

DESCRIPTION
PACKAGED MEDICINE

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 [0001]

The present invention relates to a packaged medicine in which a medicine (for example, tablet or capsule) including a micro-device is packaged in a container.

10 BACKGROUND ART

[0002]

Patent Literatures (PTLs) 1 to 3 each disclose a tablet containing an embedded micro-device (IC-chip). The microchip embedded tablets can be manufactured by compressing, from above and below, a dose of powdered medicine containing a micro-device.

[0003]

PTL 4 discloses, as one of the micro-device embedded tablets, a tablet with a transmitter which is designed to transmit a signal when the tablet is ingested into the body and then brought into contact with a conductive liquid (for example, gastric acid). In one embodiment disclosed in PTL 4, in order to produce a chemical battery, by using the conductive liquid in the body as an electrolyte, which generates electric power by the battery for signal

transmitting, the micro-device has a pair of anode and cathode electrodes with mutually different ionization tendencies and a transmitter operable to transmit a signal using electric power generated between the electrodes. In this embodiment, for example, copper chloride is used for the anode electrode, and magnesium, sodium zinc, or lithium iron is used for the cathode electrode.

PRIOR ART DOCUMENTS

PATENT LITERATURES

[0004]

[PTL 1] JP 2014-138954 A

[PTL 2] JP 2014-138795 A

[PTL 3] JP 2014-200046 A

[PTL 4] JP 2014-525780 A

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005]

Disadvantageously, the anode electrode made of copper chloride tends to deteriorate with time. Conventionally, the deterioration of the anode has been thought to be caused by the contacts with other substances, in particular moisture. Then, to ensure the micro-device to fully exercise its ability, it was considered necessary to place the micro-device in a dry condition with the aid of desiccant agent.

[0006]

Then, inventors of this application conducted an exhaustive study for providing an packaged medicine capable of protecting its electrode from being deteriorated over a long period of time and reliably transmitting signal when ingested irrespective of the time from production to ingestion, which shows that, once placed in the atmosphere, the anode electrode is susceptible to deterioration, in particular, by the contact with oxygen and moisture contained in the atmosphere, namely, that copper chloride (CuCl) forming the anode electrode of the micro-device contacts oxygen (O_2) and water (H_2O) in the ambient atmosphere to generate copper chloride hydroxide ($\text{Cu}_2(\text{OH})_3\text{Cl}$) leading the deterioration of the anode electrode, which results in that the micro-device can fail to transmit an expected signal when ingested. Based upon the knowledge obtained by the study, the inventors found that isolating the tablet in a low-oxygen condition can protect the tablets from being making contact with oxygen and thereby prevent the tablet from being deteriorated even after a long period of time has elapsed from production, thereby leading to the present invention.

[0007]

In order to achieve the object described above, a packaged medicine according to a present embodiment

comprises:

a solid medicine including drug powder and a micro-device;

a container provided with a solid medicine
5 accommodating space accommodating the solid medicine therein; and

inert gas encapsulated in the solid medicine accommodating space,

the micro-device including:

10 a first electrode comprising a first material;

a second electrode comprising a second material with a ionization tendency different from that of the first material; and

a transmitter that transmits a signal using
15 electromotive force generated between the first electrode and the second electrode when the first electrode and the second electrode are in contact with an electrolyte.

[0008]

In another aspect of the present invention, the solid
20 medicine is a tablet, and the micro-device is supported by the tablet.

[0009]

In another aspect of the present invention, the solid
medicine has a capsule, and the drug powder and a micro-
25 device are accommodated in the capsule.

[0010]

In another aspect of the present invention, the solid medicine has a capsule, the drug powder is accommodated in the capsule, and the micro-device is held in the capsule.

5 [0011]

In another aspect of the present invention, the inert gas is nitrogen gas.

[0012]

10 In another aspect of the present invention, the container is a blister package, a pouch package, a jar package, or a bottle package.

[0013]

In another aspect of the present invention, the first material is copper chloride.

15 [0014]

In another aspect of the present invention, the second material is magnesium.

[0015]

20 In another aspect of the present invention, the drug powder is drug powder of which quality does not deteriorate even when coming into contact with oxygen.

[0016]

25 According to an embodiment of the present invention configured in this manner, since a tablet placed in an environment with a low concentration of oxygen is isolated

from oxygen and inhibited from deteriorating, even when the tablet is ingested after a long period of time has elapsed since production, the tablet can transmit a signal in a stable manner by entering a body and coming into contact with a body fluid (gastric acid).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017]

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of packaged medicine according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a tablet included in the packaged medicine shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a circuit block diagram of a micro-device mounted in the tablet shown in Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is a graph showing a result of Experiment 1.

Fig. 5 is a graph showing a result of Experiment 2.

Fig. 6 is a graph showing a result of Experiment 3.

Fig. 7 is a graph showing a result of Experiment 4.

Fig. 8 is a perspective view of a packaged medicine according to another embodiment.

EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0018]

Hereinafter, embodiments of packaged medicine according to the present invention will be described with reference to

the accompanying drawings.

[0019]

Fig. 1 shows a packaged medicine 10 according to an embodiment of the present invention. The illustrated packaged medicine 10 has a blister package (container) 12 or a blister package sheet. For example, the blister package 12 is made by bonding a transparent plastic sheet 14 and an aluminum sheet 16 forming respective upper and lower layers of the packaged medicine. The upper layer transparent plastic sheet 14 includes a plurality of chambers for accommodating medicines (medicine accommodating chambers) 18 formed by, for example, vacuum molding, each of which has a configuration matching with the medicine to be accommodated. Bottom openings of the medicine accommodating chambers 18 are sealed by the lower aluminum sheet 16.

[0020]

Each of the medicine accommodating chambers 18 of the blister package 12 accommodates a solid medicine 20. In this embodiment, the solid medicine 20 is a tablet 22. Although the size of the tablet 22 is not limited, in consideration of ease of ingestion, the maximum size of the medicine is preferably 5 to 12 mm and, more favorably 7 to 8 mm.

[0021]

Air in medicine accommodating chambers 18 is replaced

during the production of the packaged medicine so that the tablet 22 is placed in an environment with a low concentration of oxygen. Although a replacement rate of inert gas does not need to be 100%, a proportion of oxygen remaining in the medicine accommodating chamber 18 is favorably as low as possible. Preferably, nitrogen is used for the inert gas, other inert gases may be employed instead.

[0022]

A method for replacing the air in the medicine accommodating chamber 18 of the blister package 12 with inert gas is well known in JP 2011-213351 A, for example.

[0023]

As shown in Fig. 2, the tablet 22 holds a micro-device (a micro-chip) 24. The maximum size of the micro-device 24 is 1 mm or less, more preferably several ten to several hundred micrometers.

[0024]

In this embodiment, the micro-device 24 is held inside the tablet 22. As described in PTL's 1 to 3, the tablet which internally holds a micro-device in this manner is formed by compressing drug powder and a micro-device arranged thereinside from above and below. The tablet 22 may be a tablet made of drug powder of which quality does not deteriorate due to the contact with oxygen. The "drug powder of which quality does not deteriorate" refers to drug powders

of which a reduction in content is 5% or less, an increase in analogous substances is 1.0% or less, or a reduction in elution is 10% or less, during a storage period of 36 months at a temperature of 25°C or 6 months at a temperature of 40°C.

5 [0025]

The micro-device 24 may be attached to a surface of the tablet 22. In this embodiment, preferably the micro-device 24 is attached to the surface of the tablet using an appropriate edible adhesive (for example, a starch glue).

10 [0026]

As shown in Fig. 3, the micro-device 24 is made of a semiconductor integrated circuit substrate (silicon substrate) 26 with anode and cathode electrodes 28 and 30 mounted on the surface of the substrate. For example, the substrate 26 is manufactured using known semiconductor manufacturing techniques, and the anode and cathode electrodes 28 and 30 are produced using known film forming techniques. In this embodiment, copper chloride is used for the anode electrode 28 and magnesium is used for the cathode electrode 30.

20 [0027]

Various circuits are formed on the substrate of the micro-device 24. For example, the micro-device 24 according to this embodiment a power supply unit (a power supply circuit) 32, a control unit (a control circuit) 34, and a

transmitter (a transmitting circuit) 36. The power supply unit 32 is configured to be directly or indirectly connected to the anode and cathode electrodes 28 and 30, such that, when the micro-device 24 comes into contact with a conductive body fluid (for example, gastric acid), the power unit 32 cooperates with the anode and cathode electrodes 28 and 30 to form a chemical cell, which supplies electric power to other circuits. The control unit 34 is configured to receive the electric power supplied from the power supply unit 32 and transmit a signal to the transmitter 36. The transmitter 36 is configured to receive the electric power from the power supply unit 32 and transmit a signal in response to a signal from the control unit 34.

[0028]

According to the packaged medicine 10 so constructed, the tablets 22 are accommodated in the medicine accommodating chambers 18 substantially filled with inert gas and are isolated from moisture and oxygen. Therefore, even when a long period of time elapses since production, no copper chloride hydroxide portion will be generated on the surface of electrodes of the micro-device 24, in particular, the anode electrode made of copper chloride. Also, when the tablet 22 is ingested into the body of a patient and then comes into contact with gastric acid, the anode electrode 28 and the cathode electrode 30 forms a chemical cell together

with the gastric acid to generate electromotive force. The generated electric power is supplied from the power supply unit 32 to the control unit 34 and the transmitter 36. The transmitter 36 transmits a signal in response to a signal from the control unit 34. The transmitted signal is received by a patient's dedicated receiver or computer capable of receiving the signal (for example, a smartphone) installed with a dedicated software or application, recording the administration of the tablets.

[Experiments]

[0029]

The micro-devices were placed in different environments, and lifetimes (signal generation times) of the micro-devices were measured.

[0030]

[Experiment 1]

Prepared were blister packages having a pair of opposite aluminum cover sheets and micro-device embedded tablets (A) disposed between the cover sheets. The blister packages were placed in experimental environments at a temperature of 60°C with oxygen concentration of 20.9%, 5%, and 1%. After the elapse of zero week (0W) (i.e., immediately after the placement in the experimental environment), 1 week (1W), 2 weeks (2W), 3 weeks (3W), 4 weeks (4W), 6 weeks (6W), and 12 weeks (12W), the tablets were taken out of respective

experimental environments. The tablets were then brought into contact with an experimental solution to measure signal transmission times. Also, a water content (%) of the tablet $[(\text{mass of moisture included in tablet} / \text{mass of medicine}) \times 100]$ was measured at respective elapsed times. The experimental results are indicated in Figs. 4A and 4B. In Fig. 4A, a vertical axis represents transmission time and a horizontal axis represents elapsed time. In Fig. 4B, a vertical axis represents water content and a horizontal axis represents measurement time points.

[0031]

[Experiment 2]

Blister packages accommodating tablets B were prepared. Other experimental conditions were the same as those of Experiment 1. The experimental results are indicated in Figs. 5A and 5B.

[0032]

[Experiments 3 and 4]

Two types of double-sided aluminum blister packages with micro-device embedded tablets (A) and (B), respectively, were prepared. The blister packages were placed in experimental environments at a temperature of 40°C with oxygen concentration of 20.9%, 5%, and 1%. After the elapse of zero week (0W) (i.e., immediately after the placement in the experimental environment), 1 month (1M), 3 months (3M),

and 6 months (6M), the tablets were taken out of respective experimental environments. The tablets were then brought into contact with the experimental solution to measure signal transmission times. The results of experiments 3 and 4 for tablets (A) and (B), respectively, are indicated in Figs. 6A and 6B and Figs. 7A and 7B.

[0033]

Figs. 4B, 5B, 6B, and 7B show that the oxygen concentration in the package does not affect the amount of moisture included in a tablet. Also, Figs. 4A, 5A, 6A, and 7A show that the performance of micro-device does not significantly decrease in the environments with low oxygen concentration (5% and 1%), but it decreases to a large extent during early stages (up until 1 W or 2 W) in the environment with high oxygen concentration (20.9%).

[0034]

As described above, the experiments prove that the oxygen concentration in the environment significantly affects the deterioration of performance of the micro-device. Therefore, according to the embodiment of the present invention described above, tablets placed in the environment with a lower concentration of oxygen for a long time from production to ingestion can transmit a signal in a stable manner by the contact with the fluid in the body.

[0035]

Although discussions have been made to the specific embodiment in which the solid medicines 40 in the packaged medicine are tablets, they may be capsules 42 shown in Fig. 8. In this embodiment, the micro-device may be loosely
5 packed together with powdered medicine in a container 44 of the capsule.

[0036]

Alternatively, the micro-device may be fixed on an inner or outer surface of the container 44. In this embodiment,
10 preferably each electrode, in particular the anode electrode made of copper chloride susceptible to deterioration, is bonded and protected so that it does not make direct contacts with air.

[0037]

Although in the previous embodiment the container of
15 the packaged medicine is made of blister package having top and bottom aluminum sheets, it may be a laminated container made by bonding top plastic sheet and bottom aluminum sheet together.

20 [0038]

Further, the container for accommodating the solid medicines is not limited to the blister package and may be a pouch package, jar package, or bottle package.

25 REFERENCE SIGNS

[0039]

10 packaged medicine
12 blister package
14 plastic sheet
5 16 aluminum sheet
18 medicine accommodating chamber (medicine accommodating
space)
20 solid medicine
22 tablet
10 24 micro-device
26 substrate
28 anode electrode
30 cathode electrode
32 power supply unit
15 34 control unit
36 transmitter
40 solid medicine
42 capsule
44 container

20

CLAIMS

1. A packaged medicine, comprising:

a plurality of ingestible solid medicines, each
5 including drug powder;

a plurality of micro-devices, each held by the solid
medicines; and

a container comprising an upper sheet and a lower
sheet, the upper sheet and the lower sheet being bonded to
10 each other to form a plurality of solid medicine
accommodating chambers, wherein each of said plurality of
solid medicine accommodating chambers separately
accommodates one of said plurality of solid medicines
thereinside, and wherein air in each of said plurality of
15 solid medicine accommodating chambers is replaced by inert
gas;

each of said plurality of micro-devices including:

a first electrode comprising a first material;

a second electrode comprising a second material with
20 an ionization tendency different from that of the first
material; and

a transmitter that transmits a signal using
electromotive force generated between the first electrode
and the second electrode when the first electrode and the
25 second electrode are in contact with an electrolyte.

2. The packaged medicine according to claim 1, wherein
each of the solid medicines is a tablet, and
a corresponding one of the micro-devices is supported
5 by the tablet.

3. The packaged medicine according to claim 1, wherein
each of the solid medicines has a capsule, and
the drug powder and a corresponding one of the micro-
10 devices are accommodated in the capsule.

4. The packaged medicine according to claim 1, wherein
each of the solid medicines has a capsule,
the drug powder is accommodated in the capsule, and
15 a corresponding one of the micro-devices is held in
the capsule.

5. The packaged medicine according to any one of claims 1
to 4, wherein the inert gas is nitrogen gas.
20

6. The packaged medicine according to any one of claims 1
to 5, wherein the container is a blister package or a pouch
package.

7. The packaged medicine according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the first material is copper chloride.

8. The packaged medicine according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the second material is magnesium.

9. The packaged medicine according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the drug powder is a drug powder of which quality does not deteriorate by a contact with oxygen.

10

10. The packaged medicine according to claim 1, wherein the upper sheet is a transparent plastic sheet, and the lower sheet is an aluminum sheet.

11. The packaged medicine according to claim 1, wherein the upper sheet and the lower sheet are both aluminum sheets.

12. The packaged medicine according to claim 1, wherein a corresponding one of the micro-devices is held inside each of the solid medicines.

13. The packaged medicine according to claim 1, wherein each of the micro-devices is attached to a surface of a corresponding one of the solid medicines.

14. The packaged medicine according to claim 4, wherein
each of the solid medicines has a capsule,
the drug powder is accommodated in the capsule, and
5 a corresponding one of the micro-devices is fixed on
an inner or outer surface of the capsule.

15. The packaged medicine according to claim 14, wherein
the first material of the first electrode is copper
10 chloride and the second material of the second electrode is
magnesium, and
the first electrode is bonded on the inner or outer
surface of the capsule.

15 16. The packaged medicine according to claim 14, wherein
an oxygen concentration in each of the solid medicine
accommodating chambers is equal to or less than 5%.