May 25, 1948. S. W. ORR ET AL 2,442,176

THUMB SUCKING INHIBITOR OR NOVELTY DEVICE

Filed June 29, 1946

Fig. 1

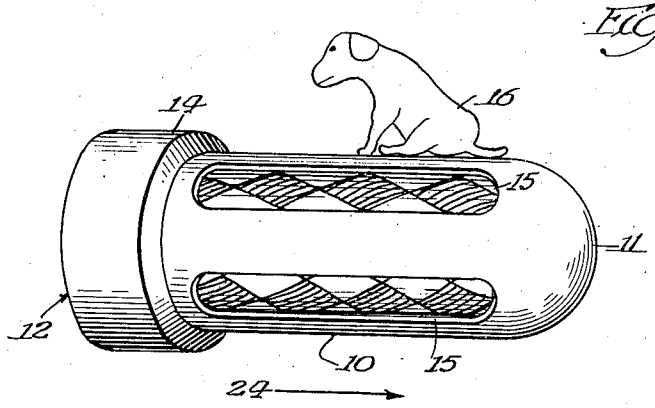


Fig. 2

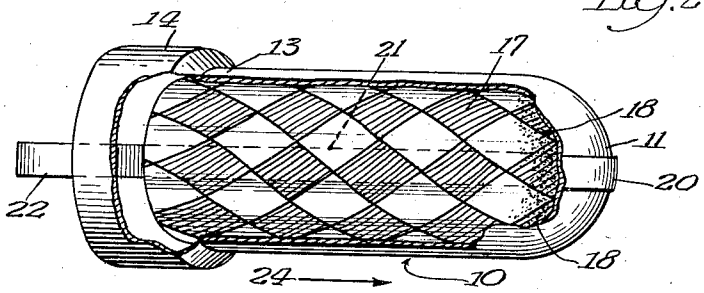


Fig. 3

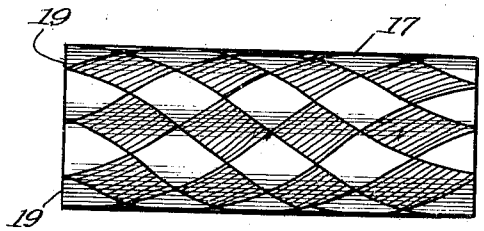
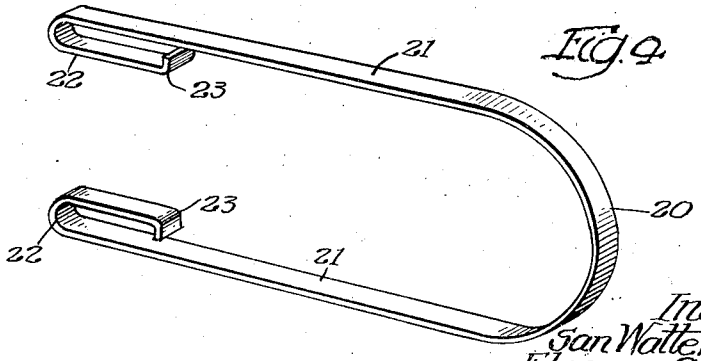


Fig. 4



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THUMB SUCKING INHIBITOR OR NOVELTY DEVICE

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2 Claims. (Cl. 128—133)

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Our invention relates generally to improvements in thumb sucking inhibitors for babies and similar novelty devices.

One object of our improvement is to provide a thumb sucking inhibitor or novelty device in which the device is secured directly to the digit rather than being secured to the hand, or wrist, or some similar place other than the digit.

A further object of our invention is to provide concealed means permitting the inhibitor or novelty device to be detached or released from the digit, so that an unauthorized detachment or release is prevented.

Other objects of the invention will appear hereinafter.

Our invention is exemplified in the accompanying drawings which illustrate a few selected embodiments of the invention and in which

Fig. 1 is an elevational view of one embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a view similar to Fig. 1 in which portions of the sidewalls of the embodiment are broken away for purposes of clarity to show the interior construction;

Fig. 3 illustrates the construction of the locking means located within Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a release key which is used to detach the inhibitor or novelty device from a digit.

The exemplification illustrated in Figs. 1 to 3 comprises an outer sheath 10 which is preferably made of a plastic material and which is made slightly larger than the digit which it is intended to cover. The sheath 10 comprises a closed cap end 11, an open end 12 and a cylindrical portion 13. Near the open end 12 of the sheath, the cylindrical portion 13 is enlarged as at 14. The cylindrical portion 13 is provided with a plurality of longitudinal openings 15 which permit the sucking of air so as to prevent a child from deriving satisfaction from sucking his thumb and so as to prevent the thumb from becoming too warm. An ornamental figure 16, which may be of a dog or the like, is secured to the cylindrical portion 13 of the sheath and extends radially from the sheath so as to make an article too large to be swallowed by the child in the event that it accidentally becomes disconnected from the child's finger.

The thumb sucking inhibitor or novelty device may be secured to the digit by means of a tubular, woven, expansible and contractile grip 17 which is familiarly known as the "Chinese" finger trap. The grip 17 is preferably also made of a plastic material and it may be secured to the interior of the sheath 10 at the interior of

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the closed end 11 in the interior of the grip, as at 18, preferably by cementing. The interior diameter of the grip 17 should correspond approximately to the diameter of the digit to which the grip is to be applied, and the length of the grip should be slightly less than the interior length of the sheath 10 so that the release ends 19 of the grip will not project outwardly beyond the open end 12 of the sheath.

In order to apply the inhibitor or novelty device to a digit, it is merely pressed upon the digit with the digit entering the interior of the grip 17. If an attempt is made to remove the inhibitor or novelty device, the grip 17 tends to lengthen which reduces its interior diameter and causes it to embrace the digit tightly. This prevents withdrawal of the inhibitor or novelty device from the digit.

A key 20 is provided to permit removal of the inhibitor or novelty device from the digit. The key 20 is generally U shaped with two legs 21. The distance between the two legs 21 is slightly greater than the diameter of the enlarged portion 14 of the sheath 10. Each of the legs 21 is provided with a return bend 22, at the end of which there is located a pad 23. The key 20 should preferably be about two inches longer than the sheath 10 of the inhibitor or novelty device.

In operating the key 20, it is placed in axial alignment with the inhibitor or thumb sucker preventer with the pads 23 positioned for entry into the opening 12 of the sheath 10. If the key is then moved axially to the right in the direction indicated by the arrow 24 in Fig. 1, the pads 23 will contact the release ends 19 of the grip 17. This will cause the grip 17 to compress in length, thereby increasing its diameter and permitting a ready removal of the inhibitor or novelty device.

By designing a key 20, separate and distinct from the inhibitor itself, and by concealing the release mechanism of the inhibitor, namely the ends 19 of the grip 17 from the person to whose digit the inhibitor has been applied, it is possible to prevent an unauthorized removal of the inhibitor or novelty device from the digit.

In the claims, the expression "inhibitor" is intended to describe the applicants' invention, whether it be used as a thumb sucking inhibitor or whether it be used as an amusement device.

We claim:

1. An inhibitor comprising an outer sheath, an internal tubular woven expansible and contractile grip connected to said sheath and adapt-

ed to fit on a digit to prevent removal of said inhibitor by pulling, and release means covered by said sheath and adapted to permit selective release of said locking means to thereby permit removal of said inhibitor from the digit, said release means being located interiorly of the open end of said outer sheath and so concealed as to make operation of the release means impractical without utilization of some device other than fingers.

2. An inhibitor comprising an outer sheath, an internal tubular woven expansible and contractile grip connected to said sheath and adapted to fit on a digit to prevent removal of said inhibitor by pulling, release means covered by said sheath and adapted to permit selective release of said locking means to thereby permit removal of said inhibitor from the digit, said release means being located interiorly of the open end of said outer sheath, and a key adapted to engage the release means so as to compress and expand the grip, thereby permitting removal of the inhibitor from the digit.

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