

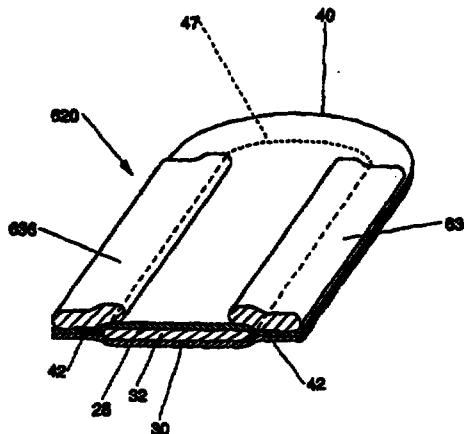


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(54) Title: **SANITARY NAPKIN HAVING STIFFENING SIDE STABILIZERS**

(57) Abstract

A unitary disposable absorbent article, particularly a catamenial pad or incontinent pad, having stabilizer members along the longitudinal side edges to enable the pad to assume a configuration conforming closely to the perineal area of the human body thereby more readily intercepting bodily discharges and providing a barrier to side soiling. The absorbent articles of the present invention comprise a central absorbent panel; a pair of side wall panels extending outwardly from and along the side borders of the central absorbent panel; and an axis of flexural bending joining each side wall panel to the central absorbent panel. The absorbent articles are constructed of a liquid pervious topsheet, a liquid impervious backsheet joined to the topsheet, an absorbent core positioned between the topsheet and the backsheet, side flaps extending outwardly from and along the side edges of the absorbent core, and stabilizer members joined in the side wall panels with the laterally innermost edge of the stabilizer member being disposed at or laterally inward from the side edge of the absorbent core. Thus, the stabilizer members increase the flexural stiffness of the side wall panels so that the flexural stiffness of each side wall panel is greater than the flexural stiffness of the central absorbent panel of the absorbent article. The lateral compression of the side wall panels is also greater than the lateral compression of the central absorbent panel to allow the central absorbent panel to buckle and bend upward to conform to the body. Preferably, the stabilizer members are joined to the wearer's surface of the topsheet to further provide a barrier to the lateral flow of liquids along the top surface of the absorbent article.

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