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(54) **Package of toothbrushes**

(57) A package containing a plurality of toothbrushes to be used sequentially throughout the calendar year, said package capable of storing any number of the said toothbrushes until such a time as they are required, each toothbrush being distinguished from at least one

other toothbrush by visual indicia, wherein the visual indicia provides a cue to the user to change the brush to the next one in the sequence at pre-determined periods in the calendar year.

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a package comprising a plurality of toothbrushes having different visual indicia.

[0002] Toothbrushes are used by virtually everyone in at least the western world. Unfortunately, while dental professionals recommend that a toothbrush should be used twice a day for three months only, the majority of people change their toothbrush much less frequently. In Europe, the average is just 1.3 toothbrushes per consumer per year.

[0003] Further, a new toothbrush removes up to 30% more plaque during brushing than a brush which is three months old.

[0004] The object of the invention is to provide toothbrushes which by way of visual means indicate to the user at regular periods or dates during a calendar year that a new toothbrush is required.

[0005] Accordingly, and in a first aspect, the invention provides a package containing a plurality of toothbrushes to be used sequentially throughout the calendar year, said package capable of storing any number of the said toothbrushes until such a time as they are required, each toothbrush being distinguished from at least one other toothbrush by visual indicia, wherein the visual indicia provides as a cue to the user to change the brush to the next one in the sequence at pre-determined periods in the calendar year.

[0006] The package needs to be able to store the brushes which are not being used. For example, should the package comprise four toothbrushes, it will need to be able to store three toothbrushes while the first is being used. It will also need to be able to store the next two while the second is being used, and so on. By store is meant that the brushes, in particular the bristles thereof, need to be kept in good condition after purchase, during storage and before use.

[0007] The toothbrushes each comprise visual indicia which can be used to provide a cue to the user that the brush needs changing at a given time during the year. Preferably, the package comprises enough toothbrushes to be used by a single user in one calendar year. More preferably the package comprises from two to ten toothbrushes, especially from three to six and most preferably four toothbrushes.

[0008] The toothbrushes comprise visual indicia which distinguish the brushes from any one other brush. Taking three as an example of the number of brushes, two of the brushes may have identical visual indicia while one brush has a different visual indicia. Accordingly, the brush with different indicia should be used between the brushes with identical indicia. The system will work providing that in any predetermined sequence of use the next toothbrush will have a visual indicia which is different from the brush currently in use.

[0009] In a preferred package which comprises four toothbrushes, there may be two brushes with identical

indicia. There may also be two sets of two brushes with each set having identical indicia. More preferably each of the four brushes will have different visual indicia.

[0010] The visual indicia is a visual indication which provides a cue to the user to consider whether the brush currently in use should be changed for the next.

[0011] The visual indicia may be colour, symbol, design, text or combination thereof.

[0012] A colour visual indicia might be the colour of the entire toothbrush save the bristles. Alternatively, it may only be the bristles which are differently coloured.

[0013] Suitable colours might usefully cue the sequential passing of seasons through the year. For example, a package comprising a blue, green, red and yellow toothbrush might cue winter, spring, summer and autumn. When the consumer realises he is using the red toothbrush in October he might be cued to change to the yellow brush and so on through the year.

[0014] Symbolic indicia may, for example, represent festivals in any particular nation or region. For example, a toothbrush may have a symbol pertaining to Christmas. Should the user realise that he is still using this brush in March he will be cued to change to the next one in the sequence.

[0015] Suitable symbols indicating events or periods of the year around Winter include: Christmas, snow, snowman, ice, skis, Jack Frost, etc.

[0016] Suitable symbols indicating events or periods of the year around Spring include: lambs, blossom, daffodils, etc.

[0017] Suitable symbols indicating events or periods of the year around Summer include: flowers, bees, the sun, the beach, a sailing boat, etc.

[0018] Suitable symbols indicating events or periods of the year around Autumn include: falling leaves, shades of brown foliage, etc.

[0019] Suitable designs might be incorporated into the handle, preferably at the end furthest from the head so as not to interfere with the grip of the brush. Typical designs might be similar to those mentioned under the symbols paragraphs above, i.e. a sun for Summer; a Father Christmas or snowman for Winter; a lamb for Spring and bee, sun or flower for Summer. Such a design would preferably be part of the moulded handle for the brushes.

[0020] Suitable text might include the names of the seasons, months, common activities or special days in any given national calendar, e.g. President's Day, Thanksgiving, Easter, Summer holidays!, May Day, Michaelmas term, Exam time!, etc.

[0021] Of course any combination of these indicia may be used provided that they act as a cue to the user that a certain brush should be used at any particular time of the year.

[0022] Preferably, the package should comprise enough brushes for a year of toothbrushing. Preferably, this could also mean that appropriate indicia are used to make sure that a whole year can be covered in any

one package. The purpose being that a consumer is purchasing a year's supply of toothbrushes in one go. For example, in the ideal scenario the package comprises four toothbrushes. Accordingly, the toothbrushes will each represent four periods of the year, e.g. the four seasons.

[0023] In a preferred embodiment the package is re-sealable.

[0024] In a further preferred embodiment the package is transparent or at least translucent so that the consumer has opportunity to identify the next brush in the sequence by its visual indicia.

[0025] In a second aspect of the invention the invention provides a method for providing a plurality of toothbrushes for a single person's use for a year, said method providing a package containing a plurality of toothbrushes to be used sequentially throughout the calendar year, said package capable of storing any number of the said toothbrushes until such a time as they are required, each toothbrush being distinguished from at least one other toothbrush by visual indicia, and providing a cue to the user to change the brush to the next one in the sequence at pre-determined periods in the calendar year by way of visual indicia on the toothbrushes.

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Claims

1. A package containing a plurality of toothbrushes to be used sequentially throughout the calendar year, said package capable of storing any number of the said toothbrushes until such a time as they are required, each toothbrush being distinguished from at least one other toothbrush by visual indicia, wherein the visual indicia provides a cue to the user to change the brush to the next one in the sequence at pre-determined periods in the calendar year.
2. A package according to claim 1, wherein the visual indicia is a colour, text, symbol, design or combination thereof.
3. A package according to claim 1 or 2, wherein each toothbrush has a different visual indicia.
4. A package according to any preceding claim comprising four toothbrushes.
5. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the pre-determined periods in the calendar year are the seasons.
6. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the pre-determined periods in the calendar year are national or regional festivals.
7. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the pre-determined periods in the calendar

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year are presented to the consumer by the media.

8. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the pre-determined periods in the calendar year are substantially evenly spaced throughout the year.
9. A method for providing a plurality of toothbrushes for a single person's use for a year, said method providing a package containing a plurality of toothbrushes to be used sequentially throughout the calendar year, said package capable of storing any number of the said toothbrushes until such a time as they are required, each toothbrush being distinguished from at least one other toothbrush by visual indicia, and providing a cue to the user to change the brush to the next one in the sequence at pre-determined periods in the calendar year by way of visual indicia on the toothbrushes.



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 07 6974

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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	DE 40 34 864 A (BOLZ BEATE) 12 September 1991 (1991-09-12)	1-4,7-9	A46B15/00 B65D75/56
Y	* column 1, line 23 - line 30 *	1-3,7,8	
X	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 2000, no. 19, 5 June 2001 (2001-06-05) & JP 2001 039471 A (YAMAGATA GRAVURE:KK), 13 February 2001 (2001-02-13)	9	
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Y	US 2 489 707 A (EUBANKS FLOYD G) 29 November 1949 (1949-11-29) * column 4 *	2,3,7,8	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			A46B B65D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 3 November 2004	Examiner Cardan, C
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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03-11-2004

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