPont, modified ethylene acrylate)	10
C	7.5	ARNITEL VT3104 (DSM, thermoplastic copolyester elastomer)	90
		BYNEL 22E757 (DuPont, modified ethylene acrylate)	10

[00227] A tie resin-free multi-layer breathable barrier film B8 having polypropylene microporous breathable skins, a thermoplastic copolyester elastomer core, and an A/B/C/B/A structure was prepared from the formulation XC5-82328-2351.1 shown in Table 34 below.

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Table 34. Composition of Tie Resin-Free ABCBA Multi-Layer Breathable Barrier Film Made from Formulation XC5-82328-2351.1.

Layer	Layer % (Total)	COMPONENT	Amount of Component (Weight %)
A	62.5	T1001R1	75
		C702-20 (Braskem, polypropylene impact copolymer)	24
		Ampacet 102823 PA (process aid)	1
B	30	T1001R1	75
		EXCEED LL3527 (ExxonMobil, metallocene polyethylene resin)	25
C	7.5	ARNITEL VT3104 (DSM, thermoplastic copolyester elastomer)	100

[00228] The composition of the CaCO₃-containing compound T1001R1 shown in Tables 33 and 34 is specified in Table 35 below.

Table 35. Composition of CaCO₃ Compound T1001R1 used in the Formulation of Tables 33 and 34.

Component	Amount of Component (Weight %)
EXCEED 3518PA (ExxonMobil, 3.5 MI, .918 g/cm ³ mLLDPE resin)	30
FilmLink 500 (CaCO ₃)	70
Thermal stabilizers	(minor)

[00229] The physical properties of the resultant films A8 and B8 are shown in Table 36 below. Each of films A8 and B8 received 25% post-stretch and was subjected to CD IMG stretching at a depth of 0.1 inches.

Table 36. Physical Properties of Tie Resin-Containing Film A8 Prepared from Formulation XC5-82328-2351.6A and Tie Resin-Free Film B8 Prepared from Formulation XC5-82328-2351.1.

Properties	Units	A8	B8
Gauge	mil	0.38	0.36
Basis Weight	g/m ²	13.17	12.53
Density	g/cc	1.3509	1.3510
Light Transmission	%	55.9	60.6
Treat - In	Dyne/cm	34	34
Treat - Out	Dyne/cm	36	36
WVTR 100K	g/m ² /day	5638	4843
Tensile Gauge MD	mil	0.38	0.36
Stress @ Peak MD	grams/inch	878	932
Strain @ Peak MD	%	227	246
Stress @ Break MD	grams/inch	878	931
Strain @ Break MD	%	227	246
Stress @ Yield MD	grams/inch	339	353
Strain @ Yield MD	%	10	10
Stress @ 5% Strain MD	grams/inch	245	247
Stress @ 10% Strain MD	grams/inch	338	352
Stress @ 25% Strain MD	grams/inch	406	424
Stress @ 50% Strain MD	grams/inch	450	470
Stress @ 100% Strain MD	grams/inch	516	532
Secant Modulus MD (1%)	grams/inch	28,597	38,403
TEA MD	FtLb/ in ²	1,227	1,486
Elmendorf Tear MD Arm	g	200	200
††††Elmendorf Tear MD	gf	8.7*	8*
Tensile Gauge TD	mil	0.38	0.36
Stress @ Peak TD	grams/inch	402	414
Strain @ Peak TD	%	356	374
Stress @ Break TD	grams/inch	401	414
Strain @ Break TD	%	357	374
Stress @ Yield TD	grams/inch	203	199
Strain @ Yield TD	%	29	28
Stress @ 5% Strain TD	grams/inch	80	82
Stress @ 10% Strain TD	grams/inch	120	122

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Stress @ 25% Strain TD	grams/inch	191	189
Stress @ 50% Strain TD	grams/inch	246	244
Stress @ 100% Strain TD	grams/inch	257	261
Secant Modulus TD (1%)	PSI	11,904	13,430
TEA TD	FtLb/ in ²	971	1,094
Elmendorf Tear TD Arm	g	200	200
Elmendorf Tear TD	gf	100	91
Dart Drop (26")	g	101	115
§ Slow Puncture - 1/4" (D3)	gf	266	254

[00230] Surprisingly and unexpectedly, it was possible to successfully produce rolls of film that were subsequently hot melt-adhesively-laminated to a nonwoven layer with both the tie resin-containing formulation XC5-82328-2351.6A and the tie resin-free formulation XC5-82328-2351.1. Heretofore, it had been believed that a tie resin adhesive would be required to keep the layers from separating during manufacture or handling. However, a manufacturing process in accordance with the present disclosure utilizing CD IMG activation allows the layers to remain together, thereby dispensing with the requirement of a tie resin.

[00231] As shown by the data in Table 36, excellent WVTR values and Dart Impact Strength were obtained in spite of the low basis weights of the films and the use of polypropylene (normally a brittle polymer with orientation) in the structure.

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CLAIMS

1. A process for making a microporous breathable film comprising the steps of
extruding a composition comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler to form a molten web,
casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll using an air knife, air blanket, a vacuum box, or a combination thereof to form a quenched film, and
stretching the quenched film to form the microporous breathable film.
2. The process of claim 1 wherein the polyolefin comprises polyethylene, polypropylene, or a combination thereof.
3. The process of claim 1, wherein the polyolefin comprises low density polyethylene, high density polyethylene, linear low density polyethylene, ultra-low density polyethylene, or a combination thereof.
4. The process of claim 1, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene.
5. The process of claim 1, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene and the linear low density polyethylene comprises a metallocene polyethylene.
6. The process of claim 1, wherein the polyolefin comprises polypropylene.
7. The process of claim 1, wherein the inorganic filler comprises from about 30% to about 75% by weight of the microporous breathable film.
8. The process of claim 1, wherein an average particle size of the inorganic filler is between about 0.1 microns and about 15 microns.
9. The process of claim 1, wherein the inorganic filler is selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, calcium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, barium sulfate, magnesium sulfate, aluminum sulfate, magnesium oxide,

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calcium oxide, alumina, mica, talc, silica, clay, glass spheres, titanium dioxide, aluminum hydroxide, zeolites, and a combination thereof.

10. The process of claim 1, wherein the inorganic filler comprises an alkali metal carbonate, an alkaline earth metal carbonate, an alkali metal sulfate, an alkaline earth metal sulfate, or a combination thereof.

11. The process of claim 1, wherein the inorganic filler comprises calcium carbonate.

12. The process of claim 1, wherein the molten web is cast against the surface of the chill roll under negative pressure by the vacuum box.

13. The process of claim 1, wherein the molten web is cast against the surface of the chill roll under positive pressure by the air knife.

14. The process of claim 1, wherein an exit temperature of cooling fluid passing through the chill roll is between about 50 degrees Fahrenheit and about 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

15. The process of claim 1, wherein the stretching comprises machine direction (MD) stretching, cross-direction (CD) stretching, intermeshing gear (IMG) stretching, cold drawing, or a combination thereof.

16. The process of claim 1, wherein the stretching comprises cross-directional intermeshing gear (CD IMG) stretching.

17. The process of claim 1, wherein the stretching comprises cross-directional intermeshing gear (CD IMG) stretching and cold draw.

18. The process of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the stretching is performed at a temperature of between about 60 degrees Fahrenheit and about 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

19. The process of claim 1, further comprising annealing the microporous breathable film.

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20. The process of claim 1, further comprising annealing the microporous breathable film in which the annealing is performed at a temperature of between about 75 degrees Fahrenheit and about 225 degrees Fahrenheit.

21. The process of claim 1, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm.

22. The process of claim 21, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 12 gsm.

23. A process for making a microporous breathable film comprising the steps of

extruding a composition that comprises polyethylene, polypropylene, or a combination thereof and an alkaline earth metal carbonate to form a molten web, the alkaline earth metal carbonate comprising at least about 50% by weight of the microporous breathable film,

casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll under negative pressure by a vacuum box to form a quenched film,

stretching the quenched film by cross-directional intermeshing gear (CD IMG) stretching to form the microporous breathable film, and

annealing the microporous breathable film at a temperature of between about 75 and about 225 degrees Fahrenheit.

24. A microporous breathable film comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams.

25. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 13 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 75 grams.

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26. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 13 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 100 grams.

27. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 9 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 100 grams.

28. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 8 gsm.

29. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the polyolefin comprises polyethylene, polypropylene, or a combination thereof.

30. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the polyolefin comprises low density polyethylene, high density polyethylene, linear low density polyethylene, ultra-low density polyethylene, or a combination thereof.

31. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene.

32. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the polyolefin consists essentially of linear low density polyethylene.

33. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the polyolefin comprises linear low density polyethylene, and the linear low density polyethylene comprises a metallocene polyethylene.

34. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the polyolefin comprises polypropylene.

35. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the inorganic filler comprises from about 30% to about 75% by weight of the microporous breathable film.

36. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the inorganic filler comprises from about 50% to about 75% by weight of the microporous breathable film.

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37. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the inorganic filler comprises an alkali metal carbonate, an alkaline earth metal carbonate, an alkali metal sulfate, an alkaline earth metal sulfate, or a combination thereof.

38. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the inorganic filler comprises calcium carbonate.

39. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 150%.

40. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 175%.

41. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 200%.

42. The microporous breathable film of claim 24, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 215%.

43. A microporous breathable film comprising
linear low density polyethylene and an alkaline earth metal dispersed in
the linear low density polyethylene,
wherein the alkaline earth metal comprises from about 50% to about 75%
by weight of the microporous breathable film,
wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than
about 13 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of at least about 90 grams, and
wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine
direction of at least about 90%.

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44. The microporous breathable film of claim 43, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 125%.

45. The microporous breathable film of claim 43, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 150%.

46. The microporous breathable film of claim 43, wherein the microporous breathable film has a strain at peak machine direction of at least about 200%.

47. A multi-layer breathable barrier film comprising
at least one microporous breathable film layer comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin, wherein the at least one microporous breathable film layer has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams, and
at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer comprising a hygroscopic polymer.

48. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of claim 47 further comprising at least one additional microporous breathable film layer, wherein the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer comprises a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin, wherein the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm and a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams, wherein the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer are the same or different, and wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer is disposed between the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer.

49. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of claim 47, wherein the hygroscopic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hygroscopic elastomers,

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polyesters, polyamides, polyetherester copolymers, polyetheramide copolymers, polyurethanes, polyurethane copolymers, poly(etherimide) ester copolymers, polyvinyl alcohols, ionomers, celluloses, nitrocelluloses, and a combination thereof.

50. A multi-layer breathable barrier film comprising
at least one microporous breathable film layer prepared by the process of claim 1,

at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer comprising a hygroscopic polymer, and

at least one additional microporous breathable film prepared by the process of claim 1,

wherein the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film layer are the same or different, and

wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer is disposed between the at least one microporous breathable film layer and the at least one additional microporous breathable film.

51. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of claim 50, wherein the hygroscopic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hygroscopic elastomers, polyesters, polyamides, polyetherester copolymers, polyetheramide copolymers, polyurethanes, polyurethane copolymers, poly(etherimide) ester copolymers, polyvinyl alcohols, ionomers, celluloses, nitrocelluloses, and a combination thereof.

52. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of claim 50, wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer further comprises an adhesive.

53. The multi-layer breathable barrier film of claim 50, wherein the at least one moisture-permeable barrier layer further comprises an adhesive, and the adhesive comprises polyethylene/acrylate copolymer, ethylene/methyl acrylate copolymer, acid-modified acrylate, anhydride-modified acrylate, ethylene vinyl acetate, acid/acrylate-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, anhydride-modified ethylene vinyl acetate, or a combination thereof.

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54. A personal hygiene product comprising
at least one inner microporous breathable film prepared by the process of
claim 1, the at least one inner microporous breathable film being configured for
contacting skin and/or clothing of a user of the personal hygiene product, and
at least one outer non-woven layer.

55. The personal hygiene product of claim 54 further comprising at
least one moisture-permeable barrier layer disposed between the at least one inner
microporous breathable film and the at least one outer non-woven layer.

56. The personal hygiene product of claim 54, wherein the at least one
inner microporous breathable film is bonded to the at least one outer non-woven layer
without an adhesive.

57. The personal hygiene product of claim 54, wherein each of the at
least one inner microporous breathable film and the at least one outer non-woven layer
comprises polypropylene.

58. The personal hygiene product of claim 54, wherein the product is
configured as an incontinence brief.

59. The personal hygiene product of claim 54, wherein the product is
configured as a surgical gown.

60. The personal hygiene product of claim 54, wherein the product is
configured as a feminine hygiene product.

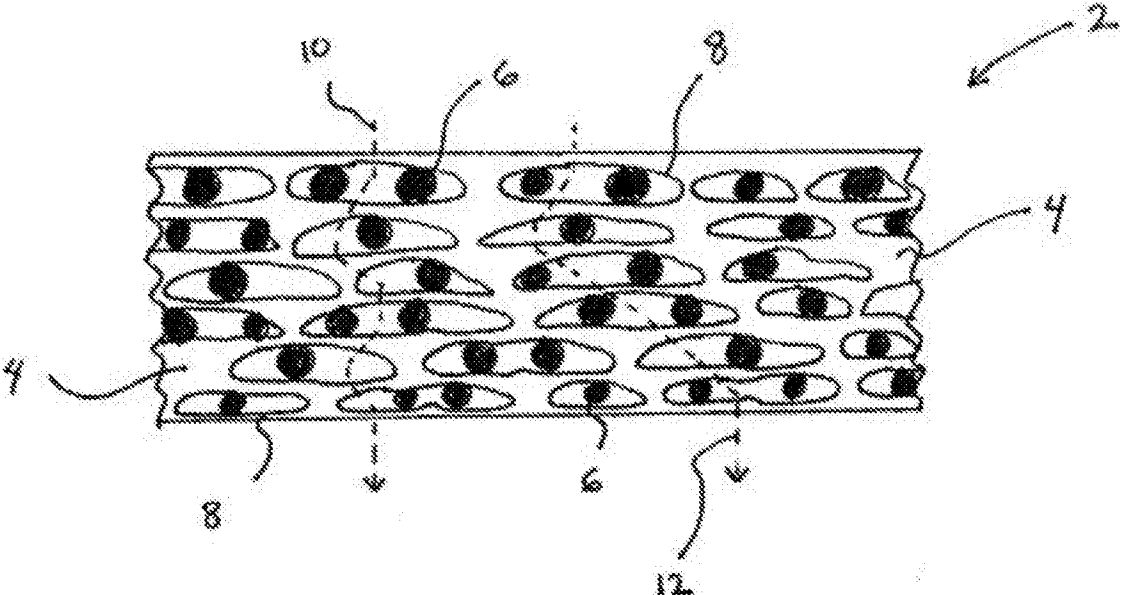


FIG. 1

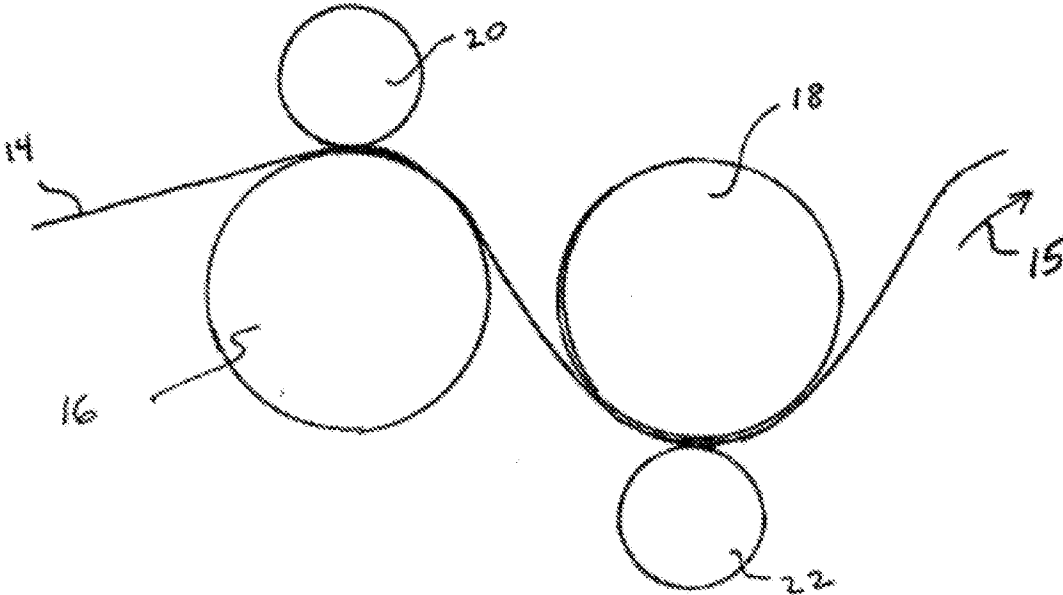


FIG. 2

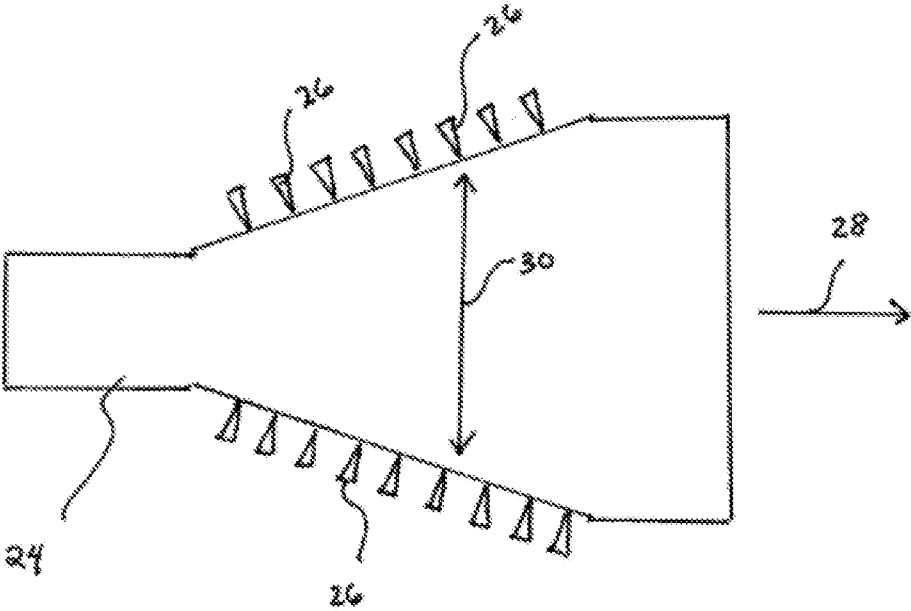


FIG. 3

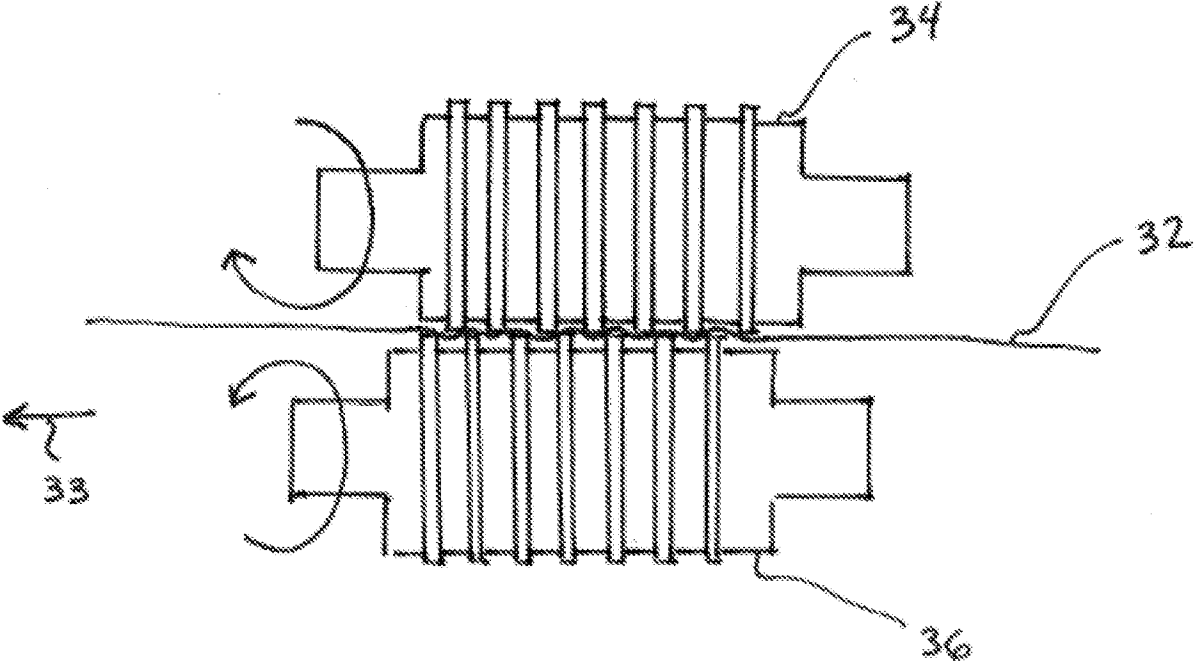


FIG. 4

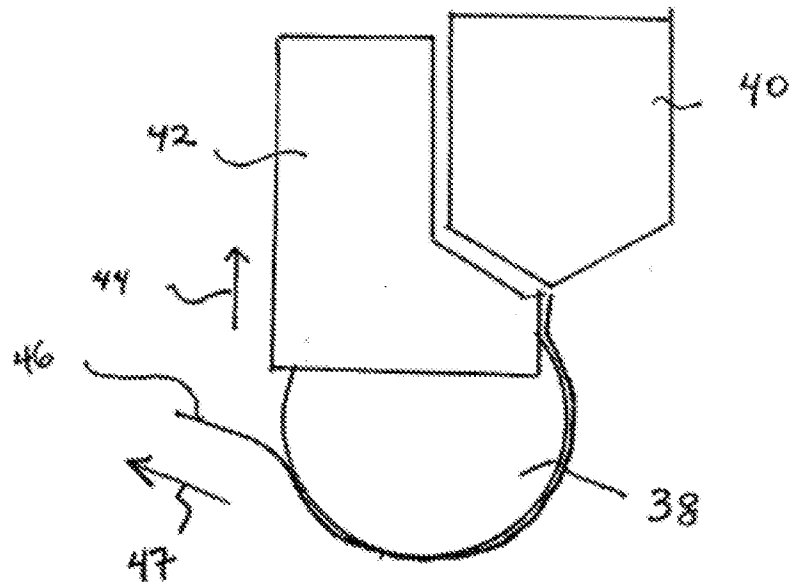


FIG. 5

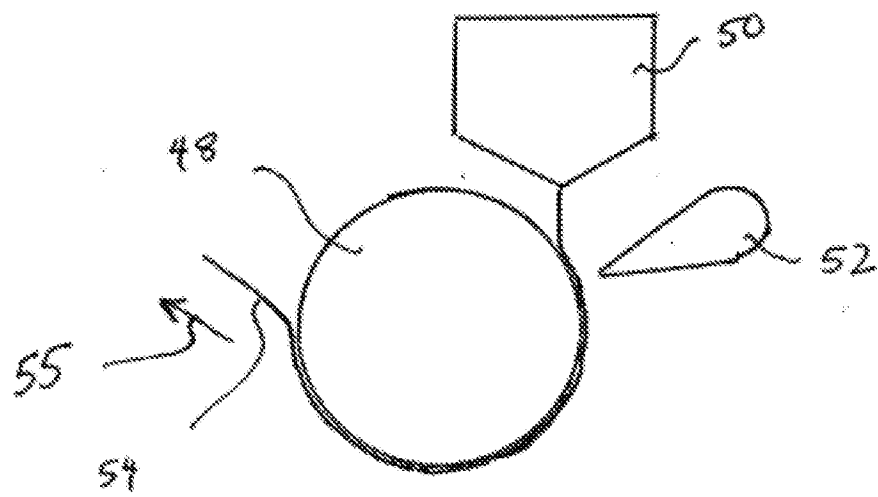


FIG. 6

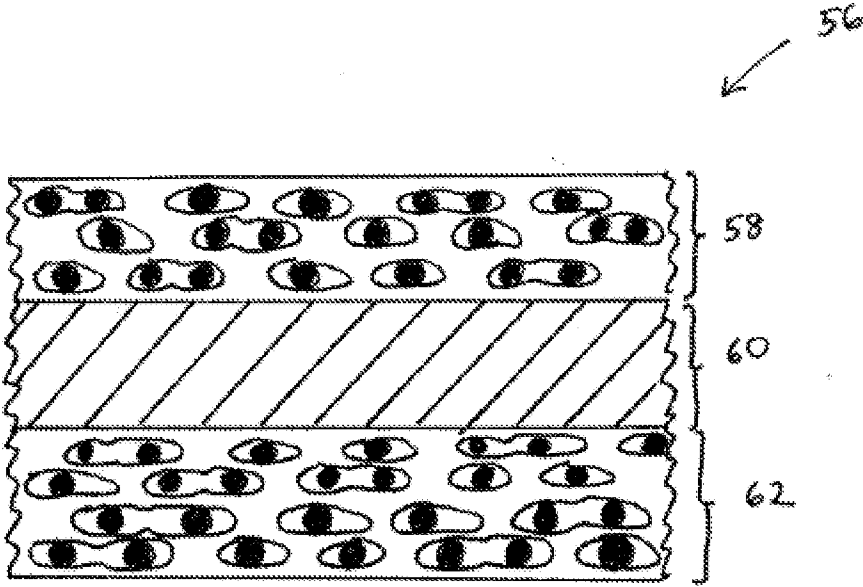


FIG. 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US16/41617

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid.

Group I: Claims 1-23, 50-60 are directed toward a process for making a microporous breathable film comprising the steps of extruding a composition comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler to form a molten web, casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll using an air knife, air blanket, a vacuum box, or a combination thereof to form a quenched film, and stretching the quenched film to form the microporous breathable film.

Group II: Claims 24-49 are directed toward a microporous breathable film having a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams.

Continued Within the Next Supplemental Box

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☒ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:
1-23, 50-60

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US16/41617

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - A61F 13/15, 13/49, 13/511, 13/514; B32B 5/18, 7/12, 27/20 (2016.01)

CPC - A61F 13/51458; B32B 27/12, 38/0012, 38/0032; B29C 55/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC(8) Classifications: A61F 13/15, 13/49, 13/511, 13/514; B32B 5/18, 7/12, 27/20 (2016.01)

CPC Classifications: A61F 13/51458; B32B 27/12, 38/0012, 38/0032; B29C 55/00

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

PatSeer (US, EP, WO, JP, DE, GB, CN, FR, KR, ES, AU, IN, CA, INPADOC Data); Google Scholar; IP.com; EBSCO Discovery; breathable, microporous, inorganic, mineral, calcium carbonate, filler, polyolefin, polyethylene, moisture-permeable, film, layer, multilayer, cool, quenched, cast film, vacuum box, negative pressure, air knife, adhesive, stretching, cross-directional intermeshing gear, cold draw

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2004/0170852 A1 (GUSTAFSON, B) 02 September 2004; entire document, in particular paragraphs [0069]-[0071], [0084]-[0087], [0094], [0135], [0142]-[0144]; claims 39-42	1-15, 18-20
X	WO 2005/021262 A1 (KIMBERLY-CLARK WORLDWIDE, INC) 10 March 2005; entire document, in particular page 5, lines 5-15; page 9, lines 5-7; page 10, lines 13-19; page 13, lines 4-5; page 24, lines 2-29; page 25, lines 1-8, 23-24; page 28, lines 8-24; page 31, lines 10-11; page 33, lines 9-14; claims 1, 12, 14-16; figures 7-8	1, 16, 21-23, 54, 56-60 --- 17, 50-53, 55
X	US 6,479,154 B1 (WALTON, GA et al.) 12 November 2002; column 4, lines 25-29; column 9, lines 24-27, 62-67; column 10, lines 1-4; column 12, lines 36-40, 60-67; column 13, lines 10-12, 29-32, 62-65	1
Y	US 2013/0210621 A1 (TOPOLKARAEV, VA et al.) 15 August 2013; abstract; paragraphs [0075]-[0076]	17
Y	US 2011/0039083 A1 (CHEN, Y et al.) 17 February 2011; paragraphs [0015], [0018]-[0019], [0035], [0037]-[0038]	50-53, 55



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

03 September 2016 (03.09.2016)

Date of mailing of the international search report

07 NOV 2016

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

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P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

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PCT OSP: 571-272-7774

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US16/41617

Continued from Box No. III: Observations where unity of invention is lacking-

The inventions listed as Groups I-II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons:

the special technical features of Group I include a process for making a microporous breathable film comprising the steps of extruding a composition comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler to form a molten web, casting the molten web against a surface of a chill roll using an air knife, air blanket, a vacuum box, or a combination thereof to form a quenched film, and stretching the quenched film, which are not present in Group II;

the special technical features of Group II include a microporous breathable film, wherein the microporous breathable film has a Dart Impact Strength of greater than about 50 grams, which are not present in Group I.

The common technical features of Groups I-II is a microporous breathable film comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin, wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm.

This common technical feature is disclosed by WO 2005/021262 A1 to Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. (hereinafter 'Kimberly-Clark'). Kimberly-Clark discloses a microporous breathable film comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin (microporous breathable film comprising a polyolefin and an inorganic filler dispersed in the polyolefin; page 21, lines 6-8, 22-24; page 25, lines 23-24; page 33, lines 9-14), wherein the microporous breathable film has a basis weight of less than about 14 gsm (microporous breathable film has a basis weight of 10-60 gsm; page 5, lines 5-15; page 25, lines 23-24).

Since the common technical feature is previously disclosed by Kimberly-Clark, this common feature is not special and so Groups I-II lack unity.