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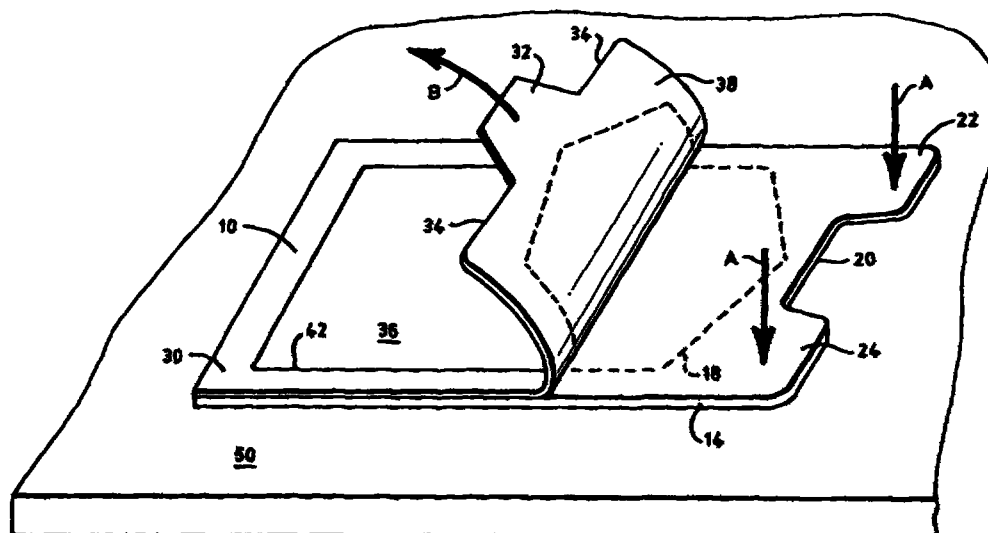
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(54) Title: PACKAGE TO REDUCE BACTERIAL CONTAMINATION OF STERILIZED ARTICLES



(57) Abstract

Disclosed is a peel pouch adapted to enclose an article to be sterilized, the peel pouch having a base panel having an exterior surface and an edge. In selected embodiments, a first and a second flap are disposed along the edge of the base panel so that the first flap is spaced apart from the second flap. The peel pouch further includes a cover panel having at least one tab disposed on along an edge of the cover panel, the cover panel overlying the base panel. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the tab is disposed above and between the first and second flaps. At least one seal joins the cover panel to the base panel so that a pocket suitable to receive articles to be sterilized is formed. The peel pouch may be electret treated prior to insertion of the article to be sterilized. During opening of the peel pouch, the exterior surface of the base panel is held against a supporting surface while a separating force is applied to the tab of the cover panel to separate the cover panel from the base panel.