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(54) **Snus container**

(57) A snus container comprising a base defining a space having a plurality of compartments is disclosed. At least one of the compartments has a lid to isolate it from the remaining compartments. A cover is releasably attachable to the base to extend over all the compartments and close the container.

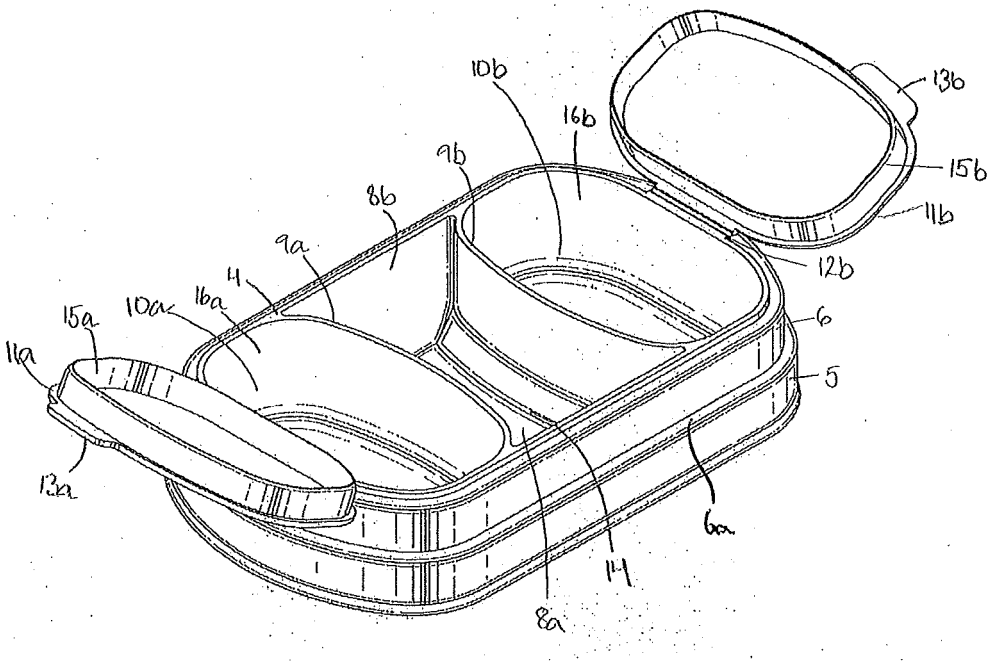


Figure 3

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a container for storing snus.

[0002] Current packaging for smokeless tobacco products such as snus and snuff generally comprises a container formed from a base and a lid. It is important that the lid and the base provide a space for storing the tobacco products which is substantially airtight so that the tobacco products retain their freshness. This is particularly important for containers that hold snus, as snus contains water and needs to remain moist in order for the user to enjoy consuming the product once the container has been opened.

[0003] A problem with conventional containers for holding smokeless tobacco products is that they only provide a single compartment for storage of one type of snus. If different types of snus are to be stored in the same container then they must be mixed together. Even if a dividing wall is used to separate different types of snus portions, the problem of cross-contamination between the portions stored on either side of the dividing wall is not eliminated. Furthermore, the entire contents of the container is exposed when the lid is removed, thereby reducing freshness of the remaining snus portions which results in them drying out quicker.

[0004] It is known from US20050173272 to provide a container having a plurality of compartments for holding smokeless tobacco products. The container has a central wall dividing the container into two compartments, each of which have a lid pivotally attached to the top surface of the dividing wall. Although this container is able to hold two types of tobacco products in different compartments, the number of compartments is limited.

[0005] The present invention seeks to provide a container for snus that overcomes or substantially alleviates the problems mentioned above.

[0006] According to the present invention, there is provided a snus container comprising a base defining a space having a plurality of compartments, at least one of the compartments having a lid to isolate it from the remaining compartments, and a cover releasably attachable to the base to extend over all the compartments located in said space and close the container.

[0007] Each compartment is preferably separated from an adjacent compartment by a dividing wall.

[0008] Only some of the compartments may have a lid.

[0009] In a preferred embodiment, each lid includes a tab to facilitate opening of said compartment, the tab extending across the top of a dividing wall separating a lidded compartment from a compartment without a lid. This enables a person to place their finger into the compartment without a lid to hold or apply pressure to the tab to open the adjacent lidded compartment.

[0010] The dividing wall between compartments may comprise a recess in its upper edge to receive the tab.

[0011] Conveniently, a plurality of compartments with lids are spaced from each other by at least one compartment without a lid.

[0012] The container may have any number of compartments, some or all of which may have lids, The compartments may be of different shapes and sizes. However, in a preferred embodiment there are at least three compartments, at least two of which have lids, each lidded compartment being separated by a compartment having no lid.

[0013] In one embodiment the container comprises three compartments two of which include lids, said lidded compartments being separated by a central compartment without a lid disposed therebetween.

[0014] The lids of compartments separated by a central compartment without a lid may be hingedly mounted to a wall other than the dividing wall separating said compartments.

[0015] In one embodiment, the container comprises two compartments, one of which is provided with a lid, the compartments being separated by the dividing wall.

[0016] Preferably, the lid is hingedly mounted to a wall other than the dividing wall separating the two compartments.

[0017] In one embodiment the compartments are integrally formed in the base and the lids may then be hingedly connected to the base to pivot between open and closed positions.

[0018] In another embodiment an insert may be received in the base and the compartments can then be formed in said insert. In this embodiment, the lids may then be hingedly connected to the insert.

[0019] In a preferred embodiment, the insert and lids are integrally formed.

[0020] In another embodiment, the lidded compartments are each formed as a separate insert which are positioned within the base and spaces between the inserts form compartments in the base without a lid.

[0021] In one embodiment, the container comprises a disposal compartment separate to said plurality of compartments, said disposal compartment being accessible through an opening in the lid or in the base.

[0022] In a preferred embodiment, the disposal compartment is formed in the base, said disposal compartment being closed by a lid located in the base.

[0023] In another embodiment, the disposal compartment is formed in the cover, said disposal compartment being closed by a lid and configured such that access to the disposal compartment is obtainable without removing the cover from the base.

[0024] According to another aspect of the invention, an insert is provided comprising a bottom wall, a side wall upstanding from said bottom wall to define a storage space, wherein said space is divided into a plurality of separate compartments and at least one of said compartments is provided with a lid.

[0025] Conveniently, each compartment is separated from an adjacent compartment by a dividing wall.

[0026] In one embodiment, only some of the compartments have a lid.

[0027] Preferably, the lid includes a tab to facilitate opening of said compartment, the tab extending across the top of the dividing wall separating a lidded compartment from a compartment without a lid.

[0028] Conveniently, the dividing wall comprises a recess in its upper edge to receive the tab.

[0029] In a preferred embodiment, the lid of the lidded compartment is hingedly mounted to a wall other than a dividing wall separating two compartments.

[0030] In one embodiment, a plurality of compartments with lids are spaced from each other by at least one compartment without a lid.

[0031] Preferably, the insert comprises at least three compartments, at least two of which have lids, each lidded compartment being separated by a compartment having no lid.

[0032] Conveniently, the insert comprises three compartments two of which include lids, said lidded compartments being separated by a central compartment without a lid disposed therebetween.

[0033] In an alternative embodiment, the insert comprises two compartments, one of which is provided with a lid and another compartment having no lid, the compartments being separated by the dividing wall.

[0034] The insert and lid or lids may be integrally formed.

[0035] Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a closed container comprising a base and a cover;

Figure 2 shows a perspective view of the base having an insert, wherein lids of the insert are closed;

Figure 3 shows a perspective view of the base and the insert, wherein the lids of the insert are opened;

Figure 4 shows a cross-sectional view of the base and the insert;

Figure 5 shows a cross-sectional view of the insert having the lids open;

Figure 6 shows a top view of the container in an opened position, having an insert of an alternative configuration;

Figure 7 shows a cross-section of the container of Figure 6, in a closed position;

Figure 8 shows a cross-section of the insert of Figure 6 and 7; and

Figure 9 shows a perspective view of a bottom wall of an alternative embodiment of the container, wherein the bottom wall is formed with a separate compartment.

[0036] Referring now to the drawings, there is shown in Figure 1 and 4 a container 1 comprising a base 2, a cover 3 and an insert 4. The base 2 defines a first space in which the insert 4 is disposed. The cover 3 is releasably attachable to the base 2 such that the first space of the base 2 holding the insert 4 may be closed and so that the cover 3 covers the entire base 2 and encloses the insert 4.

[0037] The base 2 comprises an elongate bottom wall having a perpendicularly extending peripheral wall 5 of which a portion 6 is displaced inwards as seen in Figures 2 to 4 to form a shoulder 6a. At a top of the extending wall 5, means 7 are provided which engages with the insert 4 to retain the insert 4 within the base 3.

[0038] From Figures 2 and 3 it can be appreciated that the insert 4 fits into the space defined by the base 2. The insert 4 comprises a bottom wall 8a having a vertical peripheral outer wall 8b and two dividing members 9a, 9b which divide the insert 4 into three compartments. Two outer compartments 10a, 10b are formed with lids 11a, 11b which are pivotally connected via a hinge 12a, 12b to the outer wall 8b of the insert 4 so that the lids 11a, 11b pivotally open in opposite directions away from the centre as seen in Figures 5. The lids 11a, 11b are provided with a flap 13a, 13b on the opposite side to the hinge 12a, 12b, The flaps 13a, 13b extend into a central compartment 14 disposed between the two outer compartments 10a, 10b when the lids 11a, 11b are closed as seen in Figure 2. Approximate to the outer periphery on a lower surface of the lids 11a, 11b, is a projecting lip 15a, 15b which lines an inner surface 16a, 16b of the outer compartments 10a, 10b when the lids 11a, 11b are closed. The friction between the lip 15a, 15b and inner surface 16a, 16b of the outer compartments 10a, 10b retains the lids 11a, 11b in a closed position so as to form an interference fit between lid 11a, 11b and respective inner surface 16a, 16b. The central compartment 14 is defined by the outer wall 8b and both the dividing members 9a, 9b. It is not provided with a lid and so it is directly accessible on removing the cover 3 from the base 2.

[0039] It will be appreciated that lids 11a, 11b may not be connected via a hinge to the insert 4 and instead one or both of the lids 11a, 11b may be completely separable from the insert to gain access to the compartments 10a, 10b. It is also envisaged that the lids 11a, 11b could be replaced by a peelable/flexible membrane initially sealing the compartments and which is peeled off or punctured in order to gain access to the contents of that compartment when, for example, all the snus contained in the central compartment 14 has been exhausted, thereby maintaining freshness for the portions contained in the compartments 10a, 10b for the maximum period of time.

[0040] The insert 4 further comprises a flange 17 which is circumferentially formed on the outer surface of the outer wall 8b as seen in Figure 4. The flange 17 engages the means 7 on the base 2 thereby preventing the insert 4 from becoming detached from the base 2.

[0041] The cover 3 comprises a top wall 20 having a peripheral edge 21 depending from its periphery. The corner of the top 20 and peripheral wall 21 is arcuately shaped and comprises a circumferential protrusion 22 enabling the user to grip the cover 3 when removing it from the base 2. In a closed position, the cover 3 sits on top of the base 2 such that the peripheral wall 21 of the

cover 3 encloses the displaced portion 6 of the wall 5 of the base 2 with a lower end of the peripheral edge 21 resting on the shoulder 6a of the base 2.

[0042] To open the container 1 the user removes the cover 3 from the base 2 by gripping the protrusion 22 of the cover 3 and pulling it upward off and away from the base 3. In doing so, access is provided to the central compartment 14, whereas the outer compartments 10a, 10b remain closed by their respective lids 13a, 13b. At this stage, the user is presented with an option whether to retrieve products from the central compartment 14 or to open either or both of the outer compartments 10a, 10b by pulling the flap 13a, 13b on the lids 11a, 11b so as to reveal their contents. In order to re-attach the cover 3 to the base 2, the lids 11a, 11b of the outer compartments 10a, 10b must first be closed, although they could be left off completely if they are not hinged to the insert 4 but are separate thereto.

[0043] It is envisaged that the three compartments 10a, 10b, 14 may hold the same product and that the product held in the central compartment 14 is to be consumed first as its freshness depends on the close contact of the base 2 and the cover 3. The outer compartments 10a, 10b will therefore remain sealed until the products in the central compartment have been consumed. The lids on the outer compartments provide an additional seal and so the freshness of the products therein is sustained whilst the cover is repeatedly removed from the base to access the central compartment. This arrangement allows for products to be portioned, with each portion individually sealed from the remaining portions as they are maintained within one container, thereby providing convenience and maintaining freshness.

[0044] It is also envisaged that the container according to the present invention may hold three different types of products, such as three different types of flavoured snus. The dividing members of the insert prevent the products from mixing and the airtight closure of the outer compartments as provided by the lids, stop the flavours from blending so that each portion retains its own flavour and typical characteristics.

[0045] If the lids are hinged to the insert 4, the insert 4 including the lids 11a, 111b are formed as one component, preferably by injection moulding, and so the insert of the container according to the present invention can be formed with varying number of compartments so as to tailor the configuration according to the products to be packaged therein.

[0046] An exemplary embodiment of a container 20 having an insert 21 with one lidded compartment 22 and one compartment 23 without a lid is shown in Figure 6 and 7. Its configuration is similar to that of the container 1 shown in Figure 1 to 5, however it is only provided with one dividing member 27 which forms the separate compartment 22 sealable with a lid 24. Therefore, when the cover 25 is removed from the base 26 the compartment 23 without a lid is instantly accessible, whereas the lidded compartment 22 remains closed. The lidded compartment 22 can be opened after the cover 25 has been removed by pulling on a flap 28 of the lid so that the lid rotates, away from the centre of the container 20, about a hinge 29 attaching the lid to the insert. To close the container the lidded compartment has to be closed prior to reattaching the cover 25. It should also be understood that the lid of the lidded compartment can, in an alternative embodiment, be removably attachable or comprise a flexible membrane or a film which can be peeled off or punctured in order to access the contents therein. Furthermore, in all of the aforementioned embodiments, it is also envisaged that all, as opposed to just some, of the compartments could be provided with separate lids or membranes so as to further enhance the freshness of the contents of the compartments.

[0047] In another alternative or modified embodiment, the container according to the present invention further comprises another space or compartment which is not covered by the cover and has its own separate lid. Such an exemplary embodiment is illustrated in Figure 9 which shows a perspective view of a container 30 from below and in which a separate compartment is formed in the bottom wall 32 of the container 30 and accessed by removing or pivoting a lid 33 only closing said compartment. This compartment may be used, for example, for consumed snus. Alternatively, the compartment may be formed in the cover and be accessed by removing or pivoting a lid without the need to remove the cover from the base. It is also envisaged that one of the internal compartments, such as lidded compartments 10a, 10b, could be used for the storage of used snus.

[0048] It will be appreciated that any of the aforementioned embodiments could be provided with a separate compartment accessible via another lid, as described with reference to Figure 9.

[0049] The compartments may be of different sizes to each other. For example, the compartment without a lid located between the lidded compartments may be smaller than the lidded compartments. Therefore, all the lidded compartments may have the same size and shape whereas the unlidded compartments may be of a different size and shape. Also, the number of compartments may vary, as may the relative number of lidded and unlidded compartments.

[0050] Although it is envisaged that the compartments will be formed in a separate insert which is located in the base, it is also possible that the compartments could be formed directly or integrally with the base. In another embodiment, the lidded compartments are each formed as a separate insert which are positioned within the base in spaced relation and the space(s) between the inserts form compartments in the base without a lid.

[0051] Although embodiments of the invention have been shown and described, it will be appreciated by those persons skilled in the art that the foregoing description should be regarded as a description of the preferred embodiments only and that other embodiments that fall within the scope of the appended claims are considered to

form part of this disclosure.

Claims

1. A snus container comprising a base defining a space having a plurality of compartments, at least one of the compartments having a lid to isolate it from the remaining compartments, and a cover releasably attachable to the base to extend over all the compartments located in said space and close the container.

2. A snus container according to claim 1, wherein each compartment is separated from an adjacent compartment by a dividing wall.

3. A snus container according to claim 2, wherein only some of the compartments have a lid.

4. A snus container according to any of claims 2 and 3, wherein the lid includes a tab to facilitate opening of said compartment, the tab extending across the top of the dividing wall separating a lidded compartment from a compartment without a lid.

5. A snus container according to claim 4, wherein the dividing wall comprises a recess in its upper edge to receive the tab.

6. A snus container according to any of claims 2 to 5, wherein a plurality of compartments with lids are spaced from each other by at least one compartment without a lid.

7. A snus container according to any of claims 2 to 6, comprising at least three compartments, at least two of which have lids, each lidded compartment being separated by a compartment having no lid.

8. A snus container according to claim 7, comprising three compartments two of which include lids, said lidded compartments being separated by a central compartment without a lid disposed therebetween.

9. A snus container according to claim 8, wherein the lids of compartments separated by a central compartment without a lid are hingedly mounted to a wall other than the dividing wall separating said compartments.

10. A snus container according to any of claims 2 to 5, comprising two compartments, one of which is provided with a lid, the compartments being separated by the dividing wall.

11. A snus container according to claim 10, wherein said lid is hingedly mounted to a wall other than the dividing wall separating the two compartments.

12. A snus container according to any preceding claim, wherein the compartments are integrally formed in the base.

13. A snus container according to claim 12, wherein the lids are hingedly connected to the base to pivot between open and closed positions.

14. A snus container according to any of claims 2 to 11, including an insert received in the base, the compartments being formed in or from said insert.

15. A snus container according to claim 14, wherein the lid or lids are hingedly connected to the insert.

16. A snus container according to claim 15, wherein the insert and lid or lids are integrally formed.

17. A snus container according to any of claims 14 to 16, wherein each compartment with a lid is a separate insert to each other, compartment with a lid and a space between said inserts, when said inserts are received in the base, form a compartment in the base without a lid.

18. A snus container according to any preceding claim, comprising a disposal compartment separate to said plurality of compartments, said disposal compartment being accessible through an opening in the lid or in the base.

19. A snus container according to claim 18, wherein the disposal compartment is formed in the base, said disposal compartment being closed by a lid located in the base.

20. A snus container according to claim 18, wherein the disposal compartment is formed in the cover, said disposal compartment being closed by a lid and configured such that access to the disposal compartment is obtainable without removing the cover from the base.

21. An insert for a snus container, comprising a bottom wall, a side wall upstanding from said bottom wall to define a storage space, wherein said space is divided into a plurality of separate compartments and at least one of said compartments is provided with a lid.

22. An insert according to claim 21, wherein each compartment is separated from an adjacent compartment by a dividing wall.

23. An insert according to claim 21 or 22, wherein only some of the compartments have a lid.

24. An insert according to claim 22 or 23, wherein the lid includes a tab to facilitate opening of said com-

partment, the tab extending across the top of the dividing wall separating a lidded compartment from a compartment without a lid.

25. An insert according to claim 24, wherein the dividing wall comprises a recess in its upper edge to receive the tab.

26. An insert according to claim 24 or 25, wherein the lid of the lidded compartment is hingedly mounted to a wall other than a dividing wall separating two compartments.

27. An insert according to claim any of claims 21 to 26, wherein a plurality of compartments with lids are spaced from each other by at least one compartment without a lid.

28. An insert according to claim 27, comprising at least three compartments, at least two of which have lids, each lidded compartment being separated by a compartment having no lid.

29. An insert according to claim 28, comprising three compartments two of which include lids, said lidded compartments being separated by a central compartment without a lid disposed therebetween.

30. An insert according to any of claims 22 to 26, comprising two compartments, one of which is provided with a lid and another compartment having no lid, the compartments being separated by the dividing wall.

31. An insert according to any of claims 21 to 30, wherein the insert and lid or lids are integrally formed.

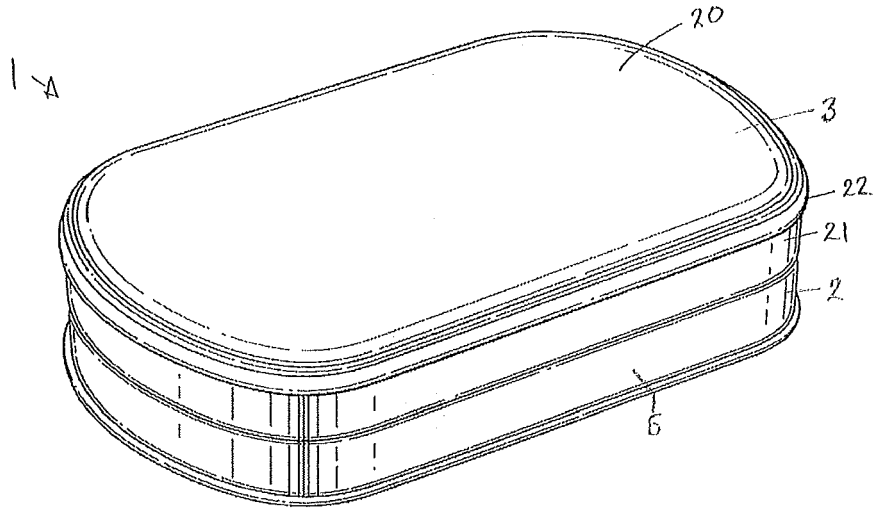


Figure 1

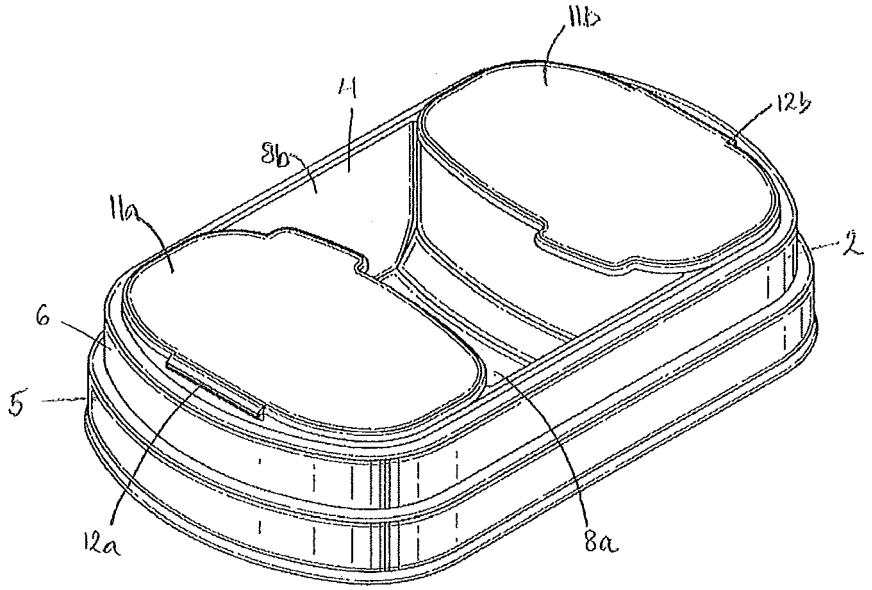


Figure 2

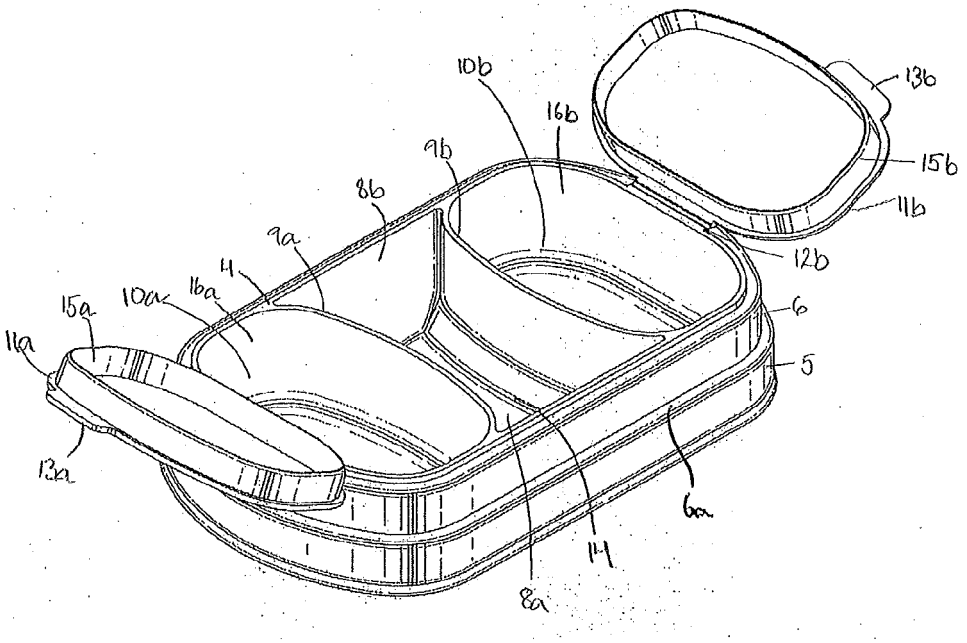


Figure 3

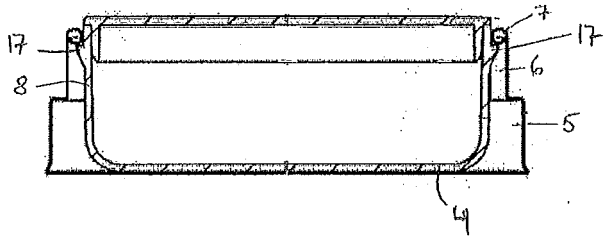


Figure 4

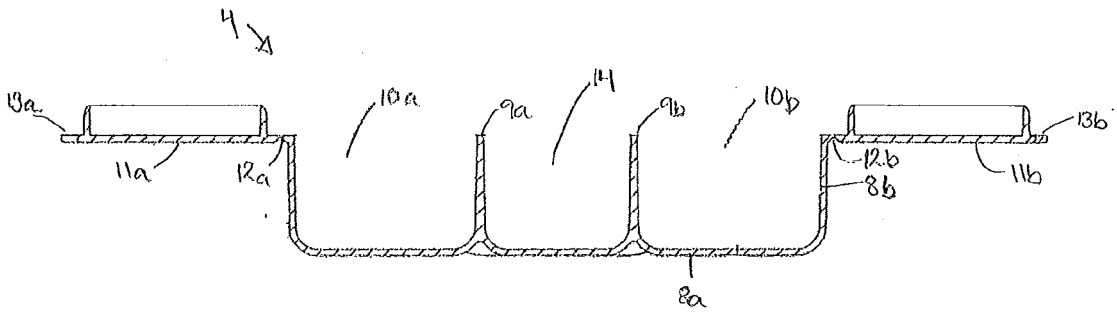


Figure 5

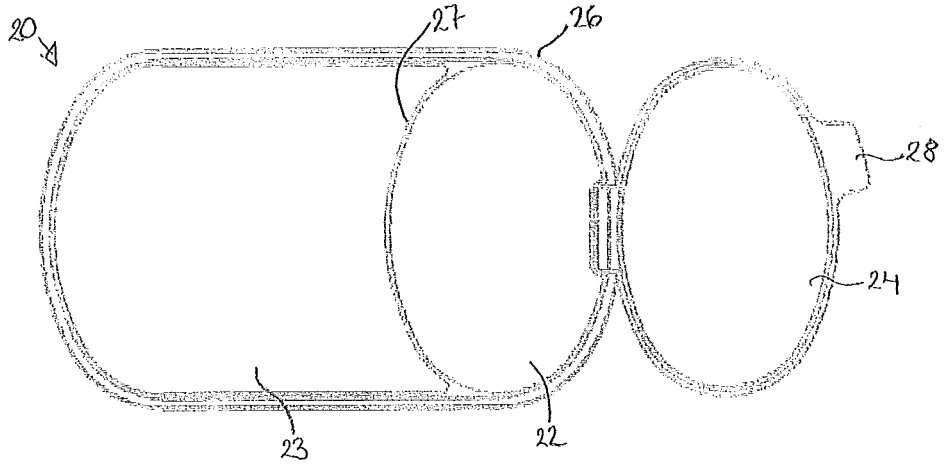


Figure 6

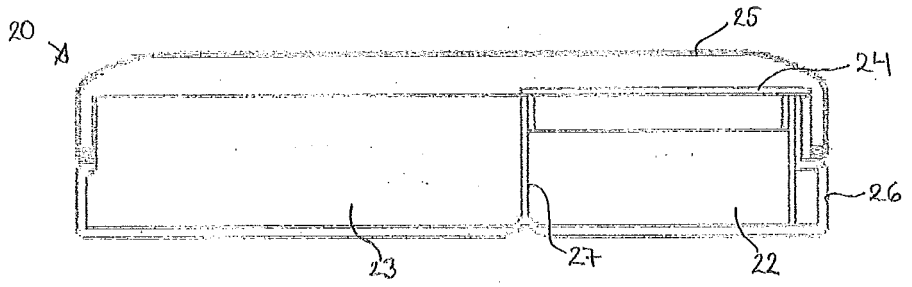


Figure 7

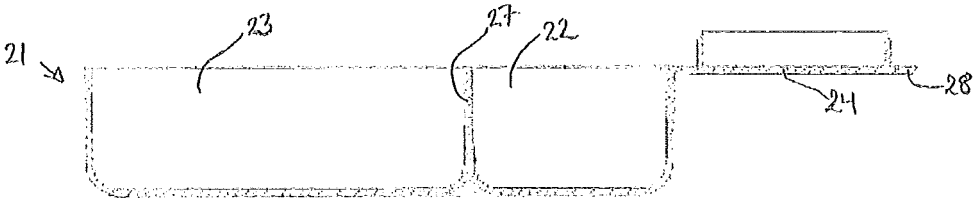


Figure 8

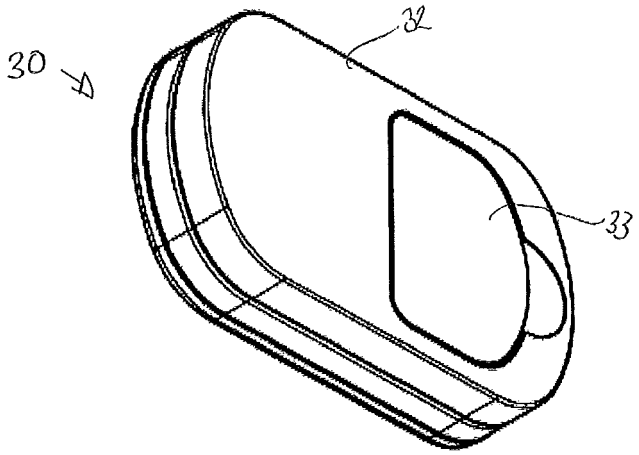


Figure 9

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 09 18 0464

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A24F
B65D

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich	26 May 2010	Visentin, Mauro

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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