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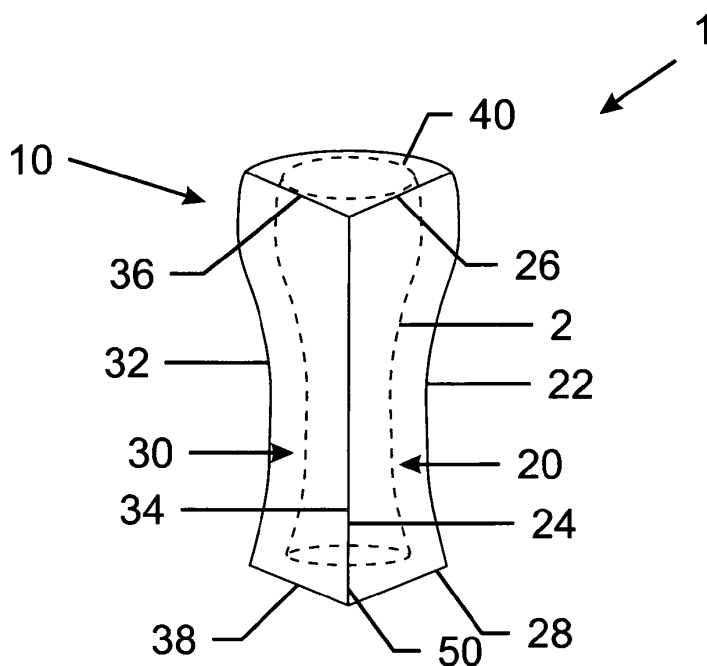
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(54) **An improved protective cover**

(57) There is described a protective cover (1) for a drink or food against sunlight and insects for use in combination with a container (2, 102) with a profiled shape for identifying said drink or food. According to the invention the horizontal top (40) is positioned to prevent insects from entering said container; and the vertical support (10)

comprises two vertical support walls (20, 30) that have a mirror symmetrical shape about a vertical axis of symmetry (50) defined by their adjacent vertical sides (24, 34) at which said vertical support walls (20, 30) are connected; and the vertical support walls form an angle (60) about said vertical axis of symmetry (50) which is smaller than 180°.



**Fig. 1**

## Description

### Field of the Invention

**[0001]** The present invention generally relates to a protective cover for a drink or food against sunlight and insects and a container with a profiled shape for identifying said drink or food.

### Background of the Invention

**[0002]** DE29606556U describes a protective cover for a drink. This kind of protective cover has a generally straight and boxy shaped vertical support that protects the drink from the sunlight. This vertical support hides the shape of the glass which contains the drink. This is disadvantageous in some respects. First of all this causes ergonomic drawbacks as the waiter serving the drinks, often transports a plurality of drinks on a tray before serving the drinks at a table. A number of drinks is served in a glass with a specific profiled shape in order to readily identify the drink. However, when combined with this prior art protective cover there is a danger that this profiled shape gets obscured. The protective cover or the tray then needs to be repositioned in order to correctly identify the drink. Furthermore this protective cover does not provide protection against insects as the horizontal top does not close off the glass. It is also not possible to stack multiple covers efficiently for storing them conveniently.

**[0003]** WO97/12533 shows a protective cover that provides protection against insects as the horizontal top can be arranged so that it closes off the container of the drink. However also here the vertical support will obscure a specific profiled shape of a glass. This prior art protective cover however provides a more optimal protection against sunlight as it comprises two vertical support walls that are angled approximately 90° with respect to each other. This enables also an effective shadow to be cast on the glass when the cover is not exactly positioned in the direction of the sun.

**[0004]** US2009/0107860 provides a protective cover of which the vertical support follows the profiled shape of the container of the drink. The cover also comprises an angled top to enable efficient stacking of a plurality of these covers for storage. This prior art cover however only has a single vertical wall, therefore the vertical support has to be positioned exactly in the direction of the sun in order to provide protection. Furthermore the angled top doesn't provide protection against insects.

**[0005]** As such there is a need for a protective cover for a container of a drink or food, especially when used in combination with a container that has a profiled shape for identifying the drink or food, that provides optimal protection against sunlight and insects, that can be stacked easily, that allows easy identification of the container or drink and that is ergonomic when serving and/or consuming the drink or food.

## Summary of the Invention

**[0006]** According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a protective cover for a drink or food against sunlight and insects for use in combination with a container with a profiled shape for identifying said drink or food, said protective cover comprising a vertical support and a horizontal top, the outer sides of the vertical support being shaped parallel to resemble the profiled shape of said container, said vertical support and said horizontal top being positioned to provide shade for said container, CHARACTERIZED IN THAT said horizontal top is positioned to prevent insects from entering said container; and in that said vertical support comprises two vertical support walls that have a mirror symmetrical shape about a vertical axis of symmetry defined by their adjacent vertical sides at which said vertical support walls are connected; and in that said vertical support walls form an angle about said vertical axis of symmetry which is smaller than 180°.

**[0007]** This advantageously enables efficient protection from the sunlight as the protective cover does not have to be positioned exactly in the direction of the sun while still allowing a clear link with the profiled shape of the container for the drink or food for easy identification while serving or consuming. Preferably the outer sides of the vertical support are being shaped parallel to the orthogonal projection of the profiled shape of said container. The horizontal top prevents insects from entering the container and stacking of a plurality of protective covers in an efficient way is possible. The angled arrangement of the vertical support walls allows for a stable positioning of the protective cover even when no horizontal base is present or during the time period when the container is removed from within this protective cover. Preferably the angle ranges from 90° and 120° as this allows an optimal increase of the protective surface of the vertical support of the protective cover without unduly extending the overall width of the protective cover. This is advantageous when a plurality of said protective covers and containers need to be transported for serving for example on a tray. Angles outside the range from 90° to 120° provide less stability and are more sensitive to wind. Angles below 90° however could be provided with a cut-out in both vertical walls, e.g. having the size of four fingers, enabling to lift the cover with one hand.

**[0008]** Said protective cover can optionally further comprise a horizontal base. This further enhances stability when a container is placed on this horizontal base.

**[0009]** According to an embodiment of the invention the height of said horizontal top is adjustable. This allows to close off the opening of the container securely in order to prevent insects from entering. According to an embodiment said vertical support walls (20, 30) comprise a resilient section (80). Said resilient section (80) is for example formed as a multi-ply, accordion folded section (80). This allows a simple and reliable construction of the resilient section which also enables the protective cover

to be conveniently folded for storage.

**[0010]** Optionally this horizontal top comprises an aperture for a straw.

**[0011]** Preferably said horizontal top comprises a central sinking. This central sinking hooks the protective cover onto the container and as such provides enhanced stability which allows the protective cover to withstand forces generated by the wind especially when the protective cover does not comprise a horizontal base on which the container can be positioned. Said central sinking comprises optionally a holder for holding food. The weight of the food further contributes to enhanced stability.

**[0012]** Said protective cover is optionally foldable so that it can be easily stacked for storage.

**[0013]** Said protective cover can be made of disposable material which would allow for a low cost embodiment that is suitable for a mass produced gadget.

**[0014]** Said protective cover could alternatively also be made of reusable, washable material. This would be advantageous when special, smaller scale series would be produced in order to fit in to for example the housing style of the restaurant that would use said covers.

**[0015]** Optionally said vertical support and/or said horizontal top are provided with one or more of the following: a message; advertisement; a logo; a drawing. This could even further enhance the resemblance with the container the cover protects

**[0016]** Said container can be one of the following: a glass; a bottle; a pot; a cup; a can; a goblet; a vase; a bowl; a plate.

**[0017]** According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided A combination of a protective cover for a drink or food against sunlight and insects according to any of the first aspect of the invention and a container with a profiled shape for identifying said drink or food.

### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

**[0018]** Fig. 1 illustrates a first embodiment according to the invention;

**[0019]** Fig. 2 illustrates a second embodiment according to the invention;

**[0020]** Fig. 3 illustrates a third embodiment according to the invention; and

**[0021]** Fig. 4 shows a fourth embodiment of the invention.

### **Detailed Description of Embodiment(s)**

**[0022]** Figure 1 shows a protective cover 1. The protective cover shields a drink which is held in a glass 2 against sunlight and insects. The glass 2 has a profiled shape for identifying the drink it contains, such glasses with a distinctive profile are for example associated with certain kinds of beer, wine or soda. The protective cover 1 comprising a vertical support 10 and on top of that a horizontal top 40. The horizontal top 40 is connected to

the vertical support for example by glue or it can be integrally formed with the vertical support. It closes off the opening of the glass to prevent insects from entering the drink. The vertical support 10 comprises two vertical support walls 20, 30. The two vertical support walls 20, 30 are positioned adjacent to each other and are connected at their adjacent vertical sides 24, 34. These vertical sides 20, 30 can be connected with glue, tape or any other suitable connection. It is alternatively possible to form the two vertical support walls 20, 30 out of a single piece of material having an angled shape, such as for example a single piece of cardboard with a suitable fold or a angled piece of plastic. The adjacent vertical sides 24, 34 define a vertical axis of symmetry 50 for the mirror symmetrical shape of the vertical support 10 of which the outer sides 22, 32 of the vertical support walls 20, 30 are shaped to resemble the profiled shape of the glass 2. Said vertical support walls 20, 30 are preferably shaped parallel to the orthogonal projection of the profiled shape of the glass 2. In this way the vertical support 10 and the horizontal top 40 are positioned to provide shade for the container glass 2 in an optimal way without obscuring the profiled shape of the glass 2. This means that the protective cover 1 doesn't have to be positioned exactly in the direction of the sun so that the glass remains easily reachable for consumption irrespective of for example its position on a table. The angle 60 between both vertical support walls 20, 30 as illustrated is about 90°. Other angles 60 are also possible but an angle in the range of 90° to 120° is preferred to allow for stability of the protective cover 1, especially in the situation wherein the glass 2 is temporarily removed. In any case this angle must be smaller than 180°.

**[0023]** In order to improve the ability to efficiently store a plurality of the protective covers according to the embodiment of Figure 1 it is optionally possible to manufacture the protective cover 1 out of for example a single piece of cardboard which is provided with suitable folds at the height of the adjacent sides 24, 34 of the vertical support walls 20, 30, a suitable fold at the height of the top side 26 of a first vertical support wall 20 and a suitable connection, for example an interlocking cardboard lip, for attaching the top side 36 of the second vertical support wall 30 to the horizontal top 40. This foldable construction then allows to store a plurality of these protective covers 1 to be stacked as a flat pieces of cardboard when unfolded.

**[0024]** Figure 2 shows an alternative embodiment of a protective cover 1 and a bottle 102 according to the invention. This embodiment corresponds largely to the embodiment of Figure 1 and equal reference signs have been used to denote equal features. The horizontal top 40 optionally comprises an aperture 42 for a straw.

**[0025]** According to the embodiment shown in Fig. 3 the horizontal top 40 comprises a central sinking 44 that fits into the opening of the glass 2. This central sinking 44 cooperates with the glass 2 in such a way that the protective cover 1 hooks onto the glass 2. As such this

still further increases stability which is sometimes suitable for enhanced wind protection without the necessity for the protective cover 1 to comprise a horizontal base on which the glass needs to be positioned to provide the necessary stability. The hooking effect of the central sinking 44 also is advantageous when serving the glass 2 in combination with the protective cover 1 as the waiter can lift this combination by holding the glass 2 alone. The protective cover 1 will hook onto the glass 2 by means of the central sinking 44 at least until it is positioned on for example a tray for serving or a table or counter for consumption.

**[0026]** This central sinking 44 is also very suitable for arranging a holder 46 for holding food, such as little snacks that are often served with certain drinks such as for example salted peanuts or a few pieces of cheese. Optionally this food may also be integrally formed with the central sinking 44. The additional weight of the food and/or the holder 46 further improves stability of the protective cover 1 especially in the case in which the glass 2 is temporarily removed for consumption. In this way it is no longer essential to provide a horizontal bottom to the protective cover 1 on which the glass 2 needs to be positioned to ensure sufficient stability. It is clear that the omission of a horizontal base in the embodiment according to Figure 1 also allows for a plurality of such protective covers 1 to be stacked efficiently as there are no obstacles to stack the respective covers 1 one inside the other.

**[0027]** The protective cover 1 can be made of cardboard, a biodegradable cellulose composition or any other suitable disposable material. This allows for cheap protective covers that can be thrown away after use. This low cost will allow mass manufacturing as a gadget. Preferably the disposable materials of these protective covers 1 when thrown away are suitable for recycling.

**[0028]** According to an alternative embodiment of the invention the protective cover 1 is made of reusable, washable material, such as for example a suitable plastic composition for containing food and withstanding treatment by a dishwasher. This is especially useful for integrally forming the food holder 46 in the central sinking 44. This more durable embodiment can last longer and could be for example more adapted to the specific house styling of the place where the drinks are being served.

**[0029]** In order to still further enhance the ability to identify the type of drink that is present in the glass 2 during serving or consumption the vertical support 10 and/or the horizontal top 40 can be provided with one or more of the following: a message; an advertisement; a logo; a drawing; ....

**[0030]** According to an alternative embodiment the height horizontal top 40 could be adjustable by for example means for repositioning the horizontal top 40 or by providing a piece of resilient material in the vertical support 1, the horizontal top 40 or their connection. This allows the horizontal top 40 to be positioned as close as possible to the glass 2 for protection against insects. A possible execution of such an embodiment is shown in

Fig 4. The vertical support walls 20, 30 comprise a multiple, accordion folded section. Optionally this accordion folded section could extend along the complete length of the vertical support walls 20, 30. It is clear that this also allows to compress the vertical support walls 20, 30 when the glass 2 is removed for convenient storage.

**[0031]** Figure 5 shows a further embodiment of the invention which corresponds to the embodiment shown in Figure 1. This embodiment however additionally comprises a horizontal base 70, connected to the bottom sides 28, 38 or the vertical support walls 20, 30, on which the glass 2 can be positioned in order to provide additional stability to the protective cover 1.

**[0032]** It is clear that the invention is not limited to a protective cover 1 in combination with the glass 2 or bottle 102 as shown in the drawings, but equally applies to any suitable container 2 for a drink or food. These containers could for example be one of the following: a glass; a bottle; a pot; a cup; a can; a goblet; a vase; a bowl; a plate;

**[0033]** Although the present invention has been illustrated by reference to specific embodiments, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the invention is not limited to the details of the foregoing illustrative embodiments, and that the present invention may be embodied with various changes and modifications without departing from the scope thereof. The present embodiments are therefore to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, the scope of the invention being indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description, and all changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are therefore intended to be embraced therein. In other words, it is contemplated to cover any and all modifications, variations or equivalents that fall within the scope of the basic underlying principles and whose essential attributes are claimed in this patent application. It will furthermore be understood by the reader of this patent application that the words "comprising" or "comprise" do not exclude other elements or steps, that the words "a" or "an" do not exclude a plurality, and that a single element, such as a computer system, a processor, or another integrated unit may fulfil the functions of several means recited in the claims. Any reference signs in the claims shall not be construed as limiting the respective claims concerned. The terms "first", "second", "third", "a", "b", "c", and the like, when used in the description or in the claims are introduced to distinguish between similar elements or steps and are not necessarily describing a sequential or chronological order. Similarly, the terms "top", "bottom", "over", "under", and the like are introduced for descriptive purposes and not necessarily to denote relative positions. It is to be understood that the terms so used are interchangeable under appropriate circumstances and embodiments of the invention are capable of operating according to the present invention in other sequences, or in orientations different from the one(s) described or illustrated above.

## Claims

1. A protective cover (1) for a drink or food against sunlight and insects for use in combination with a container (2, 102) with a profiled shape for identifying said drink or food, said protective cover (1) comprising a vertical support (10) and a horizontal top (40), the outer sides (22, 32) of the vertical support (10) being shaped parallel to resemble the profiled shape of said container (2, 102), said vertical support (10) and said horizontal top (40) being positioned to provide shade for said container (2, 102),  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said horizontal top (40) is positioned to prevent insects from entering said container; and **in that** said vertical support (10) comprises two vertical support walls (20, 30) that have a mirror symmetrical shape about a vertical axis of symmetry (50) defined by their adjacent vertical sides (24, 34) at which said vertical support walls (20, 30) are connected; and **in that** said vertical support walls form an angle (60) about said vertical axis of symmetry (50) which is smaller than 180°.
 

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2. A protective cover according to claim 1,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said protective cover (10) further comprises a horizontal base (70).
 

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3. A protective cover according to claim 1 or 2,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** the outer sides (22, 32) of the vertical support (10) being shaped parallel to the orthogonal projection of the profiled shape of said container (2, 102).
 

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4. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said angle (60) ranges from 90° to 120°.
 

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5. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** the height of said horizontal top (40) is adjustable.
 

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6. A protective cover according to claim 5,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said vertical support walls (20, 30) comprise a resilient section (80).
 

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7. A protective cover according to claim 6,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said resilient section (80) is formed as a multi-plied, accordion folded section (80).
 

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8. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said horizontal top (40) comprises an aperture (42) for a straw.
 

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9. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said horizontal top (40) comprises a central sinking (44) for enhanced wind protection.
 

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10. A protective cover according to claim 9,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said central sinking (44) comprises a holder (46) for holding food.
 

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11. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said protective cover (1) is foldable.
 

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12. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said protective cover (1) is made of disposable material or said protective cover (1) is made of reusable, washable material.
 

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13. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said vertical support (10) and/or said horizontal top (40) are provided with one or more of the following:
 

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  - a message;
  - advertisement;
  - a logo;
  - a drawing.
14. A protective cover according to any of the preceding claims,  
**CHARACTERIZED IN THAT** said container (2, 102) is one of the following:
 

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  - a glass (2);
  - a bottle (102);
  - a pot;
  - a cup;
  - a can;
  - a goblet;
  - a vase;
  - a bowl;
  - a plate.
15. A combination of a protective cover (1) for a drink or food against sunlight and insects according to any of the preceding claims and a container (2, 102) with a profiled shape for identifying said drink or food.
 

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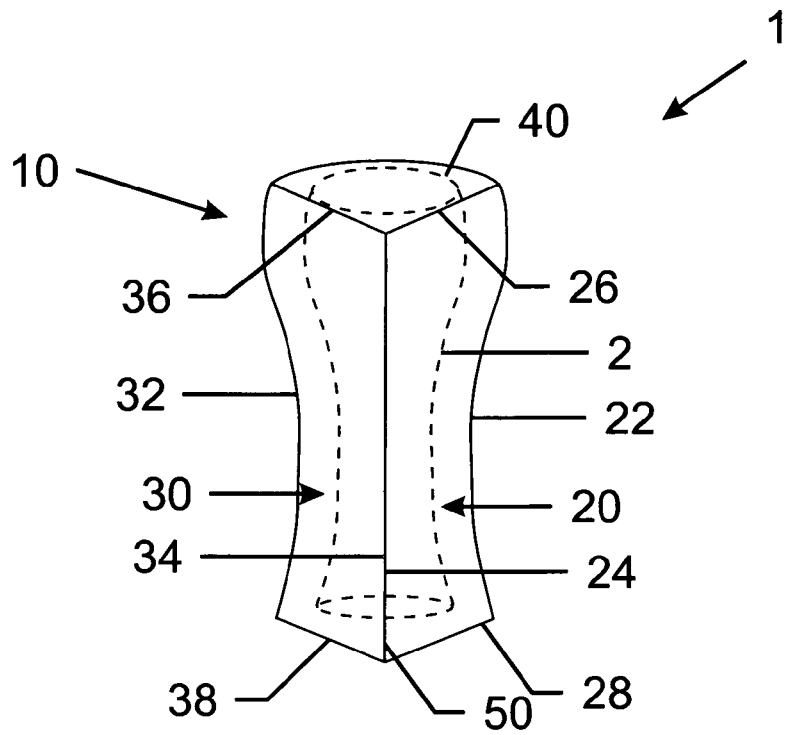


Fig. 1

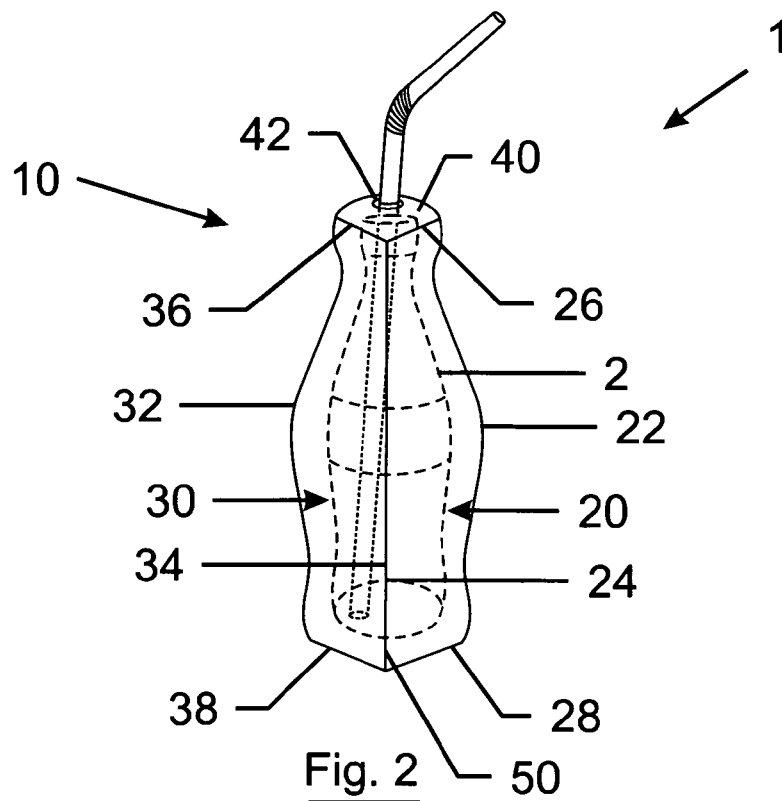
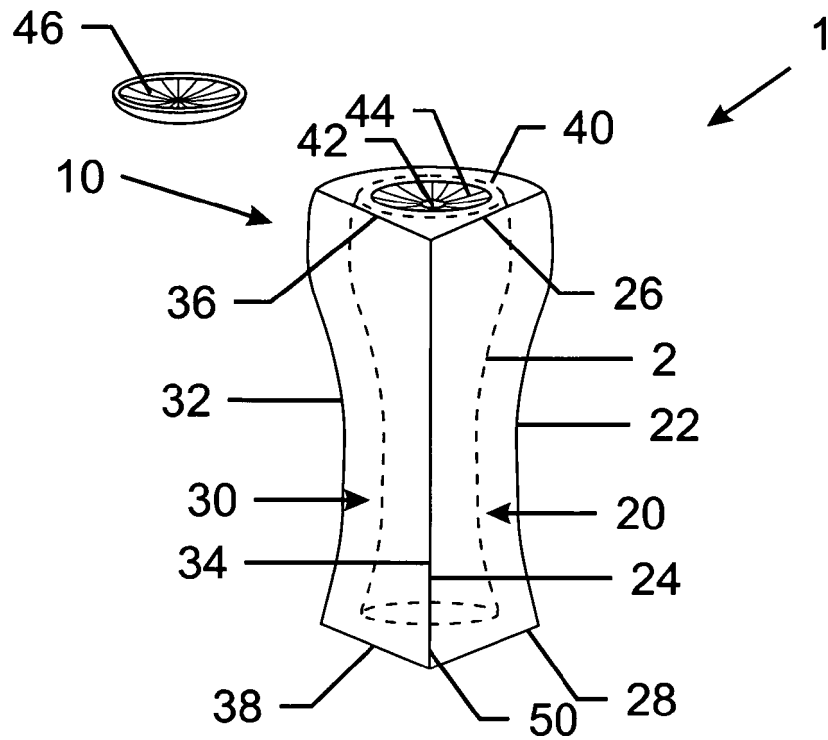
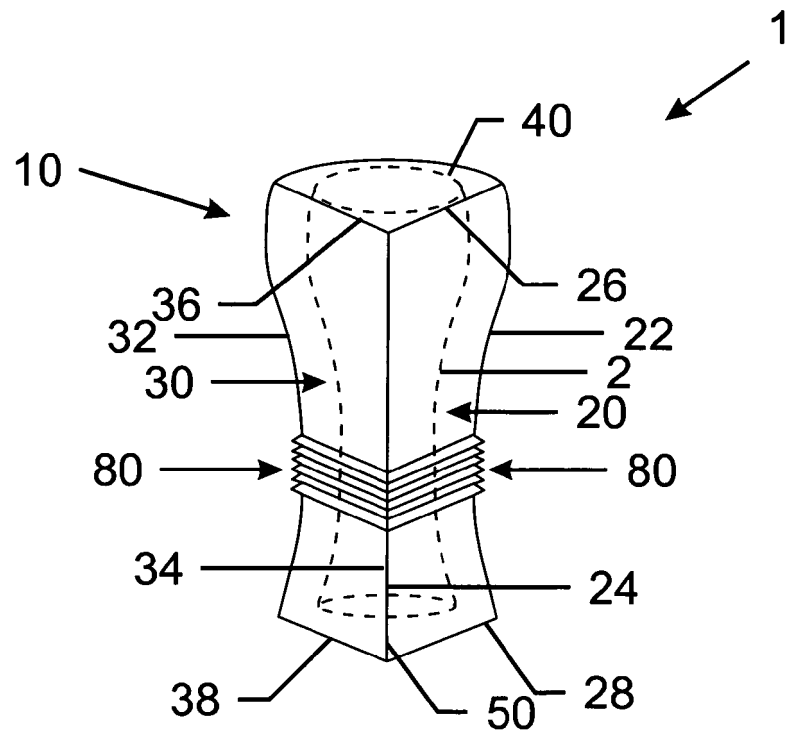


Fig. 2



**Fig. 3**



**Fig. 4**

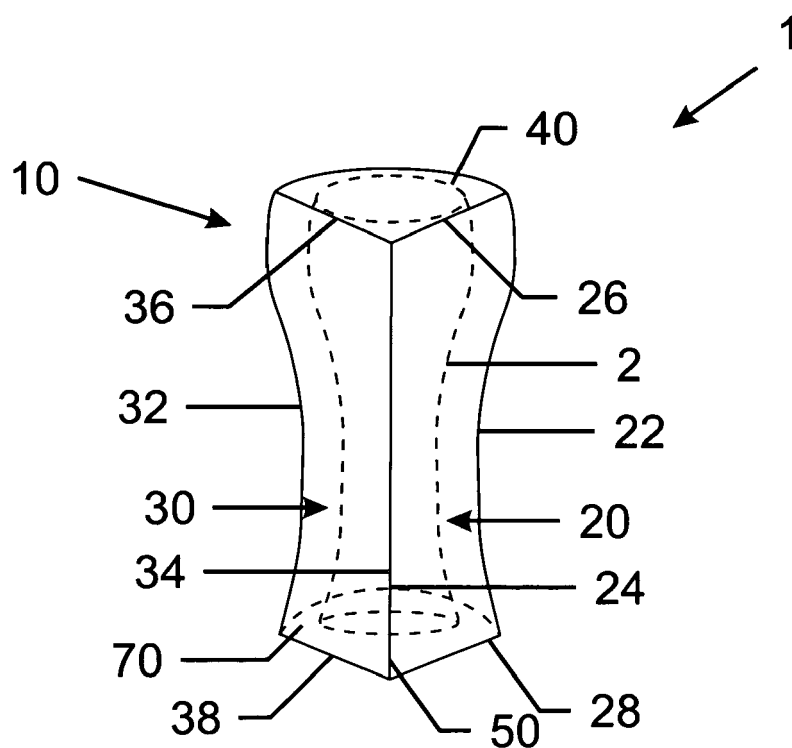


Fig. 5





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Application Number  
EP 10 01 5180

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Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 13 April 2011	Examiner Vistisen, Lars
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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## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
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EP 10 01 5180

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The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
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