A package (10), in particular for foodstuffs, comprises a base (12) having contact areas and a lid (14) made of cardboard or rigid paper having contact areas (20) thereon, which are adapted to cooperate with the contact areas (18) of the base (12) so as to form an hermetic seal for the contents of the package (10), the seal being a reclosable adhesive seal.
Description

Technical field

[0001] The invention relates to a package, which is preferably to be used for foodstuffs.

[0002] Generally in the field of packaging, and particularly when foodstuffs are to be packaged, it is on the one hand to be ensured that the contents are hermetically sealed from the environment. In particular, it has to be prevented that moisture, odour, oxygen etc. can enter the package and endanger the desired original condition of the contents. Naturally, the objective of offering products of perfect quality to the consumer is an essential aspect when designing a package. On the other hand, it can be said that consumer acceptance with regard to a certain package is reduced when the consumer has to remove several parts of the package and/or several seals in order to get access to the contents. From this point of view, a number of packages, which are currently used for packaging foodstuffs such as chocolate or confectionary products, have remarkable drawbacks.

Prior Art

[0003] For example, it is known that carton or cardboard packages, which contain confectionary products such as pieces of chocolate, can be additionally wrapped in plastic overwraps which are usually heat sealed or formed as shrink films.

[0004] With this type of package, the consumer has to remove the overwrap before he can open the package itself and get access to its contents. The same undesirable situation arises when confectionary products, such as chunks of chocolate, are sealed in a plastic bag inside a box, usually made out of cardboard or rigid paper. Also here, the consumer has to take two steps to be able to remove the contents from the package. Firstly, the box has to be opened, then the consumer has to open the plastic bag inside the box which contains the confectionary product.

[0005] In EP 0 554 152 B1 it is suggested to seal a base tray by means of a lid, which is bonded to an upper rim of the tray by means of a hot seal, as well as a material which allows the lid to be re-closed. Firstly, this structure of the sealing areas between the lid and the tray is comparably complicated. Secondly, plastic material as well as metal are given as materials for the lid. Cardboard or rigid paper does not appear to be suitable for this kind of sealing with the tray, so that the disclosed structure is not suitable for a paper-based package, which is desired in view of the manufacturing costs of the package.

[0006] EP 0 796 208 B1 discloses a package comprising a lid which is additionally covered by a plastic film. The plastic film can, after the package has been opened for the first time, be re-closed to the rim-like up-per part of the base of the package. Also this type of opening area for a package is comparably complicated.

[0007] Furthermore, it is known in the art to provide adhesive labels of plastic material to foldable lids so as to allow re-closing of the lid. Examples thereof are given in DE 94 15 949 U1, EP 0 691 636 B1, DE 200 15 597 U1, EP 0 296 054 B1 and EP 0 677 832 B1. However, all these packages necessarily need to comprise the separate label in order to allow the package to be re-closed after the first opening.

Summary of the invention

[0008] It is an objective underlying the invention to provide a package, in particular for foodstuffs, which is of a comparably simple structure and which allows easy reclosing of the package as well as maximum comfort for the consumer.

[0009] This objective is solved by means of the package described in claim 1.

[0010] In accordance with the invention, a package, which is particularly intended to contain foodstuffs, comprises on the one hand a base having contact areas. Essentially, the contact areas will most preferably be arranged such that they are located in one and the same plane and allow the formation of an hermetic seal in cooperation with corresponding contact areas of a lid. It should be mentioned that the contact areas of the base do not necessarily have to be arranged in one plane. Rather, they can be of an arbitrary structure as long as a seal can be formed which entirely seals the contents from the environment.

[0011] As already mentioned, the inventive package further comprises a lid. Unlike most known packages capable of hermetically sealing the contents from the environment, the lid is made of cardboard or rigid paper. In order to cooperate with the contact areas of the base, the lid comprises contact areas which are adapted to get into contact with the contact areas of the base so as to cooperate in forming an hermetic seal for the contents of the base. In other words, both the base and the lid comprise surface areas which extend over certain, usually strip-like, surface portions in order to form a seal between the lid and the base. In particular, the cooperating contact areas will be formed completely circumambient so that the product contained in the package is entirely protected against infestation, moisture, odour, light and oxygen.

[0012] Consequently, it can be ensured with the required certainty that the product within the package does not get spoilt due to environmental influences. As the contact areas are preferably formed completely circumambient, they could be considered a single, continuous contact area.

[0013] According to the invention, the hermetic seal formed between the lid and the base is a re-closable adhesive seal, preferably a cold seal. In other words, the contact areas of the base and/or the lid will usually...
be provided with a certain sealing agent which allows the lid to be bonded to the base when the package is filled with its contents and then closed, thus forming an hermetic seal. As this is the only seal necessary to prevent deterioration of the contents of the package, the inventive package is convenient for the customer in that the seal between the base and the lid is the only seal which has to be opened in order to get access to the contents. In particular, the consumer does not have to open any overwraps or inside plastic bags. He only has to open the cardboard package as the hermetic sealing, up to now provided by plastic bags, is now guaranteed by the adhesive seal formed between the base and the lid. Finally, the seal offers an additional consumer benefit in that it is reclosable. Thus, once the package has been opened, it can be reclosed so that the contents of the product do not fall out and, furthermore, are protected from moisture etc. entering the package.

Preferred embodiments of the inventive package are described in the dependent claims.

Generally, the invention does not prevent additional seals from being present in order to further enhance protection against the environment. However, it should be mentioned that it is currently preferred and, sufficient in view of protection of the contents of the package, that the adhesive seal between the lid and the base is the only seal which is present between these components.

As mentioned above, the lid of the inventive package is made of cardboard or rigid paper and it can be said that the invention for the first time suggests a adhesive seal formed on contact areas of a lid made of such a material to be applied to a package. However, it is also preferred for the base and, in particular for the entire package, that it be paper-based i.e. made of cardboard, rigid paper or a similar material. These materials have proven to be advantageous from an economical point of view as well as regards consumer acceptance.

Finally, manufacturing of the inventive package can be facilitated remarkably, if, according to a preferred embodiment, the lid and the base are integrally formed from one end of the same cardboard blank.

Hereafter, the invention will be described by means of a non-limitative example and with reference to the accompanying drawing which shows a sectional view of the package according to the invention.

As far as the material used for the reclosable adhesive seal is concerned, a permanent pressure-sensitive adhesive is preferred. This term describes any adhesive which keeps its adhesive characteristic even after the components, which adhere to each other, have first been taken apart. The term "pressure-sensitive" describes the fact that, as soon as pressure is applied to the adhesive, it will exhibit its adhesive quality. Most commonly known will be the notepads trading under the name "Post it". These comprise a permanent pressure-sensitive adhesive which allows them to adhere to any desired object by applying pressure. The same principle can be used in connection with the present invention which serves to provide an hermetic and, at the same time, reclosable adhesive seal between the base and the lid.

Generally, the invention does not prevent additional seals from being present in order to further enhance protection against the environment. However, it should be mentioned that it is currently preferred and, sufficient in view of protection of the contents of the package, that the adhesive seal between the lid and the base is the only seal which is present between these components.

As mentioned above, the lid of the inventive package is made of cardboard or rigid paper and it can be said that the invention for the first time suggests a adhesive seal formed on contact areas of a lid made of such a material to be applied to a package. However, it is also preferred for the base and, in particular for the entire package, that it be paper-based i.e. made of cardboard, rigid paper or a similar material. These materials have proven to be advantageous from an economical point of view as well as regards consumer acceptance.

Finally, manufacturing of the inventive package can be facilitated remarkably, if, according to a preferred embodiment, the lid and the base are integrally formed from one end of the same cardboard blank.

Brief description of the drawing

Hereafter, the invention will be described by means of a non-limitative example and with reference to the accompanying drawing which shows a sectional view of the package according to the invention.

Best mode for carrying out the invention

As can be seen from the sectional view of the figure, the inventive package 10 essentially consists of a base 12 and a lid 14. It is, however, to be understood that further components can be present within the base 12 and/or on the lid 14. For example, one or more shaped plastic trays can be accommodated within the base 12 in order to receive one or more products such as pieces of chocolate or confectionary products. In the depicted embodiment, the base 12 is essentially formed as a generally rectangular box comprising a circumambient collar or rim 16, of which two portions can be seen in the cross-sectional view of the figure. A channel-like
formation is present underneath the rim in order to enhance its rigidity. The circumambient strip like surface portions of rim 16, which face the lid 14, define those contact areas 18 which are adapted to cooperate with corresponding surface areas 20 of the lid 14. In accordance with the invention, the contact areas 18 and/or the contact areas 20 are provided with a suitable material so as to form an hermetic seal between the lid 14 and the base 12. In other words, when the lid 14 is bonded to the base 12 by means of contact between the contact areas 18 and 20, which are formed all the way around the package, the contents of the package are hermetically sealed from the environment.

The seal is finally formed in a reclosable manner so that the package can be opened and reclosed as desired.

[0023] As an alternative, also the contact areas 18 of the base 12 could be provided with the inventive adhesive seal. In order to save sealing material, it is possible with both embodiments that the contact area 18, which is adjacent the fold line connecting the lid 14 with the base 12, i.e. the left contact area 18 in the figure, is free from sealing agent. As long as those contact areas of the lid 14 and/or the base 12, which extend parallel to the plane of the paper of the figure, are provided with sealing agent, which extends up to the fold line between the lid 14 and the base, or almost to that fold, the desired sealing function is achieved.

Claims

1. A package (10), particularly for foodstuffs, comprising:
   - a base (12) having contact areas (8); and
   - a lid (14) made of cardboard or rigid paper having contact areas (20) thereon which are adapted to cooperate with the contact areas (18) of the base (12) so as to form an hermetic seal for the contents of the package (10);
   - the seal being a reclosable adhesive seal.

2. A package according to claim 1 characterized in that a sealing agent is used which is applied to the contact areas (20) of the lid (14).

3. A package according to claim 1 or 2 characterized in that the seal is formed by a permanent pressure-sensitive adhesive.

4. A package according to one of the preceding claims characterized in that the adhesive seal is the only seal which is present between the base (12) and the lid (14), and preferably in the entire package (10).

5. A package according to one of the preceding claims characterized in that the base (12), preferably the entire package (10), is made of cardboard or rigid paper.

6. A package according to one of the preceding claims characterized in that the lid (14) and the base (12) are integrally formed.
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