Oct. 8, 1946. R. S. CLAFLIN 2,408,735

TEETHING DEVICE

Filed March 20, 1943

Fig. 1.

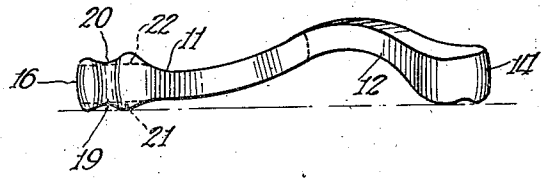


Fig. 2.

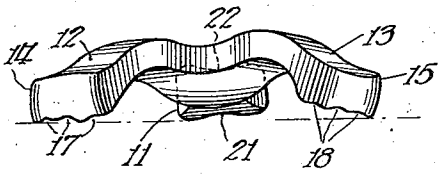


Fig. 3.

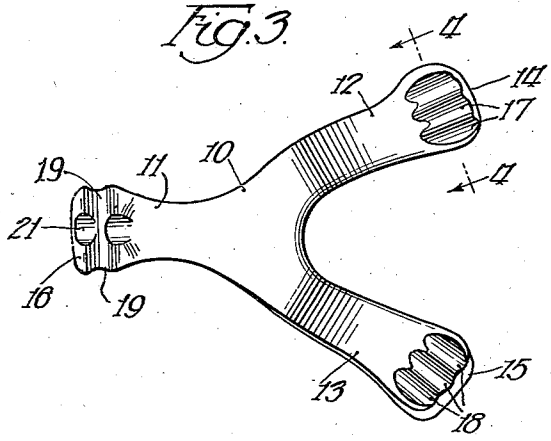


Fig. 4.

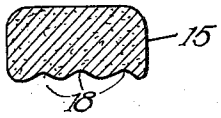
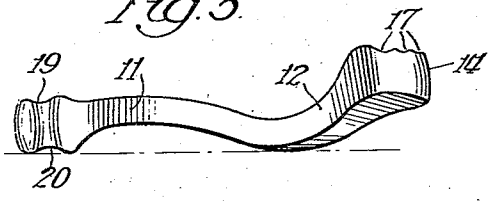


Fig. 5.



Inventor
Roland S. Claflin
By: Isabel Carlson Speyhough & Wells Attys.

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TEETHING DEVICE

Roland S. Claflin, Park Ridge, Ill.

Application March 20, 1943, Serial No. 479,837

5 Claims. (Cl. 128—359)

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The present invention relates to teething devices and has for its principal purpose the provision of a novel teething device, the parts of which are so designed and arranged as to enable an infant to readily grasp it and convey it to its mouth while at the same time the infant is prevented from getting the device into its mouth far enough to cause any injury to the throat or to present any danger of choking.

I am aware that in the prior art teething devices having a plurality of prongs spaced approximately 120° from each other have been developed. My invention however distinguishes from such devices in that it provides a three pronged teething device in which the tips of the three prongs support the body of the device above a supporting surface such as a floor or tray so that it is easy for an infant's hand to grasp when the tips are down. The device also is so curved that when turned over the body will support at least two of the tips in raised position away from the supporting surface so that the infant may readily grasp the device.

It is a further purpose of the invention to provide a teething device wherein the projections that the infant will place in its mouth are enlarged and provided with preformed surfaces of such a nature as to stimulate the gums and aid the cutting of the teeth through the gum tissue.

The features and advantages of the invention will appear more fully from the following description, reference being had to the accompanying drawing wherein a preferred form of the invention is shown. It is to be understood however that minor modifications and changes may be made in the construction and that therefore the drawing and description are illustrative only and should not be considered as limiting the invention except insofar as it is limited by the claims.

In the drawing:

Fig. 1 is a view in side elevation of the teething device showing it resting upon a surface so as to illustrate the manner in which the body of the device is spaced from the surface;

Fig. 2 is a side view taken at right angles to Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a plan view of the device;

Fig. 4 is a sectional view taken on the line 4—4 of Fig. 3; and

Fig. 5 is a view like Fig. 1 but with the device inverted.

Referring now in detail to the drawing, the present invention is a teething device which is made of a hard plastic material which is already known to be compatible with mouth conditions and which lends itself readily to a high polished surface that can be kept clean and sanitary with a minimum of difficulty. The device as shown comprises a substantially wishbone shaped body 10 having three prongs 11, 12 and 13. These prongs are substantially rectangular in cross section with the corner edges slightly rounded. Each of the prongs is curved away from its junction in the body 10 so that the device when placed on a surface will support either the central body portion or at least two of the prongs well above the surface to permit the device to be readily grasped by the untrained hand of an infant. It is a well known fact that the muscular control of the infant is poor and undeveloped so that it cannot grasp or pick up items that require the direction of the individual fingers about it. The two prongs 12 and 13 diverge from each other and curve rather considerably out of line with respect to the body portion 10. They both curve in the same direction from the plane of the body portion while the third prong 11 curves in the opposite direction but not to such a great extent.

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The prongs 12 and 13 terminate in enlarged end portions 14 and 15 which are quite similar in configuration. The portion 11 terminates in an enlarged portion 16 which is given a somewhat different configuration. It will be noted however that all of the enlarged end portions are irregular in shape so as to provide a large number of ridges and angular edges that are rounded just enough to avoid cutting. The irregularity of the end portions is purposely provided in order to present edges and ribs against the gums of the infant so that in clamping its gums against the ridges and edges the infant can exert enough force effectively to aid the teeth in erupting through the gum tissue. The portions 14 and 15 have only one surface thereof ridged, this being the downwardly directed surface in Figs. 1 and 2. The portion 14 has three grooves 17 and the portion 15 has the similar three grooves 18 running lengthwise with respect to the prongs 12 and 13, respectively. The enlarged portion 16 has a transverse groove 19 in the top side and a like groove 20 in the bottom side. These grooves 19 and 20 may be joined by like grooves, as shown, to completely encircle the end portion 16. The grooves are intersected by grooves 21 and 22, respectively, that extend lengthwise of the prong 11.

It will be noted that the end portion 16 is more rounded in contour than the end portions 14

and 15. There is a definite reason for this and it is because the end portion 16 may be inserted into the mouth further than the other portions and is therefore more apt to cause damage in the back part of the mouth.

Throughout the whole design of the device however I provide ridges or edges that can be brought against the gums with sufficient force to be effective. At the same time I avoid long grooves or hollows that are difficult to keep clean.

I prefer to construct the device out of a moldable plastic such as is used for artificial dentures in modern dental practice. Acrylic resins are generally suitable for this purpose. They also lend themselves readily to attractive coloring and to differential coloring which is of advantage in the location of the device by the infant. The particular material however may be varied over a wide range without departing from the scope of my invention.

The wishbone shape of the three-pronged device is of particular importance. The combined curvatures whereby the body of the device is held up when the three prongs are resting on a surface is also an important feature. These two features, when combined with the enlarged end portions, produce the ideal results in aiding the eruption of teeth through the gums. I have found also that the ridges and grooves of the end portions which provide the necessary relatively sharp edges are important factors.

From the foregoing description it is believed that the nature of my invention and the advantages thereof will be readily apparent to those skilled in this art.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A teething device for infants, comprising a central body portion and three diverging curved prongs, the curve in each prong being intermediate the central body and the end portion thereof and the concave side of one prong being faced in the opposite direction from that of another of the prongs whereby to hold the body of the device raised on a plane surface in substantially all positions of the device.

2. A teething device for infants, comprising a wishbone shaped body having three divergent prongs, two of which are curved between the central body portion and their end portions in the same general direction away from the central body portion and the third of which curves intermediate the central body portion and its end portion in the opposite direction away from the central portion.

3. A teething device for infants, comprising a wishbone shaped body having three divergent prongs, two of which are curved between the central body portion and their end portions in the same general direction away from the central body portion and the third of which curves intermediate the central body portion and its end portion in the opposite direction away from the central portion, the prongs terminating in enlarged end portions.

4. A teething device for infants, comprising a wishbone shaped body having three divergent prongs, two of which are curved between the central body portion and their end portions in the same general direction away from the central body portion and the third of which curves intermediate the central body portion and its end portion in the opposite direction away from the central portion, the prongs terminating in enlarged end portions, at least one of the enlarged end portions having ridges thereon extending lengthwise of the prong.

5. A teething device for infants, comprising a wishbone shaped body having three divergent prongs, two of which are curved between the central body portion and their end portions in the same general direction away from the central body portion and the third of which curves intermediate the central body portion and its end portion in the opposite direction away from the central portion, the prongs terminating in enlarged end portions, at least one of the end portions having crisscross grooves therein on opposite sides thereof.

ROLAND S. CLAFLIN.