(19) Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

(11) **EP 3 707 084 B1**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION**

(45) Date of publication and mention of the grant of the patent:
03.03.2021 Bulletin 2021/09

(21) Application number: **18786367.5**

(22) Date of filing: **22.10.2018**

(51) Int Cl.:
B65D 85/812 *(2006.01)*

(86) International application number:
PCT/EP2018/078875

(87) International publication number:
WO 2019/091767 (16.05.2019 Gazette 2019/20)

(54) **TAG FOR A TEABAG**

ETIKETT FÜR EINEN TEEBEUTEL

ÉTIQUETTE POUR UN SACHET DE THÉ

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR

(30) Priority: **09.11.2017 EP 17200724**

(43) Date of publication of application:
16.09.2020 Bulletin 2020/38

(73) Proprietor: **Unilever IP Holdings B.V.**
3013 AL Rotterdam (NL)

(72) Inventor: **KING, Alexandra,Mary**
Bedford
Bedfordshire MK44 1LQ (GB)

(74) Representative: **Boerma, Caroline**
Unilever N.V.
Unilever Patent Group
Bronland 14
6708 WH Wageningen (NL)

(56) References cited:
DE-U1- 29 806 279
US-A- 2 879 613
US-A- 3 899 599
US-A- 4 880 110

EP 3 707 084 B1

Printed by Jouve, 75001 PARIS (FR)

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a tag for a teabag.

Background

[0002] The use of teabags to prepare tea is common place. They provide the advantage over the use of loose tealeaves that the leaves are dosed in the right amount adjusted for one unit such as for one pot or for one cup. Removal of tea leaves after infusion is convenient, and the process of infusion can be stopped when the desired level is reached.

[0003] Teabags are often connected to a string, to which a tag is attached. Teabags exist where no string is present between tag and teabag, but this results in practical complications where the lid of the teapot is not closed properly, water leakage occurs and a messy presentation, and difficult attachment and to the pot and removal from it, in particular when this should be carried out with one hand. A string allows the tea bag to swirl around in the hot water, thereby enhancing the infusion process. It also allows the infusion process to take place over the entire volume of the pot, which helps justifying the desired end point of the infusion. The connected tag may provide information about the brand of the tea, the type of type, additional flavors, recommended infusion time etc. and is therefore often in a 2-dimensional flat configuration. Another function of the tag is that it helps to attach the string to the cup or to the tea pot. This is desired, as when hot water is poured in the cup or pot the tag is pulled into the cup or pot and needs to be removed with a finger from the resulting beverage, for example when the time has come to stop the infusion process. This can be an unpleasant if not painful experience for various reasons. The risk that the tag is pulled inside the beverage is more likely when a tea pot is used, as the force of the water poured into a large volume for a longer period of time is higher compared to the situation when a cup is filled.

[0004] Securing the string connected to the teabag to the handle of a mug or pot often involves turning the end of the string, including the tag, one or more times around the handle, and suitably followed by a knot for optimal security. Despite this initial relief, when the tea bag needs to be removed and transferred to a saucer, the scenario needs to be reversed, with the complication that the string is wet and the knot invisible.

[0005] It can be envisioned, that these small inconveniences become more serious issues when the tea is prepared in a restaurant setting. This holds true for the situation that individual guests prepare their own pot or cup of tea using a tea bag and when a waiter brings a pot of tea containing on or more tea bags, possibly to be removed at the table.

[0006] US 2,879,613 discloses a tea bag tag connectible with a string to a tea bag.

US 4,880,110 relates generally to grasping means located at the end of retrieval means for tea bags and similar infusion packages.

US 3,899,599 relates to an infusion bag for an infusible substance such as tea or the like comprising a porous-walled container having a head portion reinforced by a flexible strip. DE 298 06 279 U1 discloses tea bag tags that are designed to be attached to the can or cup rim or handle.

[0007] A desire exists in the art, to provide a solution to attach the string of a tea bag to the handle of a tea cup or especially to a tea pot, which is convenient to connect and disconnect, preferably with one hand.

[0008] Surprisingly, this solution is provided by a tag according to claim 1.

In a further aspect, the invention relates to a method to attach a tea tag according to the invention to a handle of a container.

Detailed description

[0009] The invention relates to a tag for a teabag. The tag is made from flexible material. In order to provide a releasable connection with the handle of a tea pot, the tag comprises at least two areas (2,3) that are separated from each other by a cut (4). The adjacent areas (2,3) are located inside of the tag, in a manner, that a frame (5) formed by part of the tag surrounds the areas (2,3). In this way, the two adjacent areas (2,3) are both located within the outer edges or frame (5) of the tag (1). In particular, the two adjacent areas (2,3) are both located within the frame (5) of the tag (1) when the tag is positioned on a flat surface and kept flat (see figure 1). The frame (5) is then not interrupted by a cut. This configuration is preferably provided when the areas (2,3) are defined by two longitudinal slits (7) running in the longest dimension of the tag, preferably parallel to each other, and one cutting line (4) that connects the two longitudinal slits, and preferably connects or intersects them perpendicularly. The length of the cutting line (4) is preferably of between 2 and 0.4 cm, preferably between 12 and 8 mm. The cutting line (4) preferably has the length equal to the distance between slits (7). This is best provided when a H-shaped cut is provided in the tag, wherein the legs of the H run in the longest dimension (length) of the tag. The slits (7) are preferably of between 4 and 1.5 cm, more preferably of between 1.5 and 2.5 cm. Preferably, the adjacent areas (2,3) are rectangular and connected to the tag via their edges (6) most distant *viz à viz* each other.

The shape of the tag is preferably rectangular. This provides the optimal configuration to allow the tag to be handled by one hand. The size of the tag is preferably such that it fits in a packaging of a teabag without the need to crease it. To this end, the length of the tag is preferably the length of a teabag or smaller. Preferably the length (longest dimension) is of between 4 and 7 cm, more preferably between 5 and 6.5 cm. Preferably, the tea tag is

rectangular. When the length of the tag becomes too long, the tag cannot be properly handles with one hand. Moreover, the strength required to maintain the tag on a handle of a teapot is related to the length of the tag, and diminishes with bigger sizes. The width of the tag (short dimension) is preferably of between 1 and 3 cm, more preferably 1.5 and 2.5 cm.

[0010] The adjacent areas (2,3) are partially separable from the tag. In this manner, the adjacent areas (2, 3) become flexed outwardly of the surface of the tag. They remain connected at their respective bases (6) to the tag. Partial separation from the tag is provided for example by pinching the tag between thumb and index finger. With reference to Figure 2 step 1, when the tag is pinched, the frame of the tag is drawn towards the hand of the user (inwardly) whereas the adjacent areas (2,3) and the center area of the tag (location of the crease line), move away from the hand of the user (outwardly). The adjacent areas (2,3) in this case are not in the same plane of the surface of the frame (5) of the tag (1) anymore. In this way the adjacent areas (2,3) separate from the tag and 'open' the tag and form a beak to grab the handle of a tea pot (Figure 2 step 2 and step 3).

[0011] The tag according to the invention is resilient. To improve the resilient properties of the tag, the tag preferably comprises material that is resilient or provides resilience to the tag. Preferably the tag comprises a resilient or resilience providing coating, a resilient layer or is prepared from a resilient material. Resilient coating (or resilience providing coating) or resilient material optimally provides for the tag and the adjacent areas (2,3), that have been opened upon pinching the tag by the user, to return towards their original position within the tag, thereby providing the tag to be pinched on the handle of the tea pot. Preferably the tag comprises a plastic coating, a layer of plastic or is prepared from plastic. Plastic is known to the person skilled in the art, and preferably comprises, more preferably consists of one or more of polyethylene, polypropylene, polylactic acid. In addition to a layer of plastic or a plastic coating a paper layer, such as cardboard, may be preferred. A plastic/paper laminate is preferred. A preferred laminate structure is PLA/Paper/PP. A paper layer is convenient to be printed with a brand name or information to be communicated to the used. A tag, preferably a paper or cardboard tag, that comprises a coating, preferably a resilient coating such as a plastic coating, is most preferred. The tag in this case requires the bounce of the coating to provide the resilience. Information on the tag could relate to the type of tea, the brewing time or the manner to use the tea tag. To further facilitate the functionality of the tea tag, the tag preferably comprises a crease line (8) running over the tag aligning the cut (4) between the two adjacent areas (2,3). The crease line is provided in such a way, that when the tag is pinched between fingers, the tag folds against the direction facilitated by the crease line. When attached to the grip of a tea pot, the crease line enforces the pinch of the tag around the handle of the teapot, by the creation of a movement of the crease line area (e.g. tilt) away from the handle of the teapot and the short outer edges of the tag slightly towards each other, thereby pressing the adjacent areas (2,3) against the handle of the teapot.

[0012] The tag of the invention is preferably connected to a string (9). Such a string is preferably connected to a teabag (10). It is an advantage of the present invention, that the tag of the invention provides proper attachment of the tag to the handle of the teapot, thereby connecting indirectly a teabag, via a string, to the handle of the teapot, and allowing the teabag to whirl around in the pot for optimal infusion. The string preferably has a length of between 10 and 25 cm, more preferably of between 12 and 20 cm, as measured between tag and bag. The teabag preferably is in the 'handbag shape', wherein the teabag comprises a rectangular compartment filled with infusible material and connected to each other at their top, where the string is connected as well. The pyramid shape' can be used, but is less preferred as it might interfere with proper packaging of the tag. The handbag configuration allows the tag to be positioned aligned with the teabag. The tea bag preferably contains tea, but may comprise herbal or other vegetal material, as known in the art. For bags for single servings, such as for a cup, the amount of infusion material other than tea, such as mint, peppermint or chamomile may preferably range from 1.5 grams to 3.5 grams, whereas for tea from 1.5 to 3, preferably 2 to 2.7 grams is preferred. Bags for a teapot comprise preferably 3 to 7 grams of infusible material, wherein 4 to 6 grams can be preferred, especially when the infusible material is tea.

[0013] In a further aspect, the present invention relates to a method to connect a tag according to the present invention to the handle of a container. A container is preferably a tea pot but may be a cup. The method comprising the steps of:

a) Pinching the tag between fingers, thereby allowing the adjacent areas (2,3) to separate from the tag. By pinching, the center of the tag (crease line) and areas (2,3) are allowed to move away from the user and adjacent areas (2,3) separate from the tag.
b) Positioning the separated areas (2,3) over the handle,
c) Releasing the pinch of the fingers, thereby allowing the tag to release towards its original configuration,

thereby connecting the tag to the handle.

[0014] The present invention provides a new and simple manner to attach a teabag to a teapot, which provides the advantage that this can be carried out with one hand. Knotting or fumbling of the string or the tag connected to it in existing configuration is not needed. Disconnecting the tag from the handle can be carried out with one hand, and as no knots or entanglements were needed, this is easily done. When the tag is connected with the tea bag

via a string, which is the most preferred configuration, the dimension of the tag and the manner the tag pinches the handle of the pot allow free whirling around of a tea bag in the pot. The inventor is not aware of any device in the art that provides these advantages and overcomes the specific complication in the art in this elegant manner.

[0015] The invention is now exemplified by the following non-limiting examples.

Examples

[0016] The invention is illustrated with reference to Figure 1. Figure 1 shows a tag (1) according to the invention, wherein the tag is connected to a string (9), thereby connecting a teabag (10) filled with tea with the tea tag. The tag comprises two adjacent areas (2) and (3) separated from each other by a cut (4) which are surrounded by a frame, or outer area (5). The areas (2) and (3), are partially separable from the tag, as they are cut via H-shaped cut (7) but are connected at their respective bases (6). A crease line (8) directs folding of the tag in the direction opposite (downwards), when the tag is attached to the handle of a pot. This increases the force of the pinch of the tag on the handle of the pot. In Figure 1 the teabag (10) is indicated for purposes of reference only and its shape and dimension may not represent a final teabag shape, this also holds for the point where the string (9) is connected to the tea bag (10).

[0017] Figure 2 illustrates the method to attach the tag of the invention to the handle of a container, in this case a tea pot. In step 1 the outer (short) sides are pinched towards each other in the direction of the hand of the user. As a result, the centre area (crease line 8) of the tag and adjacent areas (2, 3) move away from the hand of the user and the areas (2,3) separate from the tag . This allows the location of the tag on the handle of the container in step 2. In step 3, the pinch of the hand is released and the tag is allowed to return towards its original configuration, due to its resilient character, in this way providing a pinch. The pinch force is increased by the presence of the crease line (8), as the crease line (8) tilts the tag slightly away from the handle of the container.

Claims

1. Tag (1) to secure a string (9) of a tea bag (10) to a handle of a teapot, the tag being flexible and resilient and comprising at least two adjacent areas (2,3) separated by a cut (4) that are partially separable from the tag (1), and wherein the two adjacent areas (2,3) are both located within the outer edges (5) of the tag (1).

2. Tag according to claim 1, wherein the adjacent areas are rectangular and connected to the tag via their edges (6) most distant viz a viz each other.

3. Tag according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the areas are defined by two longitudinal slits (7) running in the longest dimension of the tag, and one cutting line (4) that connects the two longitudinal slits.

4. Tag according to claim 3, wherein the areas are defined by a H-shaped cut.

5. Tag according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tag is rectangular.

6. Tag according to claim 5, wherein the length of the tag is between 4 and 7 cm and the width is between 1 and 3 cm.

7. Tag according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the tag comprises a resilient coating, a resilience providing coating, a resilient layer, or wherein the tag is made of resilient material.

8. Tag according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the tag comprises a plastic coating, a cardboard layer and a plastic layer, or wherein the tag is made of plastic.

9. Tag according to claim 8, wherein plastic comprises one or more of polyethylene, polypropylene, polylactic acid.

10. Tag according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the tag comprises a crease line (8) running over the tag aligning the cut (4) between the two adjacent areas (2,3).

11. Tag according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the tag is connected to a string (9).

12. Tag according to claim 11, wherein the string is connected to a teabag (10).

13. Tag according to claim 11 or 12, wherein the string has a length of between 10 and 25 cm, preferably of between 12 and 20 cm, as measured between tag and bag.

14. Method to connect a tag according to anyone of claims 1 to 13 to the handle of a container, the method comprising the steps of:

    a) Pinching the tag between fingers, thereby allowing the areas (2,3) to separate from the tag.
    b) Positioning the separated areas (2,3) over the handle,
    c) Releasing the pinch of the fingers, thereby allowing the tag to release towards its original configuration,

    thereby connecting the tag to the handle.

Patentansprüche

1. Etikett (1) zum Befestigen einer Schnur (9) eines Teebeutels (10) an einem Griff einer Teekanne, wobei das Etikett flexibel und elastisch ist und mindestens zwei benachbarte Bereiche (2, 3) umfasst, die durch einen Schnitt (4) getrennt sind und teilweise von dem Etikett (1) trennbar sind und wobei sich die zwei benachbarten Bereiche (2, 3) beide innerhalb der äußeren Ränder (5) des Etiketts (1) befinden.

2. Etikett nach Anspruch 1, wobei die benachbarten Bereiche rechteckig sind und über ihre Ränder (6), die vis-a-vis am weitesten voneinander entfernt sind, mit dem Etikett verbunden sind.

3. Etikett nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei die Bereiche definiert sind durch zwei Längsschlitze (7), die in der längsten Abmessung des Etiketts verlaufen, und eine Schnittlinie (4), die die beiden Längsschlitze verbindet.

4. Etikett nach Anspruch 3, wobei die Bereiche durch einen H-förmigen Schnitt definiert sind.

5. Etikett nach irgendeinem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei das Etikett rechteckig ist.

6. Etikett nach Anspruch 5, wobei die Länge des Etiketts zwischen 4 und 7 cm liegt und die Breite zwischen 1 und 3 cm liegt.

7. Etikett nach irgendeinem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei das Etikett eine elastische Beschichtung, eine Elastizität bereitstellende Beschichtung, eine elastische Schicht umfasst oder wobei das Etikett aus elastischem Material ist.

8. Etikett nach irgendeinem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei das Etikett eine Kunststoffbeschichtung, eine Kartonschicht und eine Kunststoffschicht umfasst oder wobei das Etikett aus Kunststoff ist.

9. Etikett nach Anspruch 8, wobei der Kunststoff einen oder mehrere von Polyethylen, Polypropylen, Polymilchsäure umfasst.

10. Etikett nach irgendeinem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei das Etikett eine Falzlinie (8) umfasst, die über dem Etikett verläuft und den Schnitt (4) zwischen den beiden benachbarten Bereichen (2, 3) ausrichtet.

11. Etikett nach irgendeinem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei das Etikett mit einer Schnur (9) verbunden ist.

12. Etikett nach Anspruch 11, wobei die Schnur mit einem Teebeutel (10) verbunden ist.

13. Etikett nach Anspruch 11 oder 12, wobei die Schnur eine Länge zwischen 10 und 25 cm, bevorzugt zwischen 12 und 20 cm aufweist, gemessen zwischen Etikett und Beutel.

14. Verfahren zum Verbinden eines Etiketts nach irgendeinem der Ansprüche 1 bis 13 mit dem Griff eines Behälters, wobei das Verfahren die folgenden Schritte umfasst:

    a) Einklemmen des Etiketts zwischen Fingern, wodurch sich die Bereiche (2, 3) von dem Etikett absondern lassen,
    b) Positionieren der getrennten Bereiche (2, 3) über dem Griff,
    c) Lösen des Kniffs der Finger, wodurch sich das Etikett in Richtung seiner ursprünglichen Konfiguration freisetzen lässt.

    wodurch das Etikett mit dem Griff verbunden wird.

Revendications

1. Etiquette (1) pour fixer une ficelle (9) d'un sachet de thé (10) à une anse d'une théière, l'étiquette étant flexible et résiliente et comprenant au moins deux zones adjacentes (2, 3) séparées par une entaille (4) qui sont partiellement séparables de l'étiquette (1), et dans laquelle les deux zones adjacentes (2, 3) sont toutes les deux disposées dans les bords externes (5) de l'étiquette (1).

2. Etiquette selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle les zones adjacentes sont rectangulaires et connectées à l'étiquette via leurs bords (6) les plus distants les uns des autres.

3. Etiquette selon la revendication 1 ou 2, dans laquelle les zones sont définies par deux fentes longitudinales (7) courant sur la dimension la plus longue de l'étiquette, et une ligne d'entaille (4) qui connecte les deux fentes longitudinales.

4. Etiquette selon la revendication 3, dans laquelle les zones sont définies par une entaille en forme de H.

5. Etiquette selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle l'étiquette est rectangulaire.

6. Etiquette selon la revendication 5, dans laquelle la longueur de l'étiquette est de 4 à 7 cm et la largeur est de 1 à 3 cm.

7. Etiquette selon l'une quelconque des revendications

précédentes, dans laquelle l'étiquette comprend un revêtement résilient, un revêtement fournissant une résilience, une couche résiliente, ou dans laquelle l'étiquette est constituée de matériau résilient.

8. Etiquette selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle l'étiquette comprend un revêtement plastique, une couche de carton, et une couche plastique, ou dans laquelle l'étiquette est constituée de plastique.

9. Etiquette selon la revendication 8, dans laquelle du plastique comprend un ou plusieurs de polyéthylène, polypropylène, poly(acide lactique).

10. Etiquette selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle l'étiquette comprend une ligne de pliure (8) courant sur l'étiquette alignant l'entaille (4) entre les deux zones adjacentes (2, 3).

11. Etiquette selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle l'étiquette est connectée à une ficelle (9).

12. Etiquette selon la revendication 11, dans lequel la ficelle est connectée à un sachet de thé (10).

13. Etiquette selon la revendication 11 ou 12, dans laquelle la ficelle présente une longueur de 10 à 25 cm, de préférence de 12 à 20 cm, comme mesurée entre l'étiquette et le sachet.

14. Procédé pour connecter une étiquette selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 13 à l'anse d'un récipient, le procédé comprenant les étapes de :

a) serrage du sachet entre les doigts, laissant ainsi les zones (2, 3) se séparer de l'étiquette
b) positionnement des zones séparées (2, 3) sur l'anse,
c) libération du serrage des doigts, laissant par-là l'étiquette se libérer vers sa configuration d'origine,

connectant par-là l'étiquette à l'anse.

Fig. 1

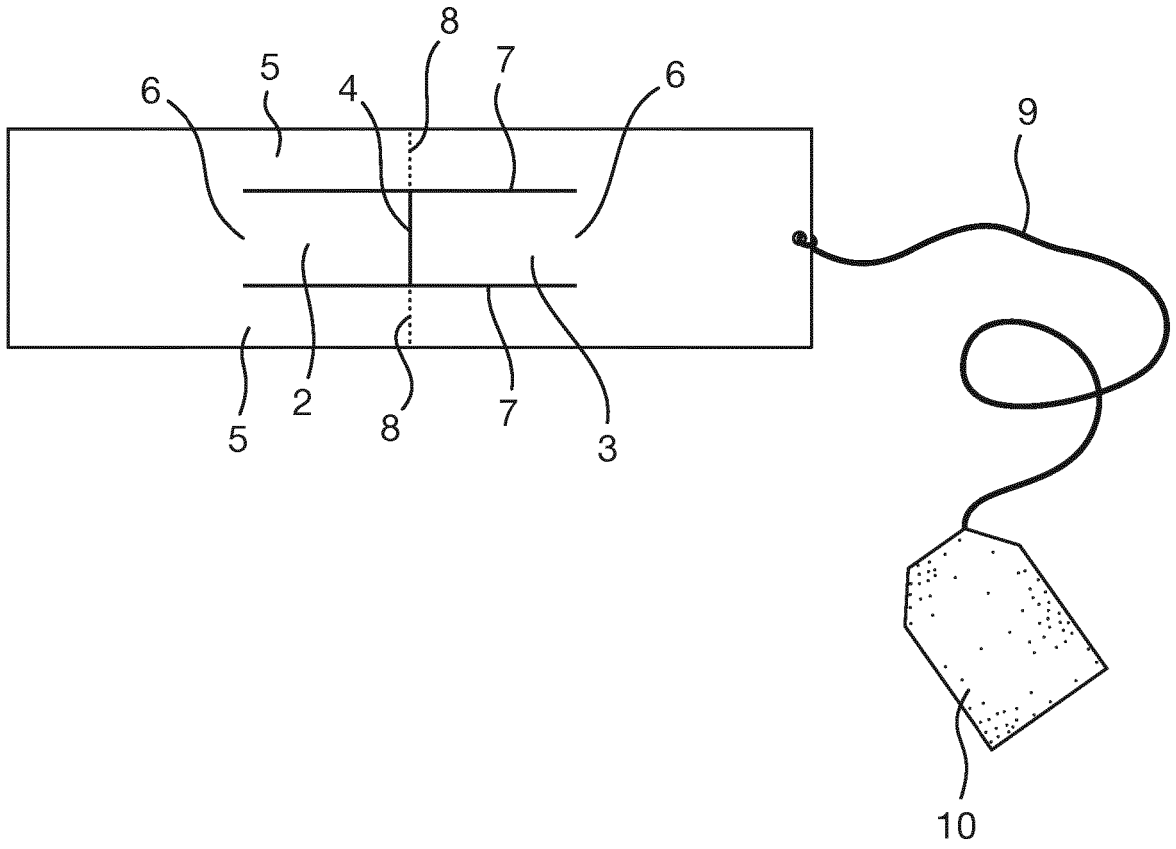
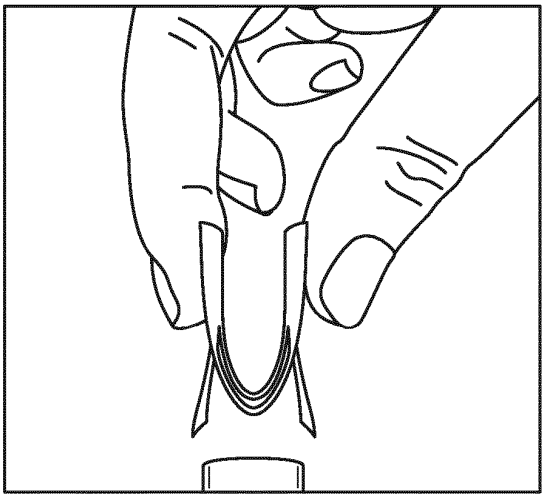
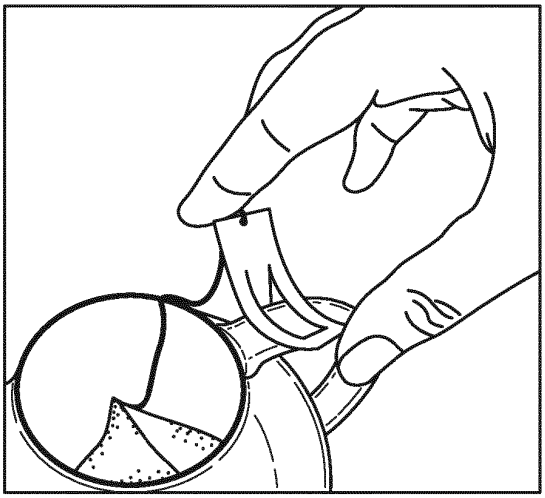


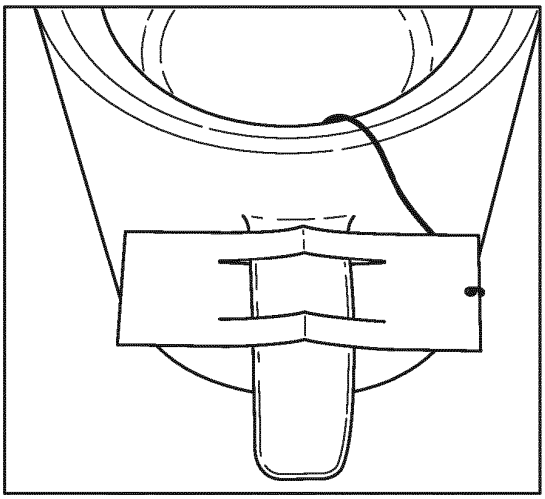
Fig. 2



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

Patent documents cited in the description

- US 2879613 A **[0006]**
- US 4880110 A **[0006]**
- US 3899599 A **[0006]**
- DE 29806279 U1 **[0006]**