

- [58] **Field of Search**35/1; 40/142; 283/1

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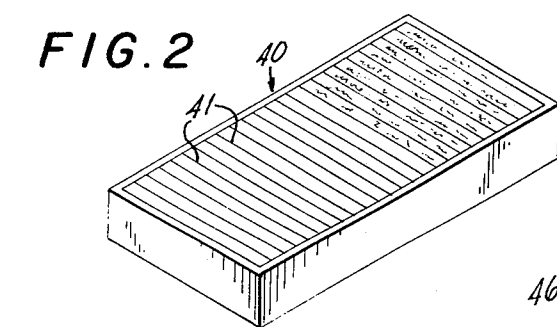
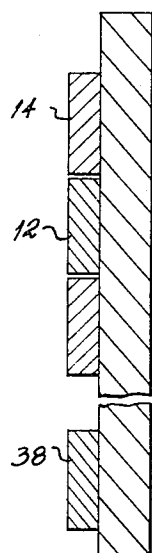
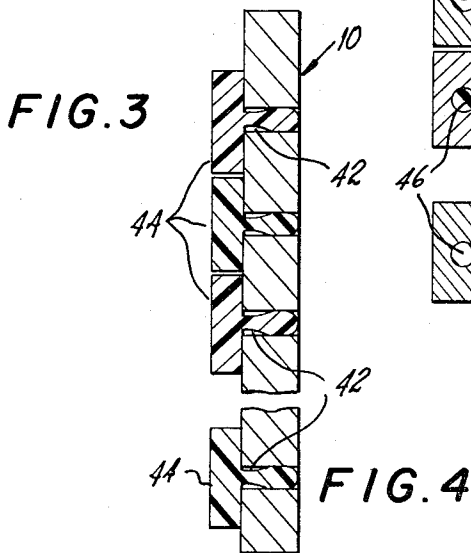
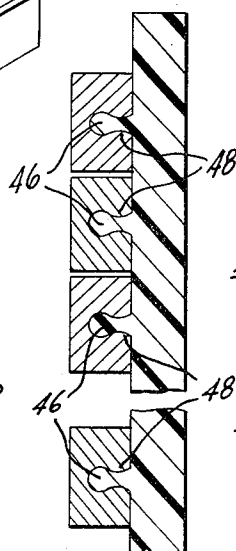
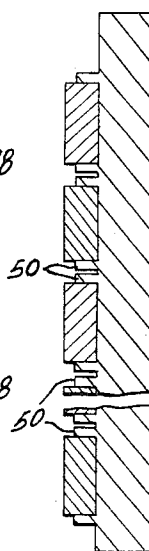
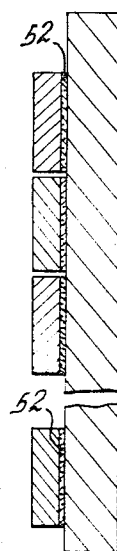
[57] **ABSTRACT**

A method and apparatus for monitoring the important food properties consumed during a pre-determined period of time. A plurality of pre-printed strips, each representing a specific food item and its nutrient values is stored in a compartmentalized storage device and retrieved therefrom for attachment to a board. A plurality of rows and columns is formed when a number of strips are placed on the board, which columns contain the amount of each important food property consumed. Each column is tallied to provide the total amount of food properties consumed during a given period of time.

5 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures

[illegible]

FIG. 1

[illegible]

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APPARATUS FOR MONITORING IMPORTANT PROPERTIES OF FOODS CONSUMED

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a method for keeping tally of important food properties eaten during a given period of time, and more particularly to a totalizer system for accomplishing the same.

Although our nation is affluent by economic standards, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the diets of many Americans are lacking in the minimum basic requirements of important food properties such as vitamins, iron, and proteins. Although the consumer can well afford to properly feed himself, most people are unaware of their poor nutritional habits which have resulted in the grossly deficient diets presently found in America. Such diets are by no means restricted to the poor or disadvantaged. The medical profession has recently become more aware of this problem as it relates to all economic classes and has been conducting studies relating thereto. Concurrently, the public has become more aware of their dietary deficiencies and have sought to remedy the same.

In order to determine the nutrient intake during the course of a day, charts and the like must be consulted. These charts contain numerical data relating to the amount of important properties contained in food. In order to calculate the total amount of vitamins, nutrients and calories taken during a day, a chart must be prepared by the user which is both tedious and time-consuming in its preparation. It can be understood that the listing of three meals and snacks, totaling possibly 20 or 25 different foods including the 10 most important components thereof, can amount to the handwriting of as many as 250 separate figures.

The counting of food properties is important to people who are on special diets as well as the general population. The preparation of such a table each day by users is boring and frequently leads the person to disregard the essential medical advice he is to follow.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved apparatus for accomplishing the above object.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide such an apparatus which is relatively easy to use.

Another object of the present invention is to provide such an apparatus which eliminates the time-consuming and tedious handwriting of many numerical figures.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide such a counter or totalizer system which is attractive, durable, yet relatively inexpensive.

Another object of the present invention is to provide such a totalizer system which is relatively light in weight and compact so that it may be portable.

Other objects, advantages, and features of the present invention will become more apparent from the following description.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the principles of the present invention, the above objects are accomplished by providing a method for monitoring or tallying the amount of properties of food eaten during a specified period of time, including the steps of selecting a first pre-printed strip containing indicia representing a specific food and the amount of different food properties contained in

the specific food, attaching the strip to a board, selecting additional pre-printed strips relating to additional foods and the amount of food properties contained therein, attaching the additional strips below the first strip on the board and aligning corresponding numerical data on the first and additional strips to form columns of data.

The strips are stored in a compartmentalized container and preferably are alphabetically stored therein. Each food item is pre-printed on a strip and the amount of important food properties contained in an average serving of the food is also printed on the strip. A plurality of such strips are placed on the board at the end of a pre-determined period of time, such as a day, to form a table. Each column of the table is appropriately designated with a specific food property such as iron, Vitamin A, or the like, and such columns are totaled at the bottom of the board, providing an indication of the amount of food properties taken in during the day.

The strips may be attached to the board by providing a magnetized board and metallic strips which readily adhere to the board. As an alternative, the board and strips may be plasticized with respective female and male connecting members, enabling the strip to be held in place by a friction fit between the members.

The present invention will find widespread use among the general population, particularly those who must regulate and watch their food intake. Additionally, those Americans who are becoming more aware of their dietary deficiencies may advantageously utilize the present invention to determine the specific food properties in which they are deficient.

The present device may be relatively light in weight, yet durable and attractive and relatively inexpensive, thus making it suitable for widespread use and distribution.

IN THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of the present invention showing the board and a plurality of strips thereon.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a compartmentalized storage device forming a portion of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken generally along lines 3—3 of FIG. 1 showing the strips being attached to the board.

FIGS. 4 through 7 are sectional views similar to FIG. 3 showing other embodiments for connecting the strips to the board.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to the drawings, FIG. 1 illustrates a board 10 upon which are mounted a plurality of strips 12 and an additional strip 14. Strip 14 serves as the heading strip, having thereon indicia representing specific food properties. In particular, the first column 16 is designated "food." The second column 18 is designated "average serving," the third, fourth, fifth and sixth columns, 20, 22, 24 and 26, are designated Vitamins A, B₁, B₂, and C, respectively. The seventh, eighth, ninth, 10th, and 11th, columns, 28, 30, 32, 34 and 36, are designated "calcium," "phosphorous," "iron," "protein," and "calories" respectively. Strip 14 may be separate from the others or may include at least a strip pre-printed with specific food properties. The

strip 14 may be left permanently on board 10 to serve as a heading. As an alternative, the headings contained in strip 14 may be pre-printed or embossed directly on the board 10.

Each strip is provided with indicia corresponding to each column heading contained in strip 14. For example, the strip for "apple" is provided with indicia, such as numerals which represent the amount of properties contained in the food, a serving of a small apple contains 25 mg. of calcium, 50 units of Vitamin A, and 0.015 mg. of Vitamin B₁. Similarly, the other strips specifically illustrated in FIG. 1 contain numerical data relating to the average sized serving and the amount of food properties contained therein. Of particular note to calorie conscious individuals, each strip is provided with the amount of calories contained in the average serving so that the calorie intake can be monitored. Each strip is placed on and attached to the board 10 and each strip forms a row with the numerical data contained on each strip falling in columns defined by the headings contained in strip 14. It may thus be seen that when the strips are placed on the board in succeeding fashion, a table of nutrient values is formed with columns thereof indicating the amount of specific food properties eaten.

Several additional strips represented by strip 38 are provided blank and may be imprinted or written on for unusual foods not contained in the plurality of pre-printed food strips, or for such additional food properties not included in the headings provided on strip 14 or on board 10. Such properties might include essential minerals or other food traces. Additionally, the strips may be provided with written information relating to different diets for research use with different patients. At this point it is contemplated that the pre-printed strips will contain the most commonly used foods and food properties while it is obvious that other foods and food properties may also be pre-printed on such strips.

A compartmentalized storage device or holder 40 is provided including a plurality of dividers 41 which enable the strips to be alphabetically stored for easy retrieval. Other arrangements for storing the strips may be provided in accordance with the number of compartments available.

FIGS. 3 through 7 illustrate various embodiments for attaching the strips to the board. FIG. 3 illustrates the board 10 being of a metallic or magnetic construction and strips 12, 14 and 38 attached thereto by magnetic coupling action. When the board is metallic in nature, the strips are magnetic, while when the board is magnetized, the strips are metallic.

FIG. 4 illustrates the board 10 having a plurality of slots or apertures 42 which serve as female receptacle members for male plug members 44. Each strip may be provided with a pair of slots or apertures at the ends of the strips which align with apertures 42 of the board. When the strips are in place, the male plug members 44 are placed through the aligned apertures to rigidly hold the strip in place. As an alternative embodiment, the male plug members may be integrally formed at the ends of the strips to be placed in slots 42.

FIG. 5 illustrates yet another embodiment for attaching the strips to the board. In particular, a plurality of projecting members 46 are integrally formed with the board projecting upwardly therefrom. Each strip is

provided with holes 48, at its ends which are adapted to fit over and be secured to the projecting members 46.

FIG. 6 illustrates yet another embodiment for attaching the strips to the board. In FIG. 6, the board is provided with a plurality of spaced apart upstanding rib members 50. The strips are placed and snap fitted between adjacent rib members to be rigidly held in place.

FIG. 7 illustrates yet another embodiment for attaching the strips to the board. In particular, each strip includes a pressure-sensitive backing 52 which is self-adhering to the board. In this manner, each strip may be readily secured to the board in the same manner as described above.

With the embodiments shown in FIGS. 4 through 7, the board may be made of a plastic material and the strips of a plastic, paper, or composite material, thus providing a relatively inexpensive monitoring device. The strips are durable and will not crack, tear or crease easily and are capable of clearly displaying pre-printed indicia carried thereon. The board and strips may be attractive, inexpensive, yet durable and suited for repetitive use.

The present invention provides a method and apparatus which eliminates the need to write down as many as 250 separate figures which was previously required. In particular, each user essentially forms his own table relating to important food properties and simply totals the amount of such properties consumed during a day. The individual when totaling his intake of vitamins, calories, etc., selects the strip representing each food item and places it on the board. When all the strips have been selected corresponding to the food eaten during a pre-determined time period and placed on the board, columns will be formed as illustrated in FIG. 1. The user simply totals each column to determine the total amount of important food properties consumed.

The board illustratively might be square, having 9 inch sides with each strip being approximately three-eighths inch wide. Approximately 30 such strips could be handled by such a board which normally would be enough for most users. It may be appreciated that other sizes and dimensions and materials may be utilized for the strips, board, and storage device, and other methods of attaching the strips to the board may be devised by those of ordinary skill in the art.

It will be thus be seen that the objects set forth above, among those made apparent from the preceding description, are efficiently attained and, since certain changes may be made in the above method and apparatus without departing from the scope of the invention, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description and shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

I claim:

1. A food intake monitor device for monitoring the properties of foods eaten during a pre-determined period of time comprising a board, said board being relatively flat, a plurality of strips, each of said plurality of strips being of substantially equal length extending substantially across the entire width of said board, each of said plurality of strips including indicia representing a specific food and the amount of vitamins, minerals,

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proteins and calories comprising the different food properties contained in each of said foods indicated on said strips, each of said strips having the food properties arranged in the same sequence on said strips, and means for attaching said plurality of said strips to said board with said strips being held on said board forming rows, whereby the amounts of vitamins, minerals, proteins and calories of each of said specific foods form a columnar arrangement for ready totalization of said respective food properties so that the total amounts of food properties consumed is readily determinable.

2. A device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said means for attaching said plurality of strips to said board is provided with magnetic means.

3. A device as set forth in claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of strips is provided with two ends, a pair

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of male plug members each of said pair of male plug members being integrally formed at respective ones of said two ends of each of said plurality of strips, said board being provided with a plurality of female receptacle members, said female receptacle members forming two columns, each of said two columns being located at opposite sides of said board, said male plug members cooperating with respective ones of said female receptacle members to attach said strips to said board.

4. A device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said board is made of a plastic type material.

5. A device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said board is made of a magnetized material.

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