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(54) CLIP FOR MOUNTING A FLUID DELIVERY DEVICE

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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 11/312,281, filed on Dec. 20, 2005.

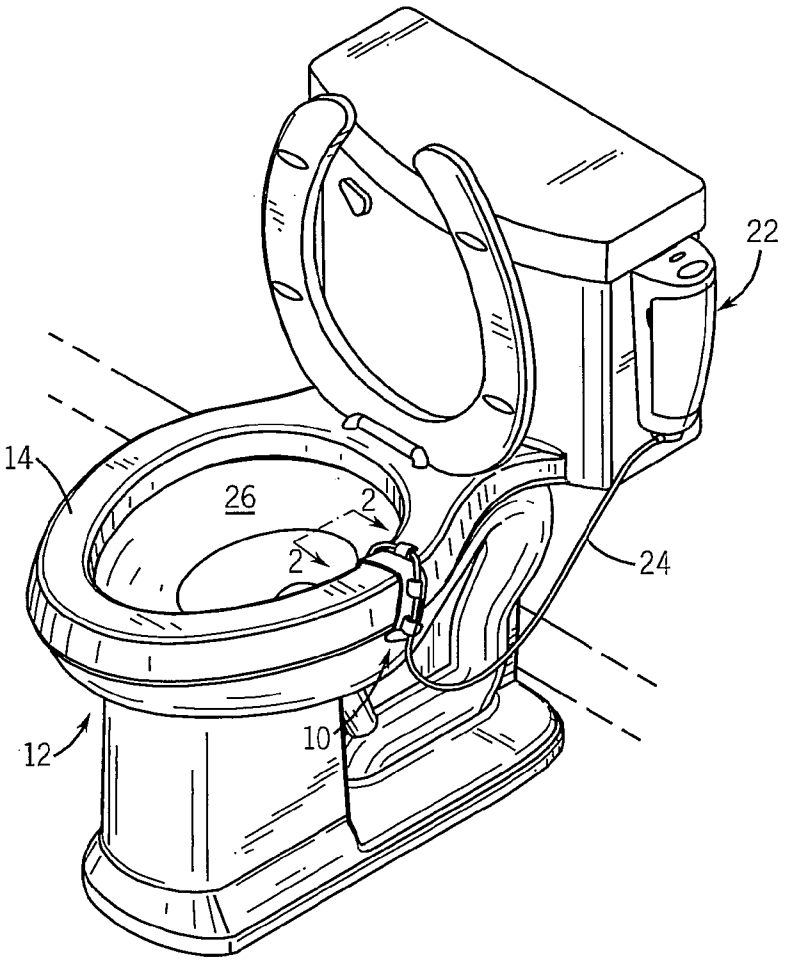
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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **4/223**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A clip for mounting a fluid delivery device adjacent a wall of an enclosure is disclosed. In one embodiment, the device includes a base, a hook configured to support the base adjacent the wall, means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base, and means for rotating the base. Additionally, a method for attaching a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device adjacent a toilet bowl is disclosed. The method includes securing a hook to a rim, engaging a tab of a base to an underside of the rim at an interface, and rotating the base in response to the interface to substantially engage the tab of the base with the underside of the rim.



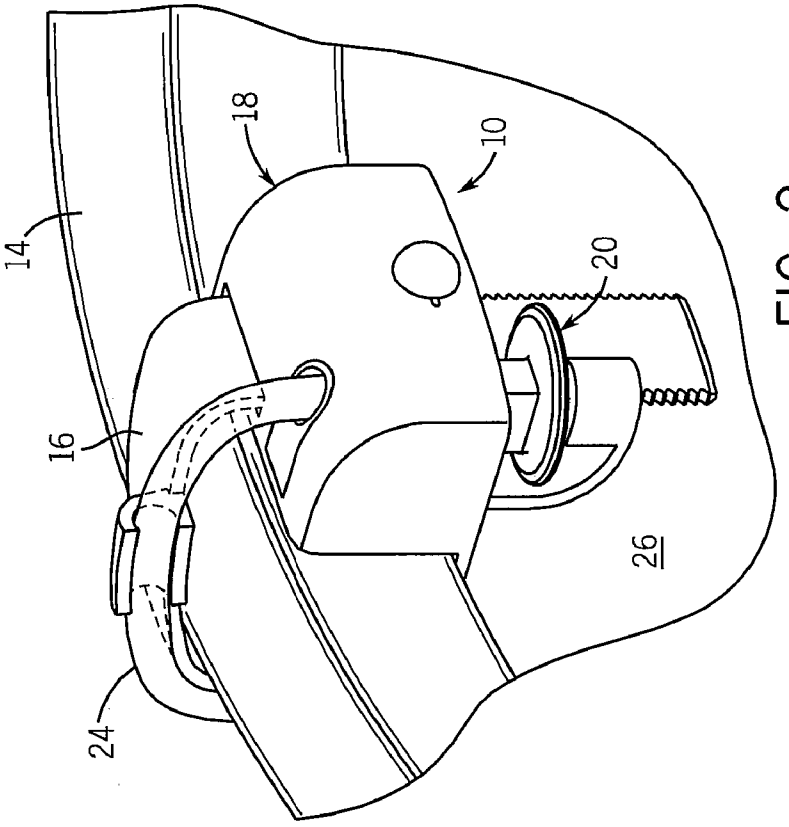


FIG. 2

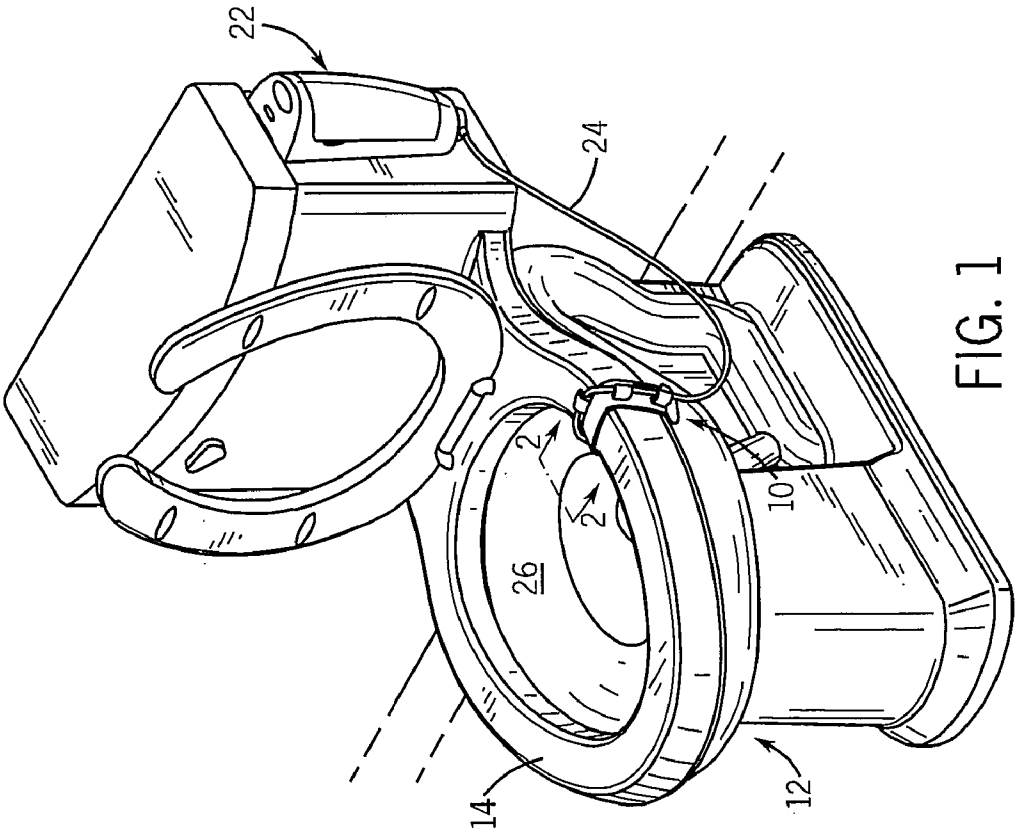


FIG. 1

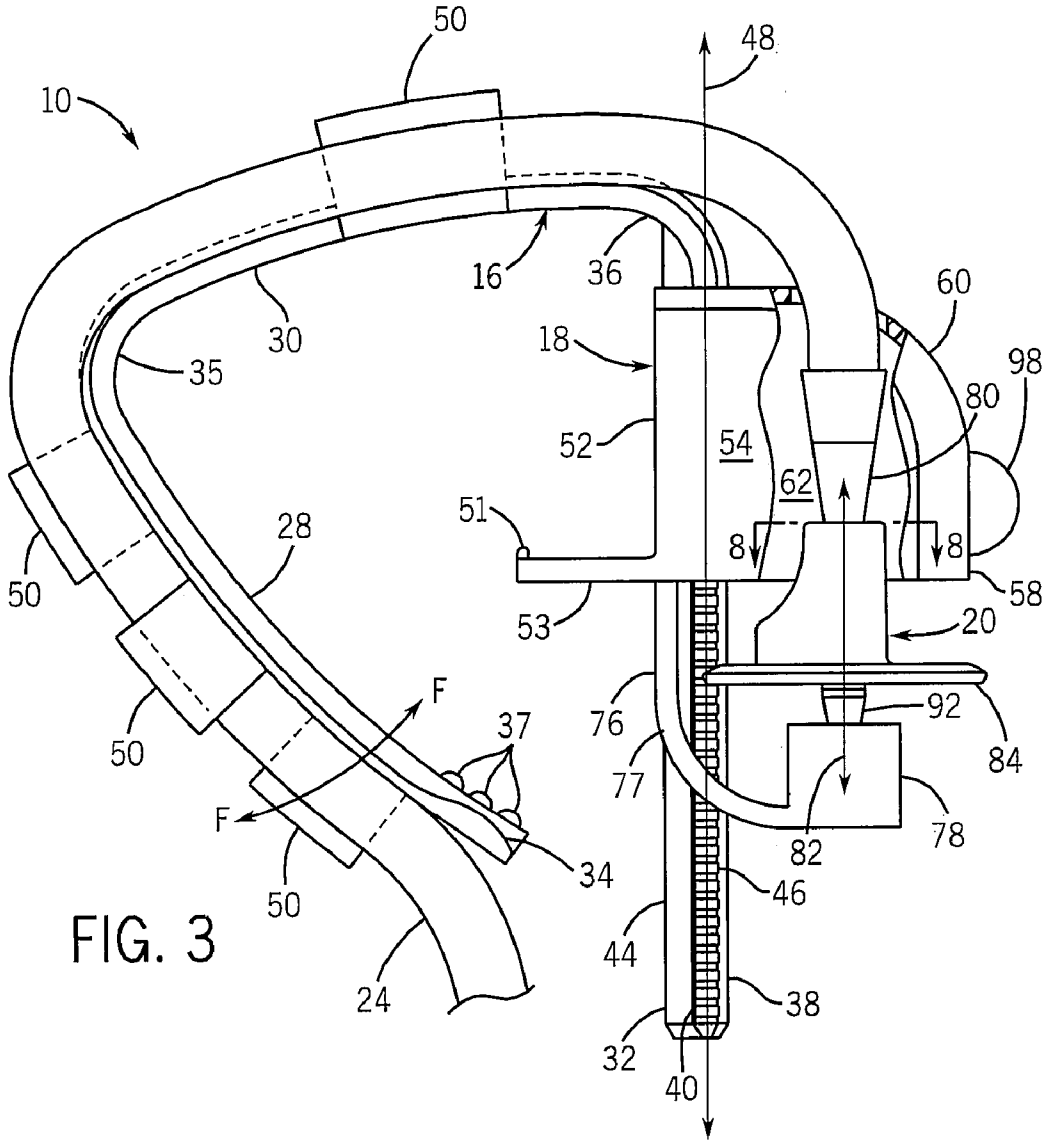

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FIG. 3

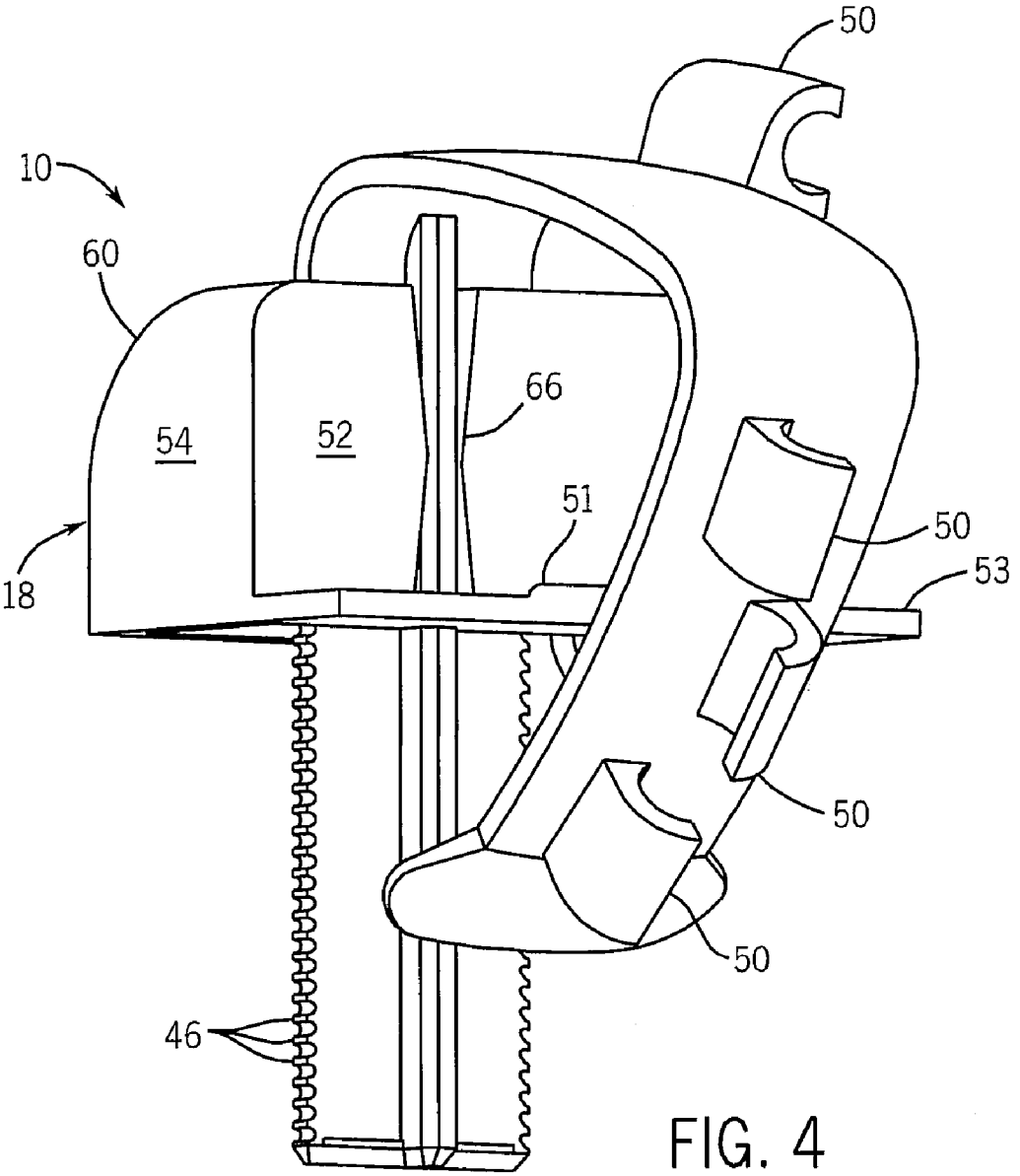


FIG. 4

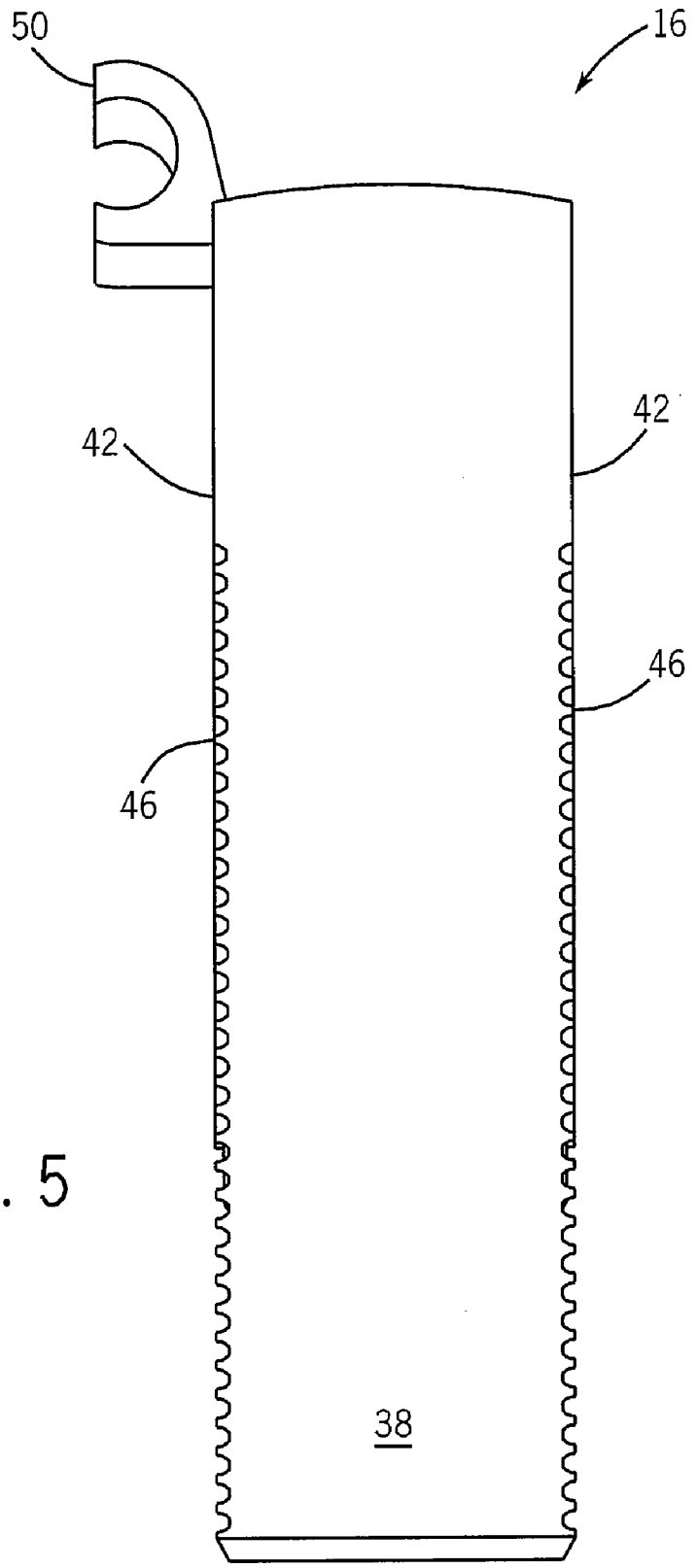


FIG. 5

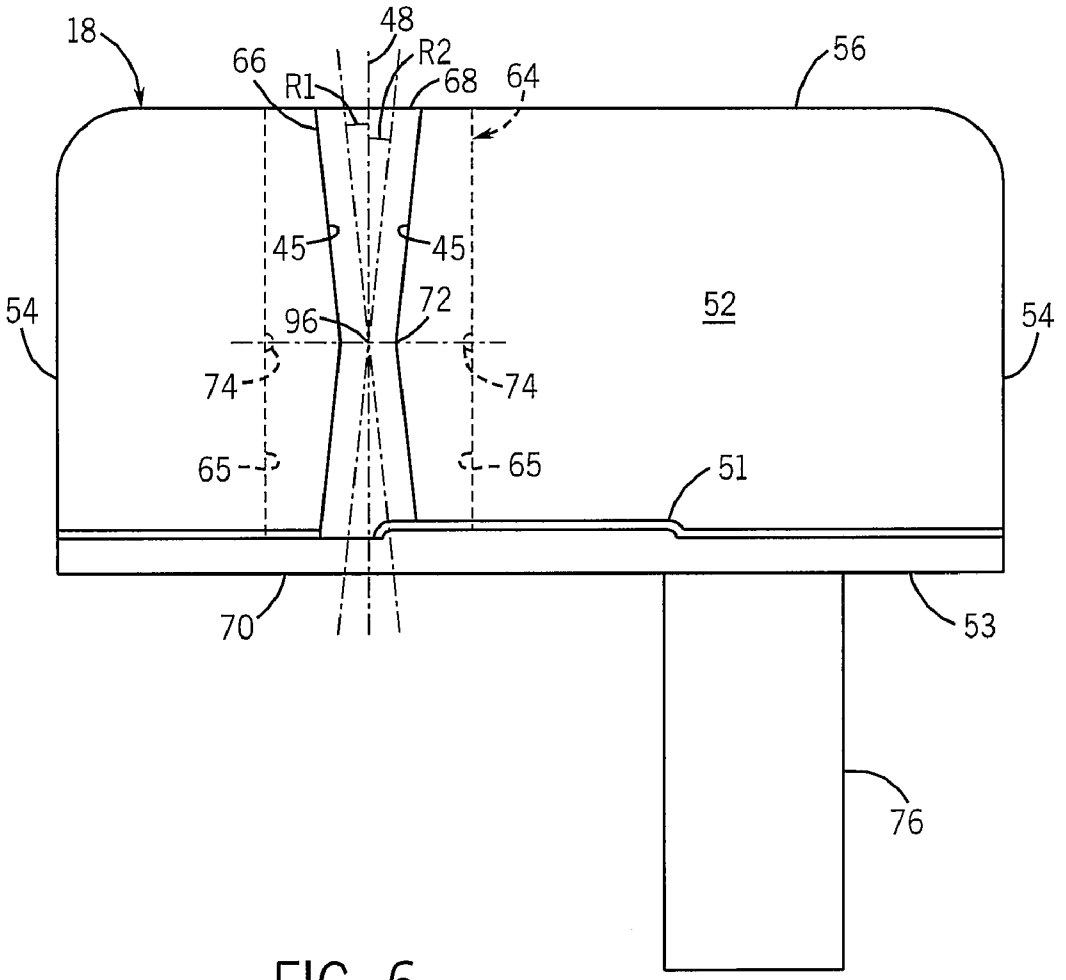


FIG. 6

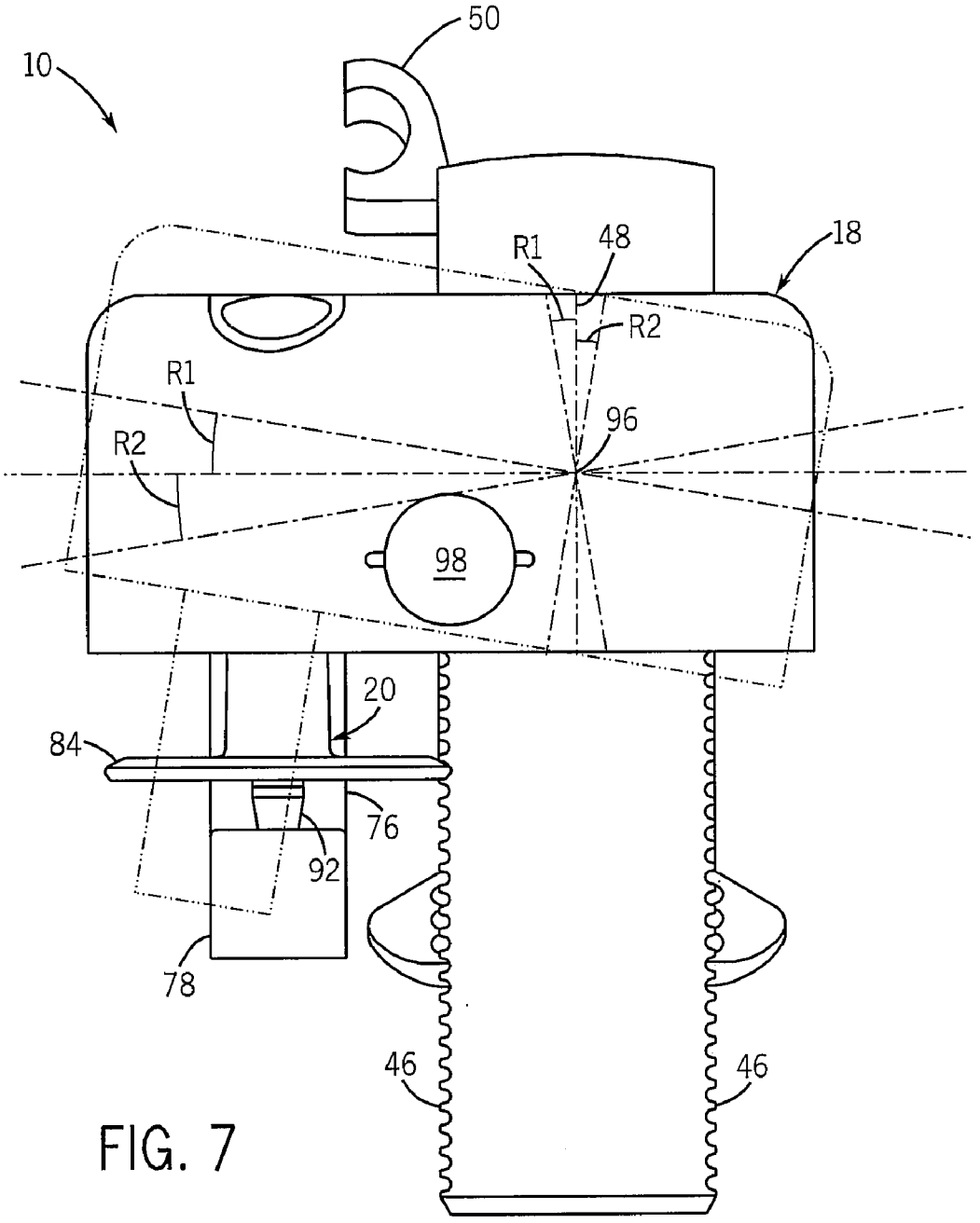


FIG. 7

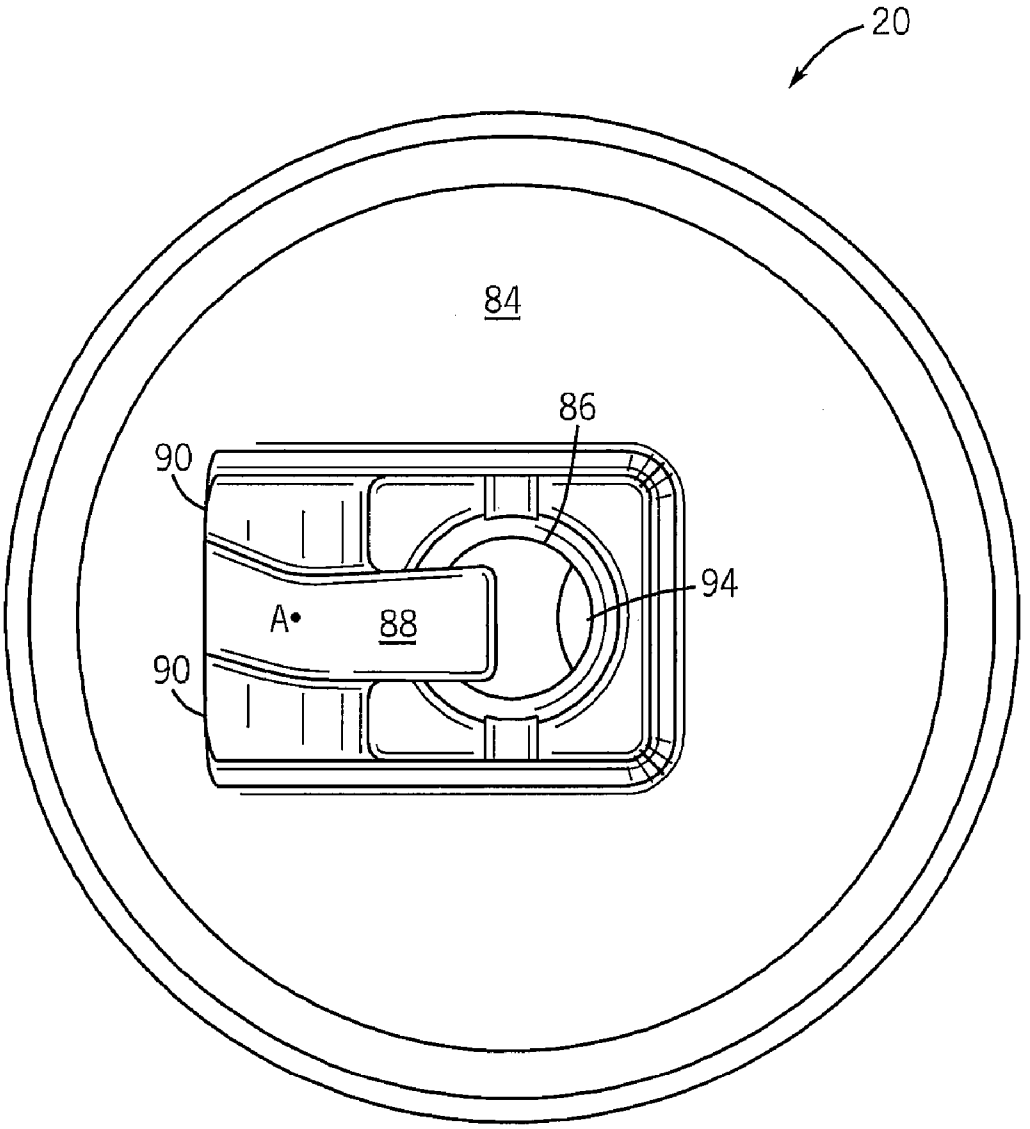


FIG. 8

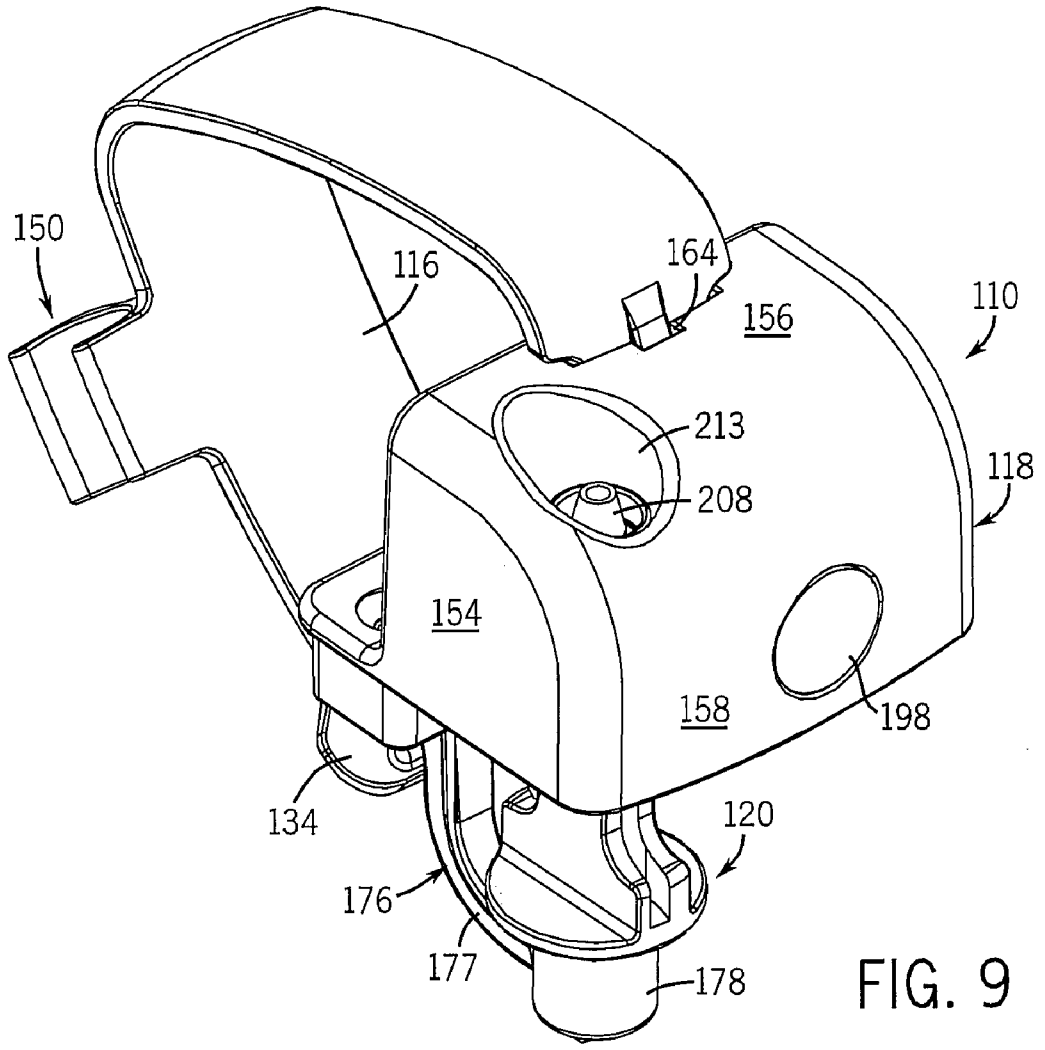


FIG. 9

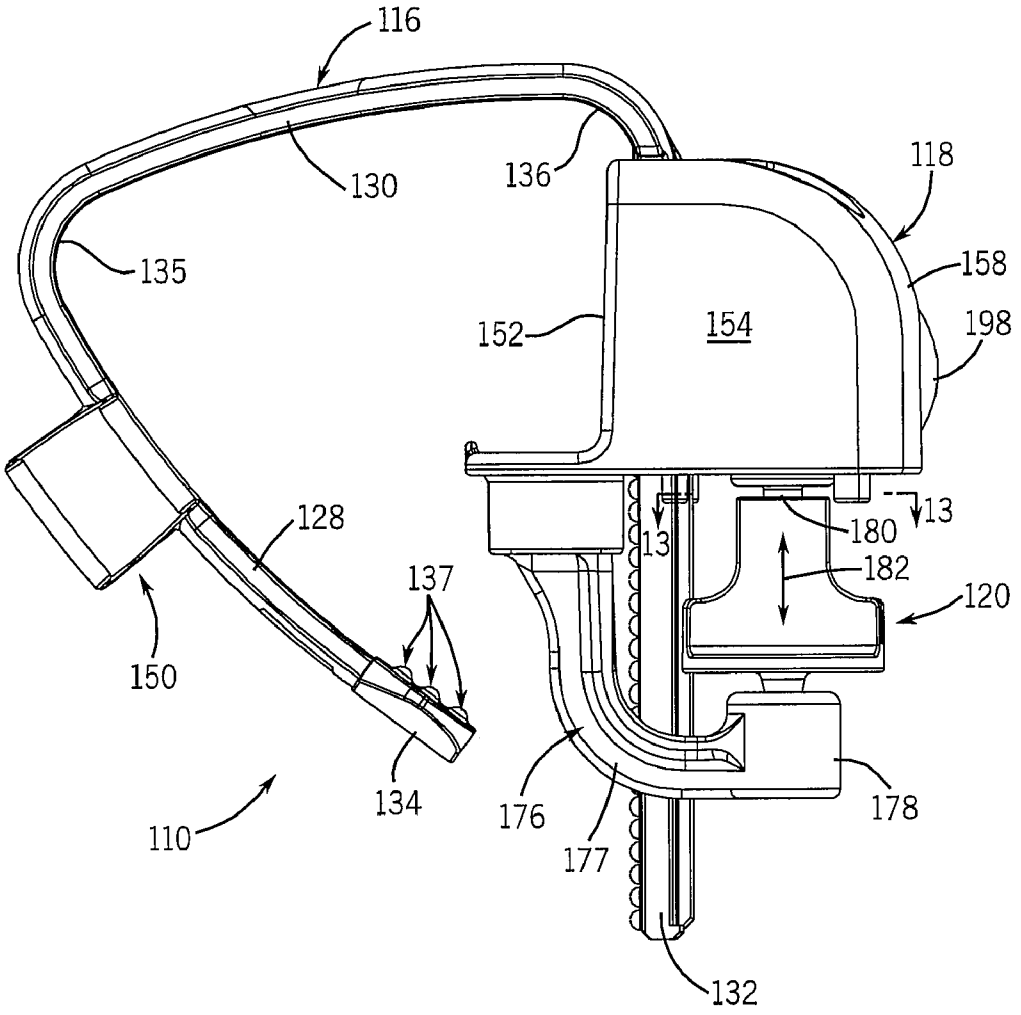

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FIG. 10

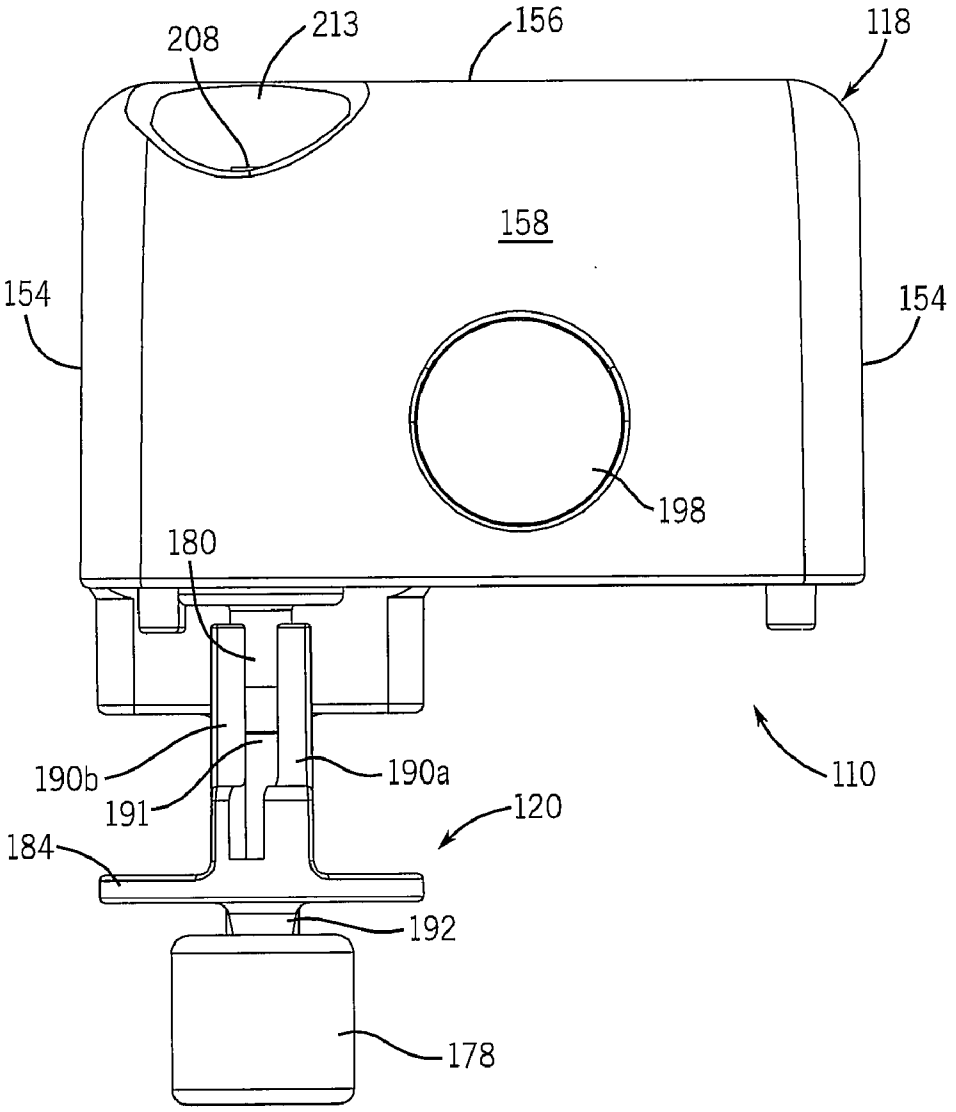

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FIG. 11

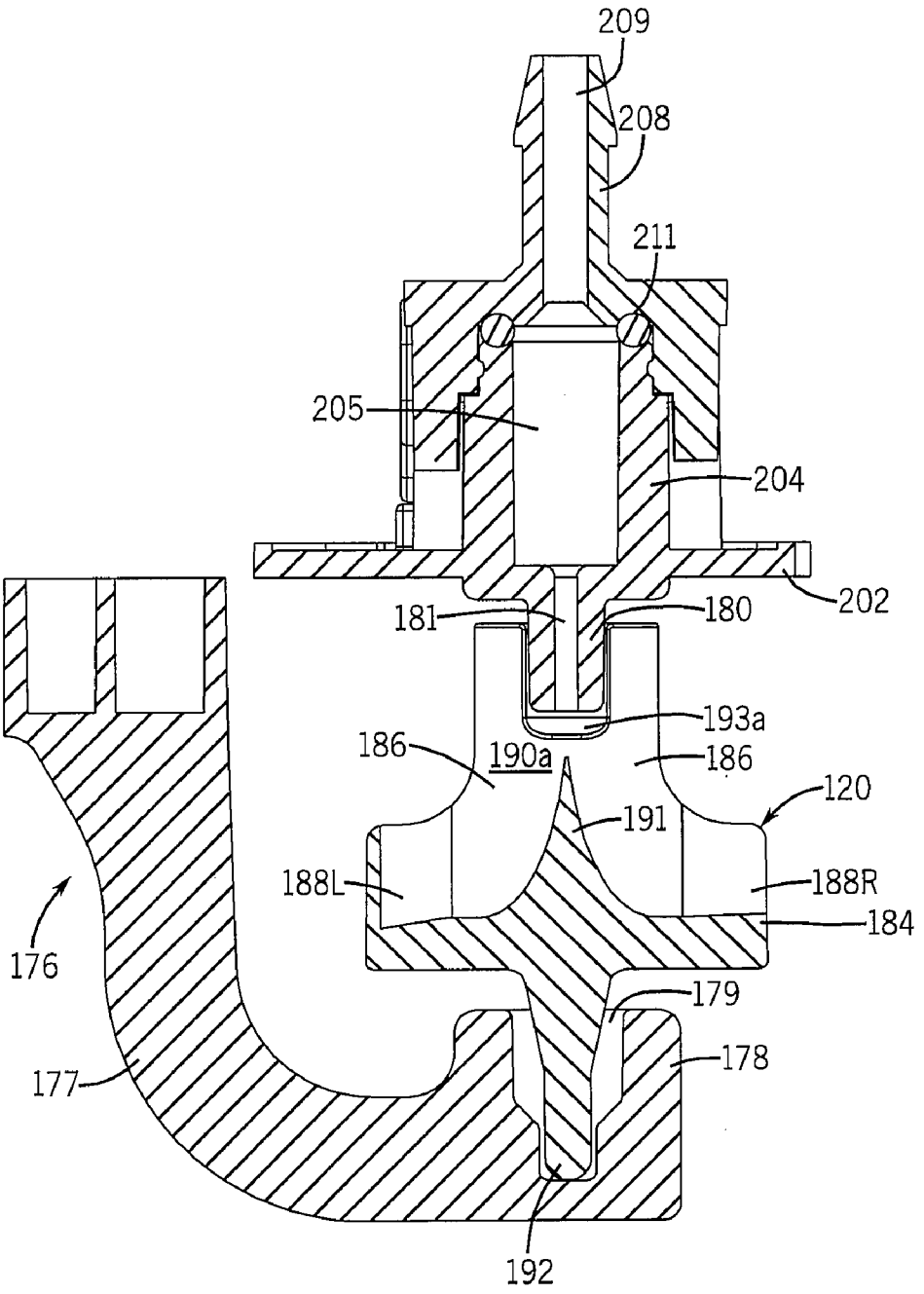

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FIG. 12

FIG. 13

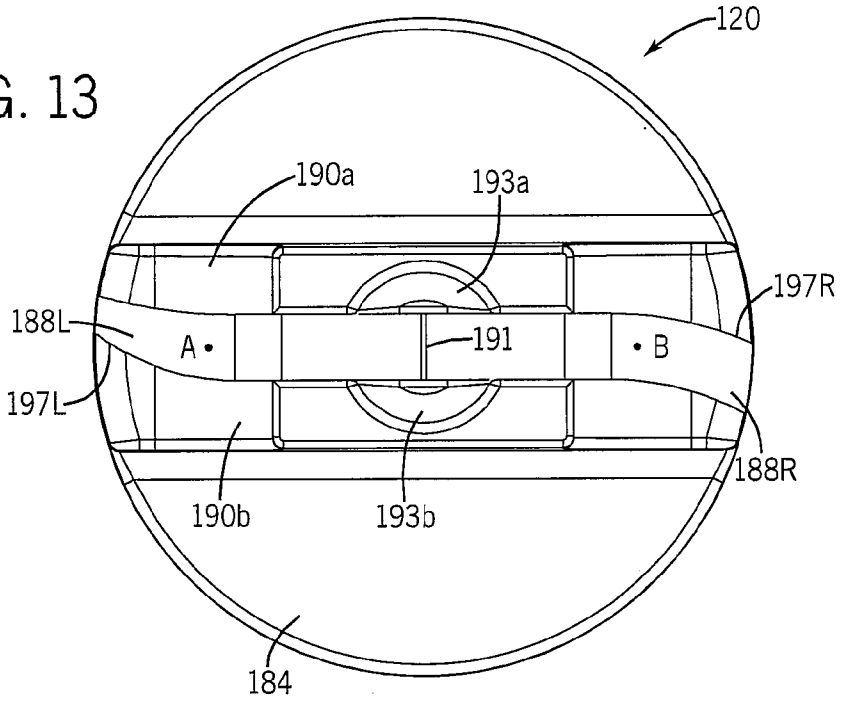

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FIG. 14

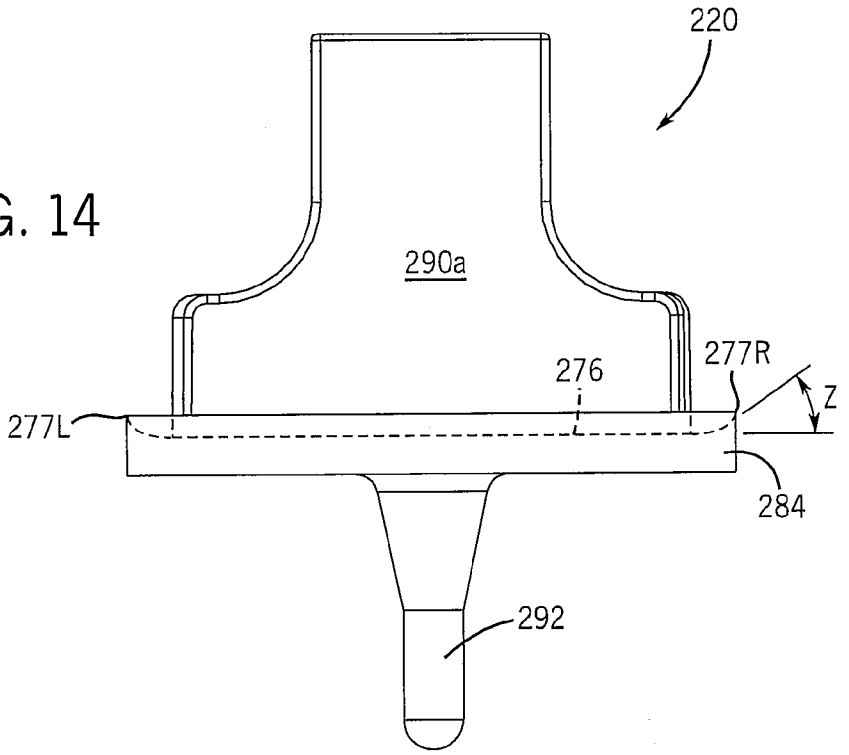

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FIG. 15

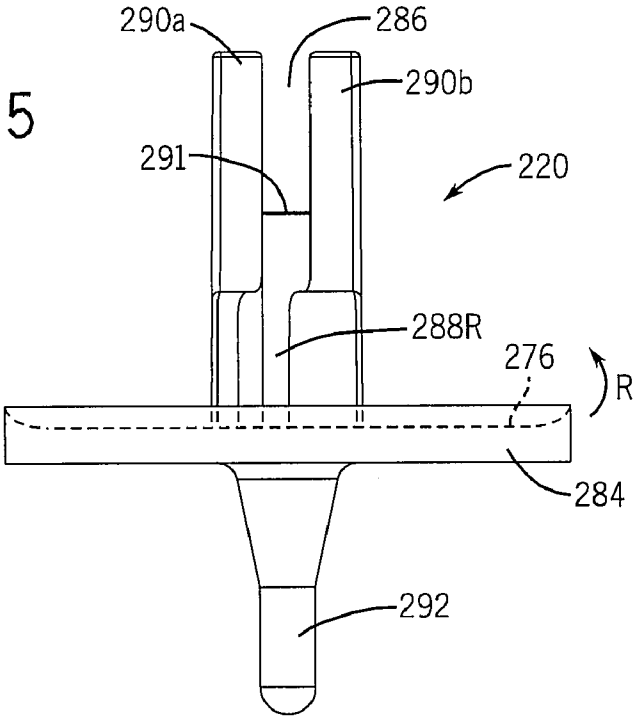
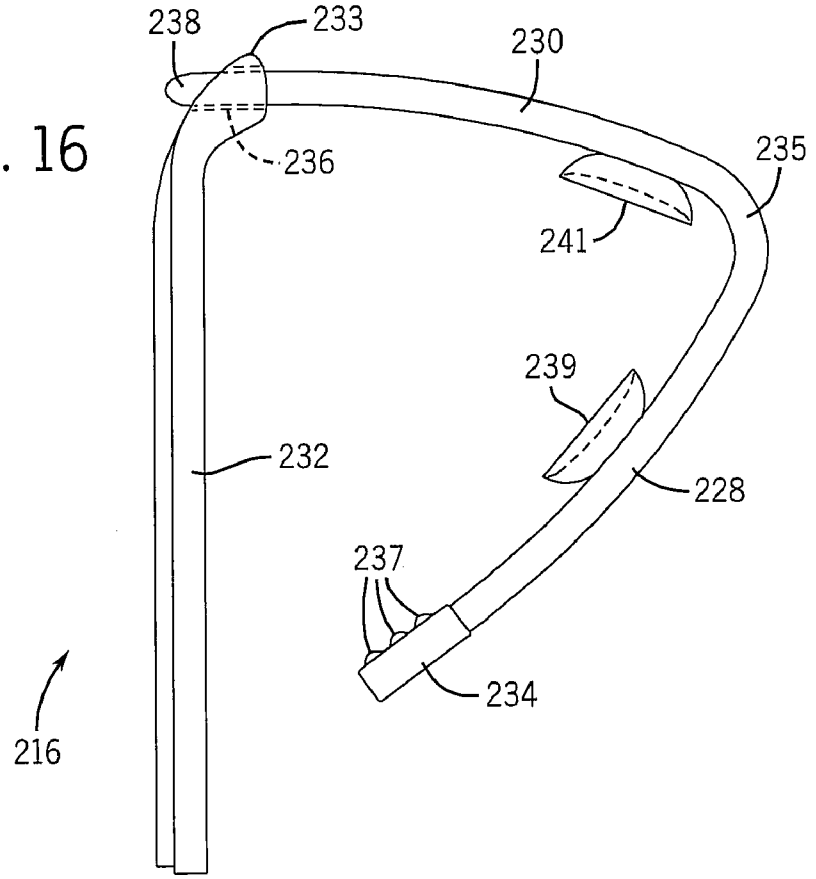

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FIG. 16


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CLIP FOR MOUNTING A FLUID DELIVERY DEVICE

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Pat. application Ser. No. 11/312,281 filed Dec. 20, 2005.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH

[0002] Not Applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] 1. Field of the Invention

[0004] This invention relates to a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device for spraying a fluid, such as a cleaner or deodorizer, on the inside surfaces of an enclosure, such as a toilet bowl, a shower enclosure, or a bathtub enclosure, where the body of the clip can be rotatably adjusted relative to the hook of the clip to direct dispensed fluid to the inside surfaces of the enclosure.

[0005] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0006] Toilet bowls require care to prevent the buildup of unsightly deposits, to reduce odors, and to prevent bacteria growth. Traditionally, toilet bowls have been cleaned, deodorized, and disinfected by manual scrubbing with a liquid or powdered cleaning and sanitizing agent. This task has required manual labor to keep the toilet bowl clean.

[0007] In order to eliminate the detested manual scrubbing, various toilet bowl cleaner dispensers have been proposed. One type of dispenser comprises a solid block or solid particles of a cleansing and freshening substance that is suspended from the rim of a toilet bowl in a container that is placed in the path of the flushing water. U.S. Pat. No. 4,777,670 (which is incorporated herein by reference along with all other documents cited herein) shows an example of this type of toilet bowl cleaning system. Typically, a portion of the solid block is dissolved in the flush water with each flush, and the flush water having dissolved product is dispensed into the toilet bowl for cleaning the bowl.

[0008] Other toilet bowl cleaning systems use a liquid cleaning agent that is dispensed into a toilet bowl. For example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,178,564 and 6,230,334, and PCT International Publication Nos. WO 99/66139 and WO 99/66140 all disclose cleansing and/or freshening devices capable of being suspended from the rim of a toilet bowl for introducing liquid active substances from a bottle into the flushing water with each flush. In these under the toilet rim devices, the liquid active substances are delivered downward from a reservoir to a dispensing plate that is supported by a base that is suspended from the toilet bowl rim. The device is suspended from the toilet rim such that the flow of flush water from the toilet contacts the dispensing plate during a flush. The flush water carries the liquid active substances that are on the dispensing plate into the toilet bowl to clean and freshen the toilet.

[0009] Other toilet bowl dispensers use an aerosol deodorizing and/or cleaning agent that is dispensed into a toilet bowl through a conduit attached to the toilet bowl rim. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 3,178,070 discloses an aerosol container mounted by a bracket on a toilet rim with a tube extending over the rim; and U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,029,286 and 5,862,532 disclose dispensers for a toilet bowl including a pressurized reservoir of fluid, a conduit connected to the source of fluid, and a spray nozzle which is installed on the toilet rim.

[0010] One disadvantage with these known toilet rim dispensing devices is that these devices may only apply the deodorizing and/or cleaning agent to one location in the toilet water or a limited area in the toilet water or on the inner surface of the toilet bowl. As a result, the cleaning of the inner surface of the toilet bowl may be limited to an area of the toilet bowl near the device.

[0011] U.S. Pat. application Ser. No. 11/312,281, which is owned by the owner of the current invention, sets forth, among others, an automatic or manual toilet bowl cleaning device where the inner surface of the toilet bowl is cleaned around the entire circumference of the toilet bowl. In one embodiment illustrated in that application, the downstream end of the conduit terminates in a nozzle capable of spraying the fluid outwardly onto the inner surface of the toilet bowl. The nozzle is attached near the rim of the toilet bowl.

[0012] Several techniques are available to provide limited adjustment for devices attached to the rim of a toilet bowl. Adjustment has been generally limited to either (1) accommodating toilet bowl rims of varying width, as shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,286 wherein a ratchet arrangement between two members of the hook is used to adjust the hook for varying rim widths, or (2) attempting to accommodate the depth of the rim and bowl geometry by adjusting the vertical position of the device below the rim. For example, U.S. Pat. No. Re. 32,017 and U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,898,806 and 7,114,199 incorporate a ratchet arrangement between the hook and the body to allow discrete vertical adjustment of the device below the rim of a toilet bowl. Furthermore, U.S. Pat. No. 6,675,396 allows for continuous adjustment of the body with respect to the rim by the use of a friction fit wherein a flat bar hook is wedged within a hollow channel formed within the body.

[0013] The previous means of adjustment, however, may not adequately position the nozzle so that the dispensed fluid reaches the extremes of the inner surface of the toilet bowl when the toilet bowl has an asymmetric or elongated rim/inner surface configuration.

[0014] Therefore, there is a need for an improved clip for mounting a nozzle near the rim of the toilet bowl.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0015] The foregoing needs can be met with a clip according to the present invention for mounting a fluid delivery device. The clip is suitable for use in an automated or manual cleaning system for cleaning an enclosure, such as a toilet bowl, a shower enclosure, a bathtub enclosure, and the like. As used herein, the term "cleaning" also includes sanitizing and/or disinfecting, the term "deodorizing" also includes freshening, and the term "fluid" includes cleaning fluids, sanitizing fluids, disinfecting fluids, and the like. Furthermore, the term "fluid" is read broadly to include, liquids, gels, flowable powders, vapors, and the like. Without limitation, an example embodiment of the invention will be described with reference to a toilet bowl.

[0016] The clip maintains the security and orientation of the fluid delivery device while in use to help ensure that the fluid is dispensed onto the desired enclosure surfaces. The clip is secured to the enclosure to prevent inadvertent or accidental movement that may cause undesired signals from the sensor and/or alter the coverage of the dispensed fluid. Additionally, the clip accommodates varying toilet sizes and shapes by adjusting for rim height, depth, angle, and curvature. Angle adjustment can be done substantially automatically as the clip is mounted to a rim. Grips on the hook help to ensure the orientation of the clip is maintained once set. Furthermore, channels are present to secure the fluid conduit to the clip to prevent pinching or kinks in the fluid conduit.

[0017] The invention provides a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device adjacent a wall of an enclosure. In one embodiment, the clip includes a base, a hook configured to support the base adjacent the wall of an enclosure, means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base, and means for rotating the base.

[0018] In one aspect, the means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base may comprises an arm extending from the body. Further, the arm may include a support segment and a barrel at the distal end of the support segment for supporting a fluid delivery device.

[0019] In another aspect, the base may include a fluid inlet and the clip may include a fluid delivery device including a nozzle in fluid communication with the fluid inlet. The nozzle may include a deflection plate, a passageway in fluid communication with the fluid inlet at an upper end of the passageway and extending between the fluid inlet and the deflection plate, a channel in fluid communication with a lower end of the passageway, and a pair of fins flanking the channel and extending upwardly from the deflection plate that when contacted by fluid rotate the nozzle.

[0020] In one configuration, the means for rotating the base includes a rib protruding from the hook, a channel formed in the base for receiving the hook, a slit formed in the channel comprising an entrance, an exit, and an intermediate position between the entrance and the exit for receiving the rib. Furthermore, the width of the slit decreases from the entrance to the intermediate position and increases from the intermediate position to the exit to allow relative rotation between the hook and the base about a point located near the intermediate position of the slit.

[0021] In yet another aspect, the hook may include ratchet teeth and the channel may comprise one or more protrusions for engaging the ratchet teeth to resist sliding movement between the hook and base. In another aspect, the hook may comprise means for attaching a fluid conduit to the hook. Furthermore, the means for attaching the fluid conduit to the hook may include a channel. In a further aspect, the fluid conduit extends into the fluid inlet for delivering fluid to the fluid delivery device.

[0022] In another embodiment of the invention, a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device adjacent a wall of an enclosure includes a base, a hook configured to support the base adjacent the wall, means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base, and a sensor mounted on the base or the hook. In one aspect, the sensor may be a motion sensor, a proximity sensor, or the like.

[0023] In another aspect, the means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base comprises an arcuate arm extending downwardly from the base to rotatably support a fluid delivery device. In yet a further aspect, the sensor is mounted on the base on a surface opposite of the hook.

[0024] In an additional embodiment, a device for spraying an inner surface of an enclosure with a fluid, includes a container for the fluid, a fluid delivery device through which the fluid can be applied to the inner surface of the enclosure, a fluid conduit in fluid communication with the container and the fluid delivery device, means for delivering fluid from the container through the fluid conduit and to the fluid delivery device, and a clip for mounting the fluid delivery device adjacent the inner surface of the enclosure; the clip comprises a base, a hook configured to support the base adjacent the inner surface, and wherein the base is configured to rotate with respect to the hook. In one aspect, the enclosure is one of a tub, a shower, a toilet, or the like.

[0025] In a further aspect, the clip comprises a rib protruding from the hook, a channel formed in the base for receiving the hook, a slit formed in the channel comprising an entrance, an exit, and an intermediate position between the entrance and the exit for receiving the rib, and wherein the width of the slit decreases from the entrance to the intermediate position and increases from the intermediate position to the exit to allow relative rotation between the hook and the base about a point located near the intermediate position of the slit.

[0026] In another aspect, a sensor is mounted on the hook or the base. Furthermore, the sensor may be a motion sensor, a proximity sensor, or the like.

[0027] In a further embodiment, a method for attaching a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device adjacent a toilet bowl having a rim including an underside, comprises the steps of providing a base comprising a tab, providing a hook configured to support the base adjacent the rim, providing means for rotating the base, securing the hook to the rim, engaging the tab of the base to the underside of the rim at an interface, and rotating the base in response to the interface to substantially engage the tab of the base with the underside of the rim.

[0028] It is therefore an advantage of the invention to provide a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device where the body of the clip is rotatable relative to the hook such that fluid is dispensed onto the inner surface of the enclosure, and further, where a sensor mounted to the hook or base helps prevent dispensing fluid during undesired periods.

[0029] These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become better understood upon consideration of the following detailed description, drawings, and appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0030] FIG. **1** is a perspective view of an embodiment of a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device in accordance with the invention mounted to a toilet bowl.

[0031] FIG. **2** is a perspective, fragmentary view taken along line **2-2** of FIG. **1** showing the clip of FIG. **1**.

[0032] FIG. **3** is a side elevation view having a cutout showing a portion of the interior of the clip of FIG. **1**.

[0033] FIG. **4** is a rear oblique view of the clip of FIG. **1**.

[0034] FIG. **5** is a front view of a portion of the clip of FIG. **1** showing a hook of the clip in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0035] FIG. **6** is a rear view of a portion of the clip of FIG. **1** showing a base of the clip in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0036] FIG. **7** is a front view of the clip of FIG. **1** showing the clip in rotated (dashed lines) and non-rotated (solid lines) orientations.

[0037] FIG. **8** is a top view of a portion of the nozzle of the clip taken along line **8-8** of FIG. **3**.

[0038] FIG. **9** is a perspective view of another embodiment of a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device in accordance with the invention.

[0039] FIG. **10** is a side view of the clip of FIG. **9**.

[0040] FIG. **11** is a front view of the clip of FIG. **9** with the hook removed.

[0041] FIG. **12** is a vertical cross-sectional view of the fluid inlet, nozzle and support arm of the clip of FIG. **9**.

[0042] FIG. **13** is a top view of a portion of the nozzle of the clip taken along line **13-13** of FIG. **10**.

[0043] FIG. **14** is a front elevational view of yet another nozzle suitable for use with the invention.

[0044] FIG. **15** is a side elevational view of the nozzle of FIG. **14**.

[0045] FIG. **16** is a side view of another hook suitable for use with the clip of FIG. **9**.

[0046] Like reference numerals will be used to refer to like parts from Figure to Figure in the following description of the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0047] A clip according to the invention for mounting a fluid delivery device can be used in various devices that dispense fluid onto the inside surfaces of an enclosure, such as a toilet bowl, a shower enclosure, a bathtub enclosure, or the like. Various embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the Figures. The embodiments are shown and described for the purposes of illustration and are not intended to limit the invention in any way.

[0048] Turning to FIGS. **1** and **2**, there is shown an example embodiment of a clip **10** for mounting a fluid delivery device to an enclosure, here a toilet bowl **12**. The clip **10** is secured to the rim **14** of the toilet bowl **12** by a hook **16**. A base **18** is supported by the hook **16** and houses a fluid delivery device, here a nozzle **20**. A container **22** supplies fluid via a fluid conduit **24** to the fluid delivery device **20** to be dispensed onto the inside surface **26** of the toilet bowl **12**. The fluid can be supplied from the container **22** to the fluid delivery device **20** in a variety of ways; for example, the fluid may be motivated by a gaseous propellant, by a pump, a syringe, or any other suitable means. Furthermore, the execution of the fluid delivery from the container **22** can be controlled by a variety of methods/devices, one being a timing circuit using predetermined logic to control when the fluid is dispensed.

[0049] Turning to FIGS. **3**, **4**, and **5** the hook **16** for supporting the base **18** and attaching the clip **10** to the toilet bowl **12** has three main segments. A bowl segment **28**, a top rim segment **30**, and an inner rim segment **32**. All three segments **28**, **30**, **32** are preferably integrally molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene or polypropylene) and form a flexible hook **16**. The bowl segment **28** has a substantially rectangular cross-section and a flared elastomeric gripping foot **34** with elastomeric ribs **37** at a lower end for helping to secure the clip **10** to the toilet bowl **12**. Suitable elastomeric materials for the gripping foot **34** and ribs **37** include, without limitation, neoprene, polyurethane rubbers, and silicone rubbers. The bowl segment **28** extends substantially vertically upward and transitions into the top rim segment **30** at a flexible elbow **35** that allows the hook **16** to flex predominantly in the F-F direction (shown on FIG. **3**) to secure the clip **10** to toilet bowls of various shapes and sizes. The top rim segment **30** has a substantially rectangular cross-section and extends horizontal across the rim **14** of the toilet bowl **12** where it transitions into the inner rim segment **32** at another flexible elbow **36**, also allowing the hook **16** to flex. The inner rim segment **32** extends vertically downward from the elbow **36** and is configured to engage and support the base **18**.

[0050] The inner rim segment **32** of the hook **16** has a front face **38** and a rear face **40** joined by two short side faces **42**. A rib **44** protrudes from the rear face **40** of the inner rim segment **32** and extends the length thereof. As discussed in detail below, the rib **44** limits the angle of rotation of the base **18** with respect to the hook **16**. The rib **44** of the example embodiment has a substantially rectangular cross-section, however, the rib **44** may have a curved cross-section, a square cross-section, comprise two spaced apart members, and the like. Additionally, the rib **44** need not extend the length of the inner rim segment **32** provided the rib **44** engages the base **18** throughout the desired adjustable range of the base **18**. The short side faces **42** have ratchet teeth **46** used in conjunction with the base **18** to restrain vertical movement of the base **18** along a vertical axis **48**. Other restraints may be used, such as a friction fit between the hook **16** and base **18**, or the like.

[0051] The bowl segment **28** and the top rim segment **30** include a series of C-shaped channels **50** that restrain the conduit **24** as it is routed around the perimeter of the hook **16** on its way to the nozzle **20** in the base **18**. The bowl segment **28** of the present embodiment includes three C-shaped channels **50** of alternating openings. The conduit **24** is pressed into the C-shaped channels **50**, however, the channels **50** could be rectangular or any other suitable shape to restrain the conduit **24**. The top rim segment **30** preferably includes one channel **50** helping to route the conduit **24**, however, more may be used if needed.

[0052] Turning to FIGS. **3**, **4**, and **6** the base **18** has a back face **52**, a pair of spaced apart side faces **54** extending forward of the back face **52**, a top face **56** and a front face **58** extending between the side faces **54**, and a curved face **60** extending between the side faces **54**, top face **56**, and front face **58**. The faces **52**, **54**, **56**, **58**, **60** define a partial cavity **62** housing a portion of the nozzle **20**. The base **18** has a tab **53** that extends rearward from the back face **52** of the

base **18**. The tab **53** helps orientate the base **18** with respect to the rim **14** when the clip **10** is mounted to the toilet bowl **12**, as discussed below. The tab **53** may be one continuous member as shown in the example embodiment, or alternatively, the tab **53** may include a plurality of members extending from the base **18**. The base **18** is preferably molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene or polypropylene).

[**0053**] With emphasis on FIG. **6**, the base **18** includes a channel **64** for receiving the inner rim segment **32** of the hook **16**. The channel **64** includes a slit **66** for receiving the rib **44** having an entrance **68**, an exit **70**, and an intermediate position **72** (which may or may not be equidistant from the entrance **68** and the exit **70**). The width of the slit **66** decreases from the entrance **68** to the intermediate position **72** and increases from the intermediate position **72** to the exit **70**. In one embodiment, the intermediate position **72** is approximately half way between the entrance **68** and the exit **70**; however, the narrowest point need not be halfway between the entrance **68** and exit **70**, but may occur anywhere between the extremes of the slit **66**. Additionally, the maximum width of the slit **66** may vary depending on the desired degree of adjustment of the base **18** with respect to the hook **16**. If greater rotational adjustment of the base **18** is desired, the maximum width of the slit **66** at the entrance **68** and exit **70** may be increased; alternatively, or in addition, the width of the rib **44** may be decreased.

[**0054**] The channel **64** includes a pair of projections **74** extending from the walls of the short sides **65** of the channel **64** to engage the ratchet teeth **46** of the hook **16** as the inner rim segment **32** slides within the channel **64**. The projections **74** are configured to engage the ratchet teeth **46** to inhibit vertical sliding of the base **18** with respect to the hook **16**. The projections **74** may be rounded, terminate in a point, or other suitable geometry. Many other structures are capable of providing the desired restraint, such as a spring-loaded ball that is housed in a cavity formed in the channel **64** to urge the ball against a contour (e.g., ratchet teeth **46**) of the channel **64**. The engagement between the projections **74** and the ratchet teeth **46** is such that the base **18** is capable of the desired rotation (discussed below) without causing the projections **74** and ratchet teeth **46** to disengage.

[**0055**] The base **18** further includes a means to attach a fluid deliver device (e.g., a nozzle **20**). In the example embodiment, the nozzle **20** is restrained laterally between a fluid inlet **80** and a barrel **78**. The base **18** includes an arm **76** extending downward from the base **18**. The arm **76** has a flat bar support segment **77** with a J-shaped bend extending forward with a barrel **78** located at the distal end of the support segment **77**. The barrel **78** includes a tubular recess for receiving the bottom of the nozzle **20**. The base **18** also has a fluid inlet **80** located in the curved face **60** that tapers from the opening (shown in FIG. **3**). The fluid inlet **80** and the barrel **78** are used in conjunction to restrain lateral movement of the nozzle **20**, but allow the nozzle **20** to rotate about the nozzle axis **82**.

[**0056**] A sensor **98** for sensing the environment surrounding the clip **10** may be mounted to the base **18** or hook **16**. Preferably, the sensor **98** is mounted substantially to the front face **58**, but may be mounted on the angled face **60** or any other suitable location providing a view, for example, of the user to accurately determine the presence or absence thereof. The sensor **98** may be a motion sensor, proximity sensor, or the like. The sensor **98** is preferably electrically connected to the container **22** and/or controller (not shown) to influence when the fluid is dispensed to the toilet bowl **12** based upon predetermined logic. It should be appreciated that the sensor can be omitted from the clip **10** in certain embodiments if the sensing function is not desired.

[**0057**] Turning to FIG. **8**, an embodiment of the fluid delivery device **20** is described. The fluid delivery device **20** is preferably molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene and polypropylene). The nozzle **20** includes a circular deflection plate **84**, a passageway **86** extending upwards from the deflection plate **84** and in fluid communication with the fluid inlet **80**. A channel **88** extends radially outward from the passageway **86** near the deflection plate **84** and angles away from the initial channel **88** path at point A as shown in FIG. **8**. The channel **88** is flanked by a pair of fins **90** that extend upwardly from the deflection plate **84**. The contour of the channel **88** and fins **90** may vary depending on the desired rotational speed of the nozzle **20**, pressure of the fluid, and the like.

[**0058**] As shown most clearly in FIGS. **3** and **8**, the nozzle **20** is restrained laterally in the base **18** by inserting a spindle **92** extending from the underside of the deflection plate **84** into the recess in the barrel **78** of the arm **76** and by inserting the tapered end of the fluid inlet **80** into the passageway **86** where it abuts a ledge **94** formed in the passageway **86**. The nozzle **20** is free to rotate about the nozzle axis **82**, but is restrained from lateral movement.

[**0059**] The means for attaching the fluid delivery device may include a fluid delivery device **20** suspended from the base **18** without the use of an arm **76**. The fluid delivery device, here a nozzle **20**, may be snap-fit to the base **18**, screwed to the base **18**, wedged to the base **18**, and the like. Furthermore, an arcuate arm (not shown) may extend from the base **18** to support the fluid delivery device **20**.

[**0060**] In operation, fluid is moved from the container **22** through the conduit **24**, which is routed through the channels **50** along the hook **16**, and into the fluid inlet **80** on the base **18**. Fluid flows into the top of the nozzle **20**, down the passageway **86** where it is directed radially outward by the channel **88**. As the fluid exits the channel **88** its path is altered by the angled fins **90** flanking the channel **88**. The reaction causes the nozzle **20** to rotate counterclockwise as viewed in FIG. **8**. As a result, the fluid is expelled radially outward from the nozzle **20** onto the inside surface **26** of the toilet bowl **12**.

[**0061**] With the general structure and operation of the fluid delivery device described, we turn our attention to the means for rotating the base **18** and thus adjusting the area covered by the fluid dispensed from the nozzle **20**. Returning to FIGS. **4** and **6**, and with reference to FIG. **7**, the base **18** can be rotated relative to the hook **16** about a horizontal axis **96** extending substantially normal from a plane defined by the vertical axis **48** and the back face **52** of the base **18**. The slit **66** formed in the channel **64** is flared at the entrance **68** and exit **70**. This allows the base **18** to rotate near the intermediate position **72** about the horizontal axis **96** until the rib **44** protruding from the hook **16** abuts the slit sides **45** formed in the back face **52**.

[**0062**] For example, with reference to FIG. **7**, when the base **18** is rotated by an angle R**1** with respect to the vertical

axis **48** (shown by dashed lines) the relative placement of the nozzle **20** is angled accordingly, thus altering the area covered by the fluid dispensed from the nozzle **20**. Additionally, when the base **18** is rotated by an angle R2 in the opposite direction, the coverage of the fluid dispensed by the nozzle **20** is again altered. As the base **18** rotates, the projections **74** slide within a respective tooth of the ratchet teeth **46**; thus, the fit between the projections **74** and the ratchet teeth **46** should allow for the base **18** to rotate freely while also inhibiting vertical movement of the base **18**. This rotational adjustment allows the clip **10** to accommodate toilets and enclosures of varying geometries.

[**0063**] The means for rotating the base **18** need not include a slit **66** as described. For example, the back face **52** may include several pairs of opposed fingers in the plane defined by the back face **52** for restraining the rotation of the rib **44** of the hook **16**. The opening between a pair of opposed fingers near the entrance and the opening of a pair of opposed fingers near the exit are larger than the opening between a pair of opposed fingers located between the entrance and exit fingers. As a result, the base **18** is capable of rotating until the rib **44** engages the fingers near the entrance and exit. In another embodiment, the slit **66** may have a V-shape wherein the entrance tapers to the exit, or the opposite. Thus, the point of rotation of the base **18** is located near the exit of the slit **66**, or smaller of the entrance and exit. Again, the rotation of the base **18** is limited by the rib **44** engaging the slit sides **45**.

[**0064**] The rotational adjustment of the base **18** may be performed manually by a user of the clip **10** or automatically as the clip **10** is mounted to the enclosure, here a toilet bowl **12**. With general reference to FIGS. **1-4**, **6**, and **7**, the clip **10** is mounted substantially as follows. The clip **10** is secured to the rim **14** of the toilet bowl **12** by urging the hook **16** in the F-F direction away from the base **18** and placing the clip **10** over the rim **14**. Once the hook **16** is secured, the base **18** is slid along the vertical axis **48** up the hook **16** and ratchet teeth **46** until the tab **53** engages the underside of the rim **14**. As the tab **53** of the base **18** continues to engage the underside of the rim **14**, the base **18** is rotated about the horizontal axis **96**, thus aligning the nozzle **20** with the plane of the underside of the rim **14** and helping to ensure that the fluid from the nozzle **20** is dispensed onto the inside surface **26** of the toilet bowl **12** (assuming the plane of the underside of the rim **14** is parallel with the plane defined by the topside of the rim **14**). The tab **53** may further include an elastomeric grip **51** protruding from the distal end of the tab **53** helping to secure the base **18** in its engaged position on the rim **14**. The base **18** need not include a tab **53**; in this embodiment, the base **18** may be manually rotated by the user to adjust the base **18** with respect to the hook **16**.

[**0065**] Turning now to FIGS. **9-11**, there is shown another example embodiment of a clip **110** for mounting a fluid delivery device to an enclosure such as a toilet bowl. The clip **110** is secured to the rim of the toilet bowl by a hook **116** (which is omitted in the view of FIG. **11**) in the same manner as the clip **10** of FIGS. **1-8**. A base **118** is supported by the hook **116** and supports a fluid delivery device, here a nozzle **120**. A container supplies fluid via a fluid conduit to the fluid delivery device **120** to be dispensed onto the inside surface of the toilet bowl in the same manner as the clip **10** of FIGS. **1-8**. The fluid can be supplied from the container to the fluid delivery device **120** in a variety of ways; for example, the fluid may be motivated by a gaseous propellant, by a manual or electric pump, a syringe, or any other suitable means. Furthermore, the execution of the fluid delivery from the container can be controlled by a variety of methods/devices, one being a timing circuit using predetermined logic to control when the fluid is dispensed.

[**0066**] Referring still to FIGS. **9-11**, the hook **116** for supporting the base **118** and attaching the clip **110** to the toilet bowl has three main segments. A bowl segment **128**, a top rim segment **130**, and an inner rim segment **132**. All three segments **128**, **130**, **132** are preferably integrally molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene or polypropylene) and form a flexible hook **116**. The bowl segment **128** has a substantially rectangular cross-section and a flared elastomeric gripping foot **134** with elastomeric ribs **137** at a lower end for helping to secure the clip **110** to the toilet bowl in the same manner as the clip **10** of FIGS. **1-8**. Suitable elastomeric materials for the gripping foot **134** and ribs **137** include, without limitation, neoprene, polyurethane rubbers, and silicone rubbers. The bowl segment **128** extends substantially vertically upward and transitions into the top rim segment **130** at a flexible elbow **135** that allows the hook **116** to flex (as in the F-F direction shown on FIG. **3**) to secure the clip **110** to toilet bowls of various shapes and sizes. The top rim segment **130** has a substantially rectangular cross-section and extends horizontally across the rim of the toilet bowl where it transitions into the inner rim segment **132** at another flexible elbow **136**, also allowing the hook **116** to flex. The inner rim segment **132** extends vertically downward from the elbow **136** and is configured to engage and support the base **118**. The bowl segment **128** and the top rim segment **130** include a C-shaped channel **150** that restrains the fluid conduit as it is routed around the perimeter of the hook **116** on its way to the nozzle **120** in the base **118**. The fluid conduit is pressed into the C-shaped channel **150** in the same manner as the clip **10** of FIGS. **1-8**. The base **118** has a back face **152**, a pair of spaced apart side faces **154** extending forward of the back face **152**, a top face **156** and a front face **158** extending between the side faces **154**. The faces **152**, **154**, **156**, **158** define a cavity. The base **118** is preferably molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene or polypropylene).

[**0067**] The base **118** includes a channel **164** for receiving the inner rim segment **132** of the hook **116**. The channel **164** is structured similar to the channel **64** of the clip **10** of FIGS. **1-8**, and the channel **164** and the hook **116** provide rotational adjustment of the base **118** using the same construction in the same manner as the clip **10** of FIGS. **1-8** so the means for rotational adjustment of the clip **110** will not be explained further.

[**0068**] A sensor **198** for sensing the environment surrounding the clip **110** may be mounted to the base **118**. Preferably, the sensor **198** is mounted substantially to the front face **158**, but may be mounted on any other suitable location providing a view, for example, of the user to accurately determine the presence or absence thereof. The sensor **198** may be a motion sensor, proximity sensor, or the like. The sensor **198** is preferably electrically connected to the container and/or controller (not shown) to influence when the fluid is dispensed to the toilet bowl based upon predetermined logic.

[**0069**] Looking at FIG. **12**, the base **118** further includes a means to attach a fluid delivery device (e.g., nozzle **120**)

to the base **118**. In the example embodiment, the nozzle **120** is restrained laterally between a barrel **178** and a fluid inlet **180**. The base **118** includes an arm **176** extending downward from the base **118**. The arm **176** has a curved section **177** with a J-shaped bend extending forward to the barrel **178** located at the distal end of the curved section **177**. The fluid inlet **180** and the barrel **178** are used in conjunction to restrain lateral movement of the nozzle **120**, but allow the nozzle **120** to rotate about the nozzle axis **182**. The tubular fluid inlet **180** defines a flow path **181**, and extends downwardly from a lower base floor **202** that is attached to the base **118**. The base floor **202** includes an upwardly extending tubular sleeve **204** that defines a flow path **205**. The base **118** is also attached to a fluid supply port **208** that defines a flow path **209**. The fluid supply port **208** and the tubular sleeve **204** are snap fit together with an O-ring **211** therebetween to create fluid tight seal. The fluid supply port **208** is located in a recess **213** in the top face **156** of the base, and may be connected to a fluid conduit (such as conduit **24** in FIG. **3**).

[**0070**] Referring to FIGS. **10** and **12** and **13**, the nozzle **120** is shown in greater detail. The nozzle **120** is preferably molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene and polypropylene). The nozzle **120** includes a circular deflection plate **184**. An axial spindle **192** extends downward from the deflection plate **184**. Spaced apart walls **190***a*, **190***b*, which have a generally inverted T-shape, extend upward from the deflection plate **184**. In the embodiment of FIG. **13**, the walls **190***a*, **190***b*, extend all the way across the deflection plate **184** from opposed outer edges of the deflection plate **184**. A central fluid deflection peak **191** extends upward from the deflection plate **184** between the walls **190***a*, **190***b*. The top of the wall **190***a* has a generally U-shaped (when viewed in vertical cross-section) inwardly directed depression **193***a*, and the top of the wall **190***b* has a generally U-shaped (when viewed in vertical cross-section) inwardly directed depression **193***b*. A passageway **186** is defined by the walls **190***a*, **190***b* and the passageway **186** extends upwards from the deflection plate **184** and in is fluid communication with the depressions **193***a*, **193***b*. A channel **188**L extends radially outward from the passageway **186** near the deflection plate **184** and angles rearwardly away from the initial channel **188**L path at point A as shown in FIG. **13**. A channel **188**R extends radially outward from the passageway **186** near the deflection plate **184** and angles forwardly away from the initial channel **188**R path at point B as shown in FIG. **13**. The contour of the channels **188**L, **188**R and walls **190***a*, **190***b* may vary depending on the desired rotational speed of the nozzle **120**, the pressure of the fluid, the flow rate of the fluid, and the like.

[**0071**] As shown most clearly in FIG. **12**, the nozzle **120** is restrained laterally by inserting a spindle **192** into a recess **179** in the barrel **178** of the arm **176** and by inserting the end of the fluid inlet **180** between depressions **193***a*, **193***b*. The nozzle **120** is free to rotate about the nozzle axis **182**, but is restrained from lateral movement.

[**0072**] In operation, fluid is moved from a container through a fluid conduit (see, for example, the container **22** and the conduit **24** of FIG. **1**) and into the fluid supply port **208**. Looking at FIG. **12**, the fluid flows through the flow paths **209**, **205**, and **181**, and out of the fluid inlet **180**. (The diameter of the exit orifice of the fluid inlet can dictate the pressure which helps to dictate the spin rate and the distance of fluid travel off the nozzle **120**.) Fluid flows onto the top of the fluid deflection peak **191** and down the forked passageways **186** where it is directed radially outward by the channels **188**L, **188**R. As the fluid exits the channels **188**L, **188**R, the fluid path is altered by the angled inner surfaces **197**L, **197**R flanking the channels **188**L, **188**R. The reaction causes the nozzle **120** to rotate counterclockwise as viewed in FIG. **13**. As a result, the fluid is expelled radially outward from the nozzle **120** onto the inside surface of the enclosure such as a toilet bowl.

[**0073**] Referring to FIGS. **14** and **15**, another embodiment of a nozzle **220** is shown in greater detail. The nozzle **220** is preferably molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene and polypropylene). The nozzle **220** includes a circular (from a top view) deflection plate **284**. An axial spindle **292** extends downward from the deflection plate **284**. Spaced apart walls **290***a*, **290***b*, which have a generally inverted T-shape, extend upward from the deflection plate **284**. In the embodiment of FIGS. **14** and **15**, the walls **290***a*, **290***b*, extend from a location spaced inward from an outer edge point **277**L of the deflection plate **284** to a location spaced inward from an outer edge point **277**R of the deflection plate **284**. A central fluid deflection peak **291** (similar to fluid deflection peak **191** of FIGS. **12** and **13**) extends upward from the deflection plate **284** between the walls **290***a*, **290***b*. The top of the wall **290***a* has a generally U-shaped inwardly directed depression (similar to inwardly directed depression **193***a* in FIGS. **12** and **13**), and the top of the wall **290***b* has a generally U-shaped inwardly directed depression (similar to inwardly directed depression **193***b* in FIGS. **12** and **13**).

[**0074**] Still referring to FIGS. **14** and **15**, a passageway **286** (similar to passageway **186** in FIGS. **12** and **13**) is defined by the walls **290***a*, **290***b* and the passageway **286** extends upwards from the deflection plate **284** and in is fluid communication with the depressions in the walls **290***a*, **290***b*. A channel (similar to channel **188**L in FIGS. **12** and **13**) extends radially outward from the passageway **286** near the deflection plate **284** and angles rearwardly away from the initial channel as in FIG. **13**. A channel **288**R extends radially outward from the passageway **286** (similar to channel **188**R in FIGS. **12** and **13**) and angles forwardly away from the initial channel **288**R path as shown in FIG. **15**. The deflection plate **284** has a dished floor **276** that creates a draft angle Z (see FIG. **14**) at the outer edge of the top of the deflection plate **284**. The contour of the draft angle Z, the channels, and the walls **290***a*, **290***b* may vary depending on the desired rotational speed of the nozzle **220**, the pressure of the fluid, the flow rate of the fluid, and the like.

[**0075**] Similar to FIG. **12**, the nozzle **220** may be restrained laterally by inserting the spindle **292** into a recess **179** in the barrel **178** of the arm **176** and by inserting the end of the fluid inlet **180** between upper depressions in the walls **290***a*, **290***b*. The nozzle **220** is free to rotate about the nozzle axis, but is restrained from lateral movement. In operation, fluid is moved from a container through a fluid conduit (see, for example, the container **22** and the conduit **24** of FIG. **1**) and into the fluid supply port **208** as in FIG. **12**, the fluid flows through the flow paths **209**, **205**, and **181**, and out of the fluid inlet **180**. Fluid flows onto the top of the fluid deflection peak **291** of nozzle **220** and down the forked passageways **286** where it is directed onto the floor **276** and radially outward by the channels. As the fluid exits the channels, the fluid path is altered by the angled inner surfaces of the walls **290***a*, **290***b* flanking the channels. The

reaction causes the nozzle **220** to rotate right in direction R as in FIG. **15**. The fluid continues to flow on the floor **276** and then moves up the draft angle at the edge of the deflection plate **284** to create a slightly upward travel path for the fluid. As a result, the fluid is expelled radially outward from the nozzle **220** onto the inside surface of the toilet bowl, with the slightly upward travel path for the fluid allowing for under the toilet rim contact of the fluid with the inner surface of the toilet bowl even after 18 or more inches of travel.

[**0076**] Comparing FIGS. **8**, **13** and **14**, the nozzle **20**, the nozzle **120**, and the nozzle **220** have differences in structure that can lead to different operating characteristics. For example, the nozzle **20** has a single channel **88** extending away from the passageway **86**, whereas nozzle **120** and nozzle **220** have two channels extending away from the central passageway. The extra passageway can serve to get maximum work out of the nozzle and improve efficiency. The nozzle **120** and nozzle **220** also have fluid deflection peaks **191**, **291** that can improve efficiency. Comparing nozzle **120** and nozzle **220**, it can be seen that the walls **190***a*, **190***b* of nozzle **120** extend all the way across the deflection plate **184** from opposed outer edges of the deflection plate **184**, whereas walls **290***a*, **290***b* of nozzle **220** are spaced inward from opposed outer edges of the deflection plate **284**. The spacing of the walls from the edge of the plate can create more tangential motion in the fluid expelled from the nozzle **220**. The centripetal force causes fluid to spin and shear off. Also, the draft angle Z at the outer edge of the nozzle **220** can provide for a spray of about 18 inches without having the level of liquid spray drop down. This is advantageous as it prevents the spray from failing down so far that it does not hit under the upper areas under the toilet rim.

[**0077**] Various parameters of the nozzles **20**, **120**, **220** can be varied depending on the application for the nozzles. For example, in a nozzle suitable for use in a toilet cleaning device, fluid flow is downward unto the deflection plate to create a spray that moves downward less quickly after leaving the surface of the deflection plate. The design parameters of the nozzles **20**, **120**, **220** can be varied to accommodate lower fluid pressures, such as 10 to 20 psi (69 to 138 kilopascals), and fluid travel paths of less than 24 inches (0.6096 meters), and flow rates below 10 gallons per hour (37.85 liters per hour). Therefore, the operating parameters of pressure, volume, and flow rate can be accommodated by varying the design of the nozzles **20**, **120**, **220**. Fluid pressures of 14 to 15 psi (96 to 103 kilopascals) and fluid travels paths of up to 18 inches (0.4572 meters) are most preferred in a toilet application.

[**0078**] Turning now to FIG. **16**, there is shown a side view of another hook **216** suitable for use with the clip of FIG. **9**. The hook **216** has three main segments, i.e., a bowl segment **228**, a top rim segment **230**, and an inner rim segment **232**. All three segments **228**, **230**, **232** are preferably molded from plastic (e.g., polyethylene or polypropylene). The bowl segment **128** has a substantially rectangular cross-section and a flared elastomeric gripping foot **234** with oblong elastomeric ribs **237** at a lower end for helping to secure the hook **216** to the toilet bowl in the same manner as the clip **10** of FIGS. **1-8**. Suitable elastomeric materials for the gripping foot **234** and ribs **237** include, without limitation, neoprene, polyurethane rubbers, and silicone rubbers. The bowl segment **228** extends substantially vertically upward and transitions into the top rim segment **230** at a flexible elbow **235** that allows the hook **216** to flex. The top rim segment **230** has a substantially rectangular cross-section and extends horizontally across the rim of the toilet bowl.

[**0079**] Still referring to FIG. **16**, the inner rim segment **232** of the hook **216** is configured to engage and support the base **118** as described above with reference to the embodiment of the clip **110** of FIGS. **9-15**. The upper end of the inner rim segment **232** has a lateral generally rectangular passageway **236** that extends through the inner rim segment **232**. A distal end **238** of the top rim segment **230** is inserted in the passageway **236** such that the bowl segment **228** and the inner rim segment **232** are movable toward and away from each other. This horizontal expansion and contraction of the hook **216** further accommodates various toilet bowl rim width sizes. Also, the inner surface of the bowl segment **228** includes a suction cup **239**, and the inner surface of the top rim segment **230** includes a suction cup **241**. The bowl segment **228** may be adhered to the toilet rim **14** by suction cup **239**, and the top rim segment **230** may be adhered to the toilet rim **14** by suction cup **241**.

[**0080**] Thus, the present invention provides a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device where the base of the clip is rotatable relative to the hook such that fluid is dispensed onto the inner surface of the enclosure, and further, where a sensor prevents dispensing fluid at undesired periods. As a result, full coverage of the fluid around the inner surface of the enclosure is possible during preferred periods.

[**0081**] Although the present invention has been described in detail with reference to certain embodiments, one skilled in the art will appreciate that the present invention can be practiced by other than the described embodiments, which have been presented for purposes of illustration and not of limitation. Therefore, the scope of the invention should not be limited to the description of the embodiments contained herein.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

[**0082**] The present invention provides a clip for mounting a fluid delivery device where the base of the clip is rotatable relative to the hook such that fluid is dispensed onto the inner surface of the enclosure, and further, where a sensor prevents dispensing fluid at undesired periods.

What is claimed is:

1. A clip for mounting a fluid delivery device adjacent a wall of an enclosure, the clip comprising:

a base;

a hook configured to support the base adjacent the wall;

means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base; and

means for rotating the base.

2. The clip of claim 1, wherein the means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base comprises an arm extending from the body.

3. The clip of claim 2, wherein the arm comprises:

a support segment; and

a barrel at the distal end of the support segment for supporting a fluid delivery device.

4. The clip of claim 1, wherein:

the base comprises a fluid inlet; and

the clip includes a fluid delivery device comprising a nozzle in fluid communication with the fluid inlet.

5. The clip of claim 4, wherein the nozzle comprises:

a deflection plate;

a passageway in fluid communication with the fluid inlet at an upper end of the passageway, the passageway extending between the fluid inlet and the deflection plate;

a channel in fluid communication with a lower end of the passageway; and

a pair of fins flanking the channel and extending upwardly from the deflection plate, the fins being contacted by fluid to rotate the nozzle.

6. The clip of claim 4, wherein the nozzle comprises:

a deflection plate;

a passageway in fluid communication with the fluid inlet at an upper end of the passageway, the passageway extending between the fluid inlet and the deflection plate;

a pair of channels in fluid communication with a lower end of the passageway; and

a pair of fins flanking the channels and extending upwardly from the deflection plate, the fins being contacted by fluid to rotate the nozzle.

7. The clip of claim 1, wherein the means for rotating the base comprises:

a rib protruding from the hook;

a channel formed in the base for receiving the hook; and

a slit formed in the channel comprising an entrance, an exit, and an intermediate position between the entrance and the exit for receiving the rib,

wherein the width of the slit decreases from the entrance to the intermediate position and increases from the intermediate position to the exit to allow relative rotation between the hook and the base about a point located near the intermediate position of the slit.

8. The clip of claim 7, wherein:

the hook comprises ratchet teeth; and

the channel comprises at least one protrusion for engaging the ratchet teeth to resist sliding movement between the hook and base.

9. The clip of claim 1, wherein:

the hook comprises an elastomeric grip for engaging a surface of the enclosure.

10. The clip of claim 1, wherein:

the hook comprises opposed spaced apart side segments movable toward and away from each other such that a distance between the opposed spaced apart side segments is adjustable.

11. The clip of claim 1, wherein:

the hook comprises a suction device for attaching the hook to a surface of the enclosure.

12. The clip of claim 1, further comprising a fluid conduit in fluid communication with the fluid inlet for delivering fluid to the fluid delivery device.

13. The clip of claim 12, wherein the hook comprises means for attaching the fluid conduit to the hook.

14. The clip of claim 13, wherein the means for attaching the fluid conduit to the hook comprises a channel.

15. A clip for mounting a fluid delivery device adjacent a wall of an enclosure, the clip comprising:

a base;

a hook configured to support the base adjacent the wall;

means for attaching a fluid delivery device to the base; and

a sensor mounted on the base or the hook.

16. The clip of claim 15 wherein the sensor is a motion sensor.

17. The clip of claim 15 wherein the sensor is a proximity sensor.

18. The clip of claim 15 wherein the means for attaching the fluid delivery device to the base comprises an arcuate arm extending downwardly from the base to rotatably support the fluid delivery device.

19. The clip of claim 15 wherein the sensor is mounted on the base on a surface opposite of the hook.

20. A device for spraying an inner surface of an enclosure with a fluid, the device comprising:

a container for the fluid;

a fluid delivery device through which the fluid can be applied to the inner surface of the enclosure;

a fluid conduit in fluid communication with the container and the fluid delivery device;

means for delivering fluid from the container through the fluid conduit and to the fluid delivery device; and

a clip for mounting the fluid delivery device adjacent the inner surface of the enclosure, the clip comprising:

a base; and

a hook configured to support the base adjacent the inner surface of the enclosure,

wherein the base is configured to rotate with respect to the hook.

21. The device of claim 20 wherein the enclosure is one of a tub or a shower.

22. The device of claim 20 wherein the enclosure is a toilet comprising a rim.

23. The device of claim 22 wherein the hook comprises an elastomeric grip for engaging a surface of the toilet.

24. The device of claim 22 wherein the hook comprises a suction device for attaching the hook to a surface of the toilet.

25. The device of claim 22 wherein the hook comprises opposed spaced apart side segments movable toward and away from each other such that a distance between the opposed spaced apart side segments is adjustable.

26. The device of claim 20 further comprising:

a rib protruding from the hook;

a channel formed in the base for receiving the hook;

a slit formed in the channel comprising an entrance, an exit, and an intermediate position between the entrance and the exit for receiving the rib,

wherein the width of the slit decreases from the entrance to the intermediate position and increases from the intermediate position to the exit to allow relative rotation between the hook and the base about a point located near the intermediate position of the slit.

27. The device of claim 20 further comprising a sensor mounted on the hook or the base.

28. The device of claim 27 wherein the sensor is a motion sensor or a proximity sensor.

29. The device of claim 20 wherein the base comprises a tab for engaging the rim of the toilet.

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