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DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PAD

The present invention relates to so-called disposable absorbent pads, particularly such as incontinence pads, sanitary pads or menstruation pads, adapted to be used only once and then thrown away.

So far as it is known to the inventors, there are several articles of prior art used as incontinence guards which are partially similar in their constructions to a disposable absorbent pad of the present invention. For example, the specification of U.S. Patent No. 3,452,753 discloses an article comprising a water-impermeable outer cover (not disposable) designed for elastic fitting around the wearer's waist- and leg-openings and a support attached to the inner side of the cover for a separate absorbent pad, and Japanese Patent Application Disclosure Gazette No. 1982-143502 discloses an article comprising an elastically stretchable waist band and straps interconnected so as to form a supporter (not disposable) to support a separate absorbent pad, wherein the supporter surrounds the wearer's legs not completely but partially.

These well known techniques are similar to the

invention in that there are provided straps connected to an elastically stretchable waist band to support an absorbent pad in direct or indirect manner and a basic body or supporter is configured so as to surround the wearer's legs not completely but partially.

There are many other well known incontinence guard articles, for example, a disposable incontinence guard article comprising a liquid-permeable topsheet, a liquid-impermeable backsheet, a liquid-absorbent core sandwiched between these two sheets, and elastically stretchable members arranged along waist- and leg-openings and such an article further comprising a separate absorbent pad to be attached to the inner side of the article.

Straps employed by the prior art disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 3,452,753 appear to be provided for the purpose of assuring a stability with which a pad proper of the article can be put on the wearer's body, and the strap employed by the prior art disclosed in Japanese Patent Application Disclosure Gazette No.1982-143502 functions only as a component of the supporter.

These straps have no elastic stretchability and therefore no function for pulling the basic body or supporter up toward the wearer's crotch. Accordingly, the

absorbent pad is not maintained in sufficiently close contact with the wearer's crotch to prevent the leakage of excretion from occurring around this zone.

In view of the problem as has been mentioned above, it is a principal object of the invention to maintain a pad proper in close contact with the wearer's crotch by elastically suspending the pad proper.

To achieve the object set forth above, the present invention consists in an improved absorbent pad of the disposable type comprising a pad proper, an annular elastic waist band and elastic suspending straps. Said pad proper comprises a liquid-permeable topsheet, a liquid-impermeable backsheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between these two sheets, wherein side flaps extend outward from laterally opposite side edges of said core, said side flaps are provided at least adjacent their outer side edges with elastic members being stretchable longitudinally of said outer side edges, said side flaps are folded inward, respectively, and longitudinally opposite ends of said side flaps thus folded inward are fixed, in their longitudinally stretched states, to said pad proper, and wherein a

longitudinally front end of said pad proper is connected to a front side of said waist band and a longitudinally rear end of said pad proper is connected to a rear side of said waist band by respective pairs of said suspending straps spaced from each other.

Preferably, sleeves are formed by the respective outer side edges of said side flaps and said elastic members are received by said sleeves, respectively, so that said elastic members extend beyond longitudinally opposite ends of the respective sleeves and these extensions define said suspending straps. Preferably, each pair of straps is connected to said waist band at two positions further spaced from each other than two positions at which this pair of straps is connected to one of the longitudinally opposite ends of said pad proper. Preferably, said side flaps are formed by at least portions of said top- and backsheets extending from the laterally opposite side edges of said core.

The pad according to the invention may be used independently or with a separately provided outer cover, if it is desired. In actual use of the pad, as the annular elastic waist band is placed at a predetermined location around the wearer's waist, the pad proper is pulled up

against the wearer's crotch by the contraction of the elastic suspending straps and simultaneously the outer side edges of the respective side flaps are brought under the effect of the elastic members contained in these outer side edges into close contact with the wearer's crotch, particularly, the groins. When it is desired that the pad proper should be more correctly positioned against the wearer's crotch, the pad proper may be held by the hand, then pulled down against the action of the elastic suspending straps and released. Thereupon, the pad proper will be automatically brought back against the wearer's crotch by the contraction of the elastic suspending straps. Obviously, such operation may be repeated, if necessary.

With the pad proper correctly placed on the wearer's body in this manner, the side flaps are risen by the contraction of the elastic members contained in the outer side edges thereof against the wearer's skin, thus generally presenting a boat-shape having a substantially U-shaped transverse section and a substantially bow-shaped longitudinal section, so that the side flaps may completely receive and guide liquid excretion to the core where excretion is absorbed and held.

The invention will be described in more detail by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a partially broken-away perspective view showing an embodiment of an incontinence pad constructed according to the invention as developed for actual use; and

Fig. 2 is a plan view showing this pad as collapsed for storage.

Referring to Fig. 1, a pad of the invention generally comprises a pad proper 1, an annular elastic waist band 2 and elastic suspending straps 3.

The pad proper 1 comprises a liquid-permeable topsheet 4, a liquid-impermeable backsheet 5, a relatively short and narrow liquid-absorbent core 6 sandwiched between these two sheets 4, 5 and side flaps 8. The side flaps comprise respective portions of the topsheet 4 extending outward from laterally opposite side edges of the core 6 and folded back so that laterally opposite side edges 7 of these folded portions may be bonded to laterally opposite side edges of the backsheet 5 by suitable bonding means such as

ultrasonic welding or adhesive. Portions of the top- and backsheets 4, 5 extending from longitudinally opposite ends of the core 6 are also bonded together by the similar bonding means. When the pad proper 1 is for incontinence guard, it may be dimensioned so as to cover the urinary organs and a peripheral region therearound or may be slightly larger than the average size of ordinary sanitary menstruation pads for visual impression. It should be understood that the pad proper 1 may be dimensioned to cover the anus and its periphery as well, if necessary.

As will be apparent to those skilled in the art without illustration, it is also possible to form the side flaps 8 from portions of both the topsheet 4 and the backsheet 5 extending from the laterally opposite side edges of the core 6 and folded back together in the same manner as the topsheet 4 alone has been folded in the above-mentioned arrangement, or from portions of the backsheet 5 instead of the topsheet 4 extending from the laterally opposite side edges of the core and folded back in the same manner. In these alternative arrangements, the side flaps 8 will be liquid-impermeable. As will be apparent to those skilled in the art without illustration, it is also possible to form liquid-permeable or liquid-

impermeable side flaps 8 from suitable sheets provided separately of both the top- and backsheets 4, 5 and, in such an alternative arrangement, these separate sheets will be bonded to the portions of the top- and backsheets 4, 5 slightly extending outward from the laterally opposite side edges of the core 6.

Sleeves 9 are defined by the respective side flaps 8 along the respective folding lines to receive elastic members 10 extending therethrough. Between the folded and nonfolded portions of the respective side flaps 8, a plurality of longitudinally stretchable elastic members 11 are adhesively interposed in their stretched states so that these elastic members 11 are transversely spaced one from another in parallel with the respective side edges 7 of the folded portions to the associated sleeves 9. The side flaps 8 arranged as has been described are now folded back toward the portion of the topsheet 4 defining the top of the core 6 and longitudinally opposite ends thereof are bonded, in their longitudinally stretched states, to said portion of the topsheet 4 by said suitable bonding means.

The pad proper 1 of the foregoing arrangement has the side flaps 8 risen by the contraction of the elastic members operatively associated therewith against the

wearer's skin, generally presenting a boat-shape having a substantially U-shaped transverse section and a substantially bow-shaped longitudinal section.

The respective suspending straps 3 are defined by portions of the respective elastic members 10 extending beyond longitudinally opposite ends of the respective sleeves 9. Consequently, the respective suspending straps 3 elastically act integrally with the associated ones of elastic members 10. The respective suspending straps 3, i.e., the respective elastic members 10 have a stretching stress selected so as to prevent the waist band 2 put around the wearer's waist from slipping down. Obviously, the respective suspending straps 3 may comprise elastic members provided separately of the respective elastic members 10 and may be bonded to the associated elastic members 10 or longitudinally opposite ends of said folded portions of the respective side flaps 8.

The waist band 2 has a considerably larger width and a higher stretching stress with respect to the respective suspending straps 3. The respective suspending straps 3 have their ends connected to front and rear sides of the waist band 2 at locations circumferentially spaced one from another. Each pair of adjacent suspending straps

3 are larger spaced (12) from each other along the waist band 2 than they are spaced (13) from each other along the front or rear end of the core 6 in order that the pad proper 1 can be stably suspended.

Referring to Fig. 2, the respective side flaps 8 inwardly collapse in a flat state as the pad proper 1 is subjected to a tension exerted thereon in the longitudinal direction. The pad proper 1 thus flattened may be longitudinally folded to be compactly packaged.

The pad proper 1 may be made of the same materials as usually used for disposable diapers, sanitary napkins or menstruation pads and the like. For example, the topsheet 4 may be made of a nonwoven fabric, the backsheet 5 may be made of a plastic film and the core 6 may be made of fluff pulps mixed with high absorption polymer powders. The waist band 2 and the suspending straps 3 may comprise conventional cords, belts or the like having a rubber elasticity.



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CLAIMS

1. A disposable absorbent pad comprising a pad proper, an annular elastic waist band and elastic suspending straps, said pad proper comprising a liquid-permeable topsheet, a liquid-impermeable backsheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between these two sheets, wherein side flaps extend outward from laterally opposite side edges of said core, said side flaps are provided at least adjacent their outer side edges with elastic members stretchable longitudinally of said outer side edges and said side flaps are each folded inward, and longitudinally opposite ends of said side flaps thus folded inward are fixed, in their longitudinally stretched states, to said pad proper, and wherein a longitudinally front end of said pad proper is connected to a front side of said waist band and a longitudinally rear end of said pad proper is connected to a rear side of said waist band by respective pairs of said suspending straps spaced from each other.

2. A disposable absorbent pad according to Claim 1, wherein sleeves are formed along respective outer side edges of said side flaps and said elastic members are received by said sleeves, respectively,



so that said elastic members extend beyond longitudinally opposite ends of the respective sleeves and these extensions define said suspending straps.

3. A disposable absorbent pad according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein each pair of straps is connected to said waist band at two positions further spaced from each other than two positions at which this pair of straps is connected to one of said longitudinally opposite ends of said pad proper.

4. A disposable absorbent pad according to Claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said side flaps are formed by at least portions of said top- and backsheets extending from the laterally opposite side edges of said core.

5. A disposable absorbent pad according to any preceding Claim, wherein said pad is adapted to present a boat-shape under the contraction of the elastic members of said side flaps.