ABSTRACT

A package is provided which includes a tray with a dispensing opening surrounded by a skirt projecting outwardly. The skirt on one corner is configured with a cut-away edge to receive and snap secure a locking member. A lid is slideable along an upper surface of the skirt. The locking member is formed on a corner of the lid as a downward bent tab which mates with the cut-away to secure the lid against sliding off the tray.
PACKAGE FOR STORING PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention concerns a package for storing personal care products.

[0003] 2. The Related Art

[0004] There are a variety of personal care products which require packaging in a tray or tub container. Illustrative but not limiting personal care products may include towelettes, dry cleansing wipes, impregnated and non-impregnated pads, swab sticks and similar types of single dose unit articles. Functional areas include products for treating the oral cavity, skin, hair, feet and underarm areas.

[0005] Relevant art includes U.S. Pat. No. 6,520,331 B2 (Okin et al.). Therein a package for dispensing towelettes. The towelettes are stored within a container having a hinged lid securable through a button flap.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 6,736,266 B2 (Flaig et al.) discloses a packaged cosmetic product. Therein a tub is filled with a plurality of sachets formulated with an effervescent cleaner composition. A foil having breathability for carbon dioxide is disposed sealingly across a dispensing opening of the tub. A hinged cover is closable over a mouth of the tub to secure contents.

[0007] A problem with hinged containers is that most often they are formed in a unitary molding process. Consequently, the lid or cover must be of the same plastic composition as that of the tub or tray. Sometimes it is desirable to utilize different plastics to achieve different functionalities or improved cost structure. A package may require an opaque tray in combination with a transparent lid. Alternatively, there may be requirements for a flexible walled tray and a relatively rigid lid or vice versa. In all situations the materials of construction between the tray or tub and the lid or cover must be different. Packaging is sought which allows for diversity of materials.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A Package is Provided Which Includes:

[0008] a tray having a floor panel from which upwardly projects a first and second side panel facing each other, a rear and front panel facing each other and each connecting the first and second side panels, a dispensing opening opposite the floor panel, a skirt surrounding the dispensing opening projecting outward from and having first, second, rear and front lateral members tracing an upper edge of respectively the first, second, rear and front panels, the skirt having four corners, at least one of the four corners configured as a cut-away to receive and snap secure a locking member;

[0009] a lid slideable along an upper surface of the skirt, the lid including a pair of parallel rails to slideably engage the skirt along the first and second lateral members, the locking member formed on a corner of the lid as a downward bent tab which mates with the cut-away to secure the lid against sliding off the skirt.

[0010] Advantageously, the tab has a rounded outer edge upon which the tab slides along the upper surface of the skirt until mating with the cut-away. In a preferred embodiment the cut-away is a straight edge. Other remaining corners for the skirt in this embodiment are rounded.

[0011] Preferably the lid is transparent or translucent while the tray is opaque. Illustrative materials of construction for the lid include polyvinyl chloride, polystyrene and clarified polypropylene. Most preferred is polyvinyl chloride. The tray may utilize a variety of plastics including polyethylene, polypropylene and polystyrene. Most preferred is high-density polyethylene.

[0012] The lid in a preferred embodiment features a rear rail orthogonal to the pair of parallel rails. The rear rail engages a rear member of the skirt upon the lid fully covering the dispensing opening. Engagement of the rear rail functions as a stop mechanism to prevent any further forward sliding of the lid. The parallel and rear rails are integrally molded with the lid in a U-shaped form, the U facing inward toward a cavity of the tray. In the preferred embodiment, the lid has four corners, none of which are occupied by the parallel or rear rails. This means there are only three rails segments each being separated from the other. These segments are the two parallel rails and the rear rail.

[0013] A flexible foil covers the dispensing opening and adhesively attaches to the upper surface of the skirt. The lid slides over the flexible foil. Preferably the foil is opaque and may include a printing or a label with printing to indicate brand, package contents, manufacturer, weight, ingredients and/or UPC barcode symbol. For this embodiment, the lid is transparent to render the writing visible. Suitable materials of construction for the foil include films of polypropylene, polyethylene, polyester and polystyrene. The film may be multi-layered. Panels of the tray may also have multiple layers of different plastics or blends thereof.

[0014] A corner of the foil aligned with the cut-away of the skirt is bent downward along an edge of the cut-away. This arrangement allows a grab point for initiating removal of the foil from over the dispensing opening.

[0015] Upon first use, the lid is slid along the skirt to expose the foil. A consumer then peels back the foil or may totally remove the foil. Thereupon the lid is slid back across the skirt until the locking member tab snaps securely over the cut-away. The tray dispensing opening is thereby sealed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0016] Various advantages and features of the present invention are illustrated in the accompanying drawing in which:

[0017] FIG. 1 is a plan perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

[0018] FIG. 2 is a plan perspective view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1 with the lid slideably partially removed from covering the dispensing opening;

[0019] FIG. 3 is a partial view of a corner of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1 featuring details of the locking member; and

[0020] FIG. 4 is a bottom surface perspective view of the lid now separated from the package.
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] Herein is reported a package with a non-unitary molded construction and a special locking mechanism for retaining a lid over an open mouth of a tub.

[0022] FIG. 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of the package according to the present invention. The package includes a tray 2. The tray includes a floor panel 4 from which upwardly project a first side panel 6, a second side panel 8, a rear panel 10 and a front panel 12. The first and second side panels 6, 8 are substantially parallel and face one another. Likewise the rear and front panels 10, 12 are substantially parallel and face one another. Further, the rear and front panels connect the first and second side panels to one another.

[0023] A dispensing opening 14 is positioned opposite the floor panel 4. The dispensing opening allows entry into a cavity of the tray defined by the array of panels.

[0024] A skirt 16 surrounds the dispensing opening project outward away from the tray. The skirt features first and second lateral members 18, 20 parallel to one another bridged by rear and front lateral members 22, 24. These members trace an upper edge of the first, second, rear and front panels of the tray, respectively. FIG. 2 best illustrates the various members of the skirt.

[0025] Skirt 16 features four corners, one of which is configured as a cut-away 26 best illustrated in FIG. 3. The cut-away has a straight edge. The remaining corners 28 of the skirt are rounded.

[0026] A lid 30 is slideable along an upper surface of the skirt. The lid includes a pair of parallel rails 32, 34 best illustrated in FIG. 4. The parallel rails engage the skirt along the first and second lateral members 18, 20 to achieve slideability along a length of the tray. A rear rail 36 is arranged on a trailing edge of the lid. The function of the rear rail is to stop motion of the lid by engaging rear member 22 of the skirt upon the lid fully covering the dispensing opening. Each of the parallel rails and the rear rail have a U-shaped configuration. The concave area of the U faces inward toward the cavity of the tray.

[0027] FIG. 3 illustrates a downwardly bent tab 38 formed on a corner of the lid. This tab mates with the cut-away corner 26 of the skirt. This mating arrangement secures the lid against sliding off the tray. A rounded outer edge 40 on tab 38 allows the tab to minimize friction as it slides along an upper surface of second lateral member 20.

[0028] A flexible foil 42 is positioned beneath the lid. This foil extends over the dispensing opening and adhesively attaches to the upper surface of the skirt. A corner 44 of the foil is aligned with the cut-away of the skirt and bent downward along an edge of the cut-away.

[0029] For definitional purposes the term “comprising” is meant not to be limiting to any subsequently stated elements but rather to encompass non-specified elements of major or minor functional importance. In other words, the listed steps, elements or options need not be exhaustive.

What is claimed is:

1. A package comprising:
   a tray having a floor panel from which upwardly projects a first and second side panel facing each other, a rear and front panel facing each other and each connecting the first and second side panels, a dispensing opening opposite the floor panel, a skirt surrounding the dispensing opening projecting outward from and having first, second, rear and front lateral members tracing an upper edge of respectively the first, second, rear and front panels, the skirt having four corners, at least one of the four corners configured as a cut-away to receive and snap secure a locking member;
   a lid slideable along an upper surface of the skirt, the lid comprising a pair of parallel rails to slideably engage the skirt along the first and second lateral members, the locking member formed on a corner of the lid as a downward bent tab which mates with the cut-away to secure the lid against sliding off the skirt.
2. A package according to claim 1 wherein the tab has a rounded outer edge upon which the tab slides along the upper surface of the skirt until mating with the cut-away.
3. The package according to claim 1 wherein the cut-away is a straight edge and other remaining corners of the skirt are rounded.
4. The package according to claim 1 wherein the lid is transparent or translucent and the tray is opaque.
5. The package according to claim 1 wherein the lid further comprises a rear rail orthogonal to the pair of parallel rails and engaging the rear member of the skirt upon the lid fully covering the dispensing opening and functioning as a stop.
6. The package according to claim 1 wherein the parallel rails are U-shaped.
7. The package according to claim 5 wherein the lid has four corners none occupied by the parallel or rear rails.
8. The package according to claim 1 further comprising a flexible foil positioned beneath the lid extending over the dispensing opening and adhesively attached to the upper surface of the skirt.
9. The package according to claim 8 wherein the foil is opaque.
10. The package according to claim 8 wherein a corner of the foil aligned with the cut-away of the skirt is bent downward along an edge of the cut-away.