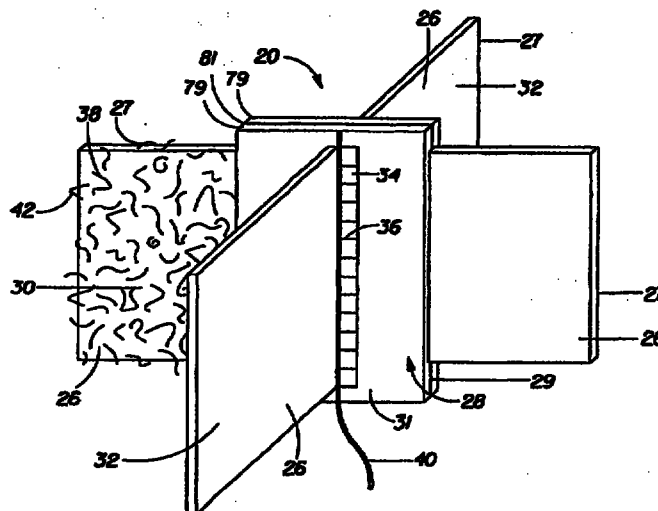




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(54) Title: **TAMPON WITH FLEXIBLE PANELS**

(57) Abstract

This invention relates to catamenial tampons, and more particularly to an improved tampon which has a compressed core portion and at least one flexible panel for improved coverage of the interior of the vaginal cavity and for directing fluid toward the tampon core. The tampon of the present invention combines the advantages of an absorbent material compressed to a self-sustaining form with an absorbent portion which is uncompressed and relatively flexible. This tampon has a central absorbent core having a first (insertion) end, a second (withdrawal) end disposed opposite the first end, and a side surface which extends between the first end and the second end. The central absorbent core is constructed from an absorbent material which has been compressed to a self-sustaining form. The tampon also includes at least one flexible panel which is joined to the central absorbent core along at least a portion of the side surface of the core. The flexible panel extends outwardly from the core away from this point of attachment.