A storage device for an orthotic appliance which includes a housing defining a storage chamber. This housing includes means for gaining access to the storage chamber and for resealing the storage chamber. In the one of the preferred embodiments of this invention, the storage device includes means for releasable attachment of the housing to an item of apparel (e.g. belt) or to an accessory (e.g. backpack or purse). In an alternative embodiment of this invention the means for attachment of the housing to the item of apparel or to an accessory can be integral with the housing. The storage device is preferably configured to disguise its function, and is, thus, designed to mimic a cell “flip” phone, pager or a personal desk accessory (PDA).
CARRYING CASE FOR ORTHODIC APPLIANCE WHICH IS DESIGNED TO DISGUISE ITS FUNCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field Of The Invention

More specifically, this invention relates to a carrying case for an orthodic appliance (e.g. retainer). The carrying case is preferably in the form of a telecommunication device (e.g. pager, cell phone, PDA, etc.) that can be worn on a strap or belt.

[0002] 2. Description Of Prior Art

Parents of children know all too well the problems associated with lost or broken orthodic appliances (e.g. retainer) when their child removes the appliance to eat or to engage in sport activities. The most common occurrence of the loss of the appliance is when it is removed at lunch in the school cafeteria and placed upon the lunch tray. All to often the child simply forgets the retainer on the lunch tray and it is discarded. Up to now, such dental appliances have been typically stored in a case which accompanies their delivery from the manufacturer. This container is simply box or cosmetic compact-like package. Accordingly, it does not provide either a convenient or loss-proof means for storage of an orthodic appliance when not in use. Accordingly, there continues to exist a need to provide both an effective and convenient device for storage of an orthodic appliance (e.g. retainer) when not in use, specifically, when removed by a child at school lunch or when engaged in some activity (e.g. sports). In order to be effective, the storage device need be easy to use, complimentary to the child’s dress (e.g. attach to clothing or backpack) and be attractive or hip.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is the object of the invention to remedy the above as well as related deficiencies in the prior art.

[0006] It is the principle object of the invention to provide a storage device, in the form of an adult-like accessory, that can be readily attached to an article of clothing or backpack, for storage of an orthodic appliance.

[0007] It is another object of this invention to provide a storage device in the form of a flip-phone, which includes an integral cradle, for attachment to an article of clothing or to a backpack.

[0008] It is yet another object of this invention to provide a storage device in the form of a pager, which includes an integral cradle, for attachment to an article of clothing or to a backpack.

[0009] It is still yet another object of this invention to provide a storage device in the form of a PDA (personal desk accessory), which includes an integral cradle, for attachment to an article of clothing or to a backpack.

[0010] Additional objects of this invention include the provision of a storage device having internal means for protection of an orthodic device from shock and abuse.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The above and related objects are achieved by providing a storage device for an orthodic appliance which includes a housing defining a storage chamber. This housing includes means for gaining access to the storage chamber and for resealing the storage chamber. In the one of the preferred embodiments of this invention, the storage device includes means for releasable attachment of the housing to an item of apparel (e.g. belt) or to an accessory (e.g. backpack or purse). In an alternative embodiment of this invention the means for attachment of the housing to the item of apparel or to an accessory can be integral with the housing.

[0012] The housing of this device is preferably configured in the form to disguise its function for an orthodic appliance; and, thus, conforms in overall appearance to an item of that is commonly carried or adorns an item of clothing, or an accessory to an item of clothing. Thus, in the preferred embodiments of this invention, the storage device is configured as a cell phone (e.g. “flip” phone), or a pager or a personal desk accessory (PDA). In each instance, the front of the device is removable, or replaceable (herein also “access panel”) to permit access to the interior of the storage device, and thereby the placement of the orthodic therein. Thereafter, the access panel is returned to its closed position, so as to seal the orthodic safely within the storage device. The interior chamber of the storage device is preferably provided with resilient material, to cushion the orthodic from shock when placed therein. This resilient material can be formed to include a recess or imprint of the orthodic to better protect it from movement within the storage device. In one of the preferred embodiments of this invention, the resilient material comprises a synthetic plastic foam that includes an anti-bacterial agent.

[0013] In another of the preferred embodiments of this invention, the storage device can include a lanyard for tethering of the storage device to an individual’s item of clothing (e.g. belt or belt loop), or to an article or accessory normally carried by an individual (e.g. backpack, purse, etc.). In another of the preferred embodiments of this invention, the storage device can be fitted to a belt by threading a belt through a pair of slots formed within the lateral margins of the storage device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0014] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a storage device of this invention.

[0015] FIG. 2 is an enlarged view of the storage device shown in FIG. 1 with an orthodic appliance nested inside.

[0016] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a storage device of this invention in the form of a pager.

[0017] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a storage device of this invention in the form of a personal desk accessory (PDA).

[0018] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a storage device of FIG. 1, as fitted to a belt.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] The preferred embodiments of this invention are described hereinafter in reference to the foregoing Figures. For ease of expression and comprehension, elements and components of each of these drawings, which depict elements common to more than one Figure, are assigned the same reference numeral.
[0020] FIG. 1 depicts an orthodic storage device (10) of this invention in the form of cellular “flip” phone. This device comprises a housing (12), defining an internal storage chamber (14). This chamber (14) is accessed through an opening (16) on one side of the housing (12) by flipping a hinged panel (18) that is attached to front of housing (12). In practice this hinged panel (18) is preferably spring loaded to maintain it in the closed position. When access to the interior storage chamber of the housing is desired, this hinged panel (18) is deflected from the closed to the open position, and an orthodic appliance (20) either inserted into or removed from this internal storage chamber (14). A detent (22) can be provided at the base (24) of the housing (12) to maintain the hinged panel (18) in the open position.

[0021] The overall configuration of the device of FIG. 1 can further incorporate or integrate means for attachment (26) of the storage device (10) to an article of clothing, or to an accessory normally worn or carried upon the person of an individual. In the embodiment of this invention depicted in FIG. 1, storage device includes a cradle (26). This cradle (26) can be integrated into the housing (12) of the storage device (10); or, designed to engage and release the storage device, incident to the insertion and removal of an orthodic appliance (20) from the internal storage chamber (14) of the housing (12). In an alternative embodiment of this invention, depicted in FIG. 2, the means for attachment of the storage device to a person may comprise a pair of slots (28) designed for attachment of a belt to the storage device.

[0022] FIG. 3 depicts an alternative embodiment of the storage device of this invention in the form of a pager (30). In this embodiment of the invention, as in FIG. 1, the pager (30) includes both an interior storage chamber (14) and means (18) for accessing the chamber. Similarly, FIG. 4 depicts the storage device of thin invention in the form of a personal desk accessory (PDA) (32). As in FIGS. 1 & 3, the device depicted in FIG. 4 also includes an interior storage chamber (14) and means (18) for accessing the interior storage chamber. In devices depicted in each of FIGS. 3 & 4, a cradle (26) can be provided for attachment of each of the pager (30) and the PDA (32) to an article of clothing or to an accessory worn or carried by a person. This cradle (26) can also be integral with the pager or the PDA.

[0023] In each of the embodiments of this invention, the storage device (10) can be provided with alternative means (34), as depicted in FIG. 4, for attachment to an article of clothing or to an accessory worn or carried by a person. This alternative means can include a lanyard (36) to tether the storage device to an article of clothing or to an accessory worn or carried by a person. In this alternative embodiment of the invention, the lanyard (36) is attached to the storage device by means or a pair of loops (38) molded into the body of the housing (12). The looped ended (38) of the lanyard (36) can then be used to attach the device to an article of clothing or to an accessory worn or carried by a person.

[0024] The foregoing Figures and accompanying description have been provided as illustrative of a number of the preferred embodiments of this invention, and not intended to delineate the scope thereof, which is set forth in the claims that follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A storage container for an orthodic appliance which is configured to disguise its function, comprising:

A. A housing defining an internal storage chamber of sufficient volume to house an orthodic appliance;

B. Means for opening and closing said housing to permit access to said internal storage chamber, and thereby permit insertion and removal of said orthodic appliance from said housing;

C. Means for attachment of said housing to an item of clothing or to an accessory of an item of clothing; and

2. The storage device of claim 1, wherein the housing mimics, in overall appearance, telecommunications device selected from the group consisting of a cell phone, a pager or a personal desk accessory.

3. The storage device of claim 1, wherein the means for attachment of the housing to an item of clothing or to an accessory to an item of clothing is selected from the group consisting of a cradle, a lanyard, or a pair of belt loops.

4. The storage device of claim 1, wherein the means for attachment of the housing to an item of clothing or to an accessory to an item of clothing, is integral to the housing.

5. The storage device of claim 1, wherein the housing includes means for cushioning and retaining the movement of said orthodic appliance within said housing.

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