



(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Shultz et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2004/0117889 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 24, 2004**

(54) **METHOD OF SELECTING OR IDENTIFYING A SURGICAL GOWN**

Publication Classification

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(51) **Int. Cl.7** **A41D 1/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **2/69**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of selecting a gown for a surgical procedure is provided. The method includes the step of displaying a listing of surgical procedures and a plurality of gown identification marks at a first location. Another step involves correlating the surgical procedures to the gown identification marks. Additionally, another step involves choosing a gown from a location that is remote to the first location. The gown chosen is suited for the surgical procedure based upon indicia at the remote location that corresponds the gown to at least one of the gown identification marks or the surgical procedures.

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(21) Appl. No.: **10/325,628**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 20, 2002**

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Surgical Gown Levels of Protection

Procedure Type	Low Fluid Insult	Moderate Fluid Insult	High Fluid Insult
Typical Fluid & Duration	<100mL Any Duration	100 -300mL 2-4 Hours	>300mL >4 Hours
Procedure Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gastrointestinal Endoscopies •Eye and Ear Procedures •Lumps and Bumps •Hernia Repairs •Pacemaker Insertions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Most Thorac Surgeries •Neurological Procedures •Surgeries where Physician sits with instrument trays in lap •Vaginal & Perineal Procedures •Most Laproscopical Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Major Abdominal Dissections •Major Orthopedic •Major Back Procedures •Burns •Trauma •Cardiovascular •C-Sections
Recommended Gown	New Gown	ULTRA Non-Reinforced	ULTRA Fabric-Reinforced Basic Impervious MicroCool* Specialty

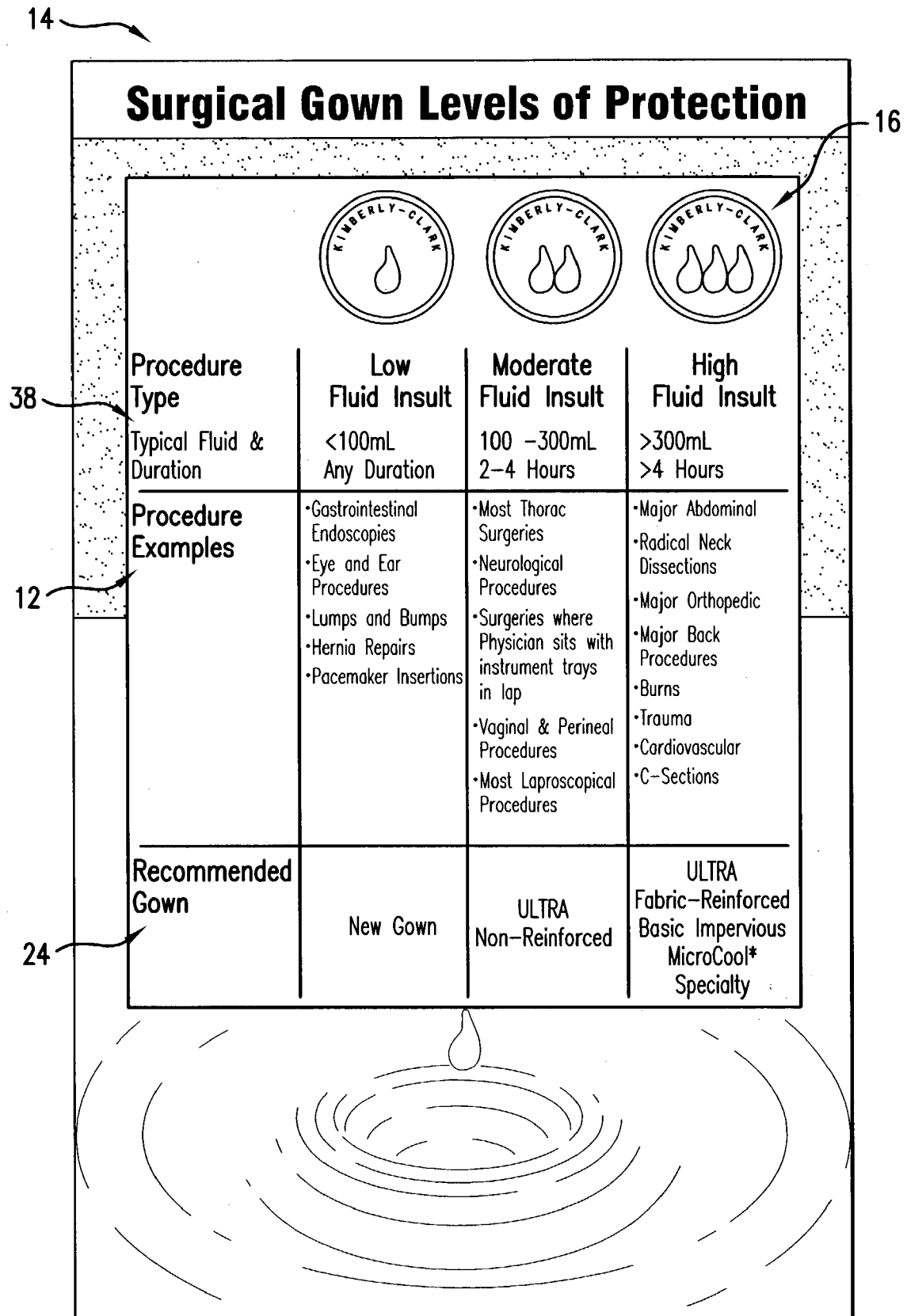


FIG.1

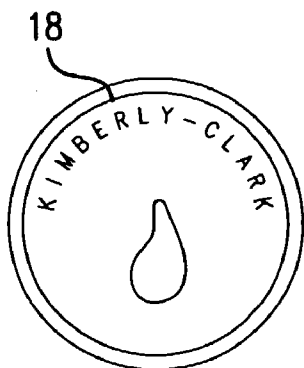


FIG. 2

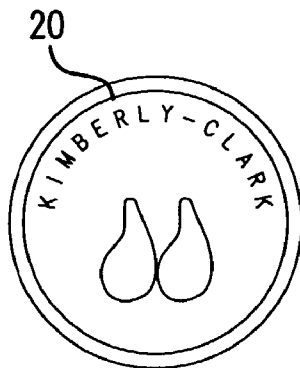


FIG. 3

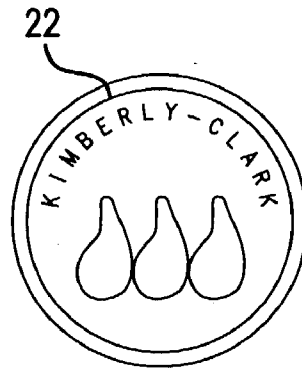


FIG. 4

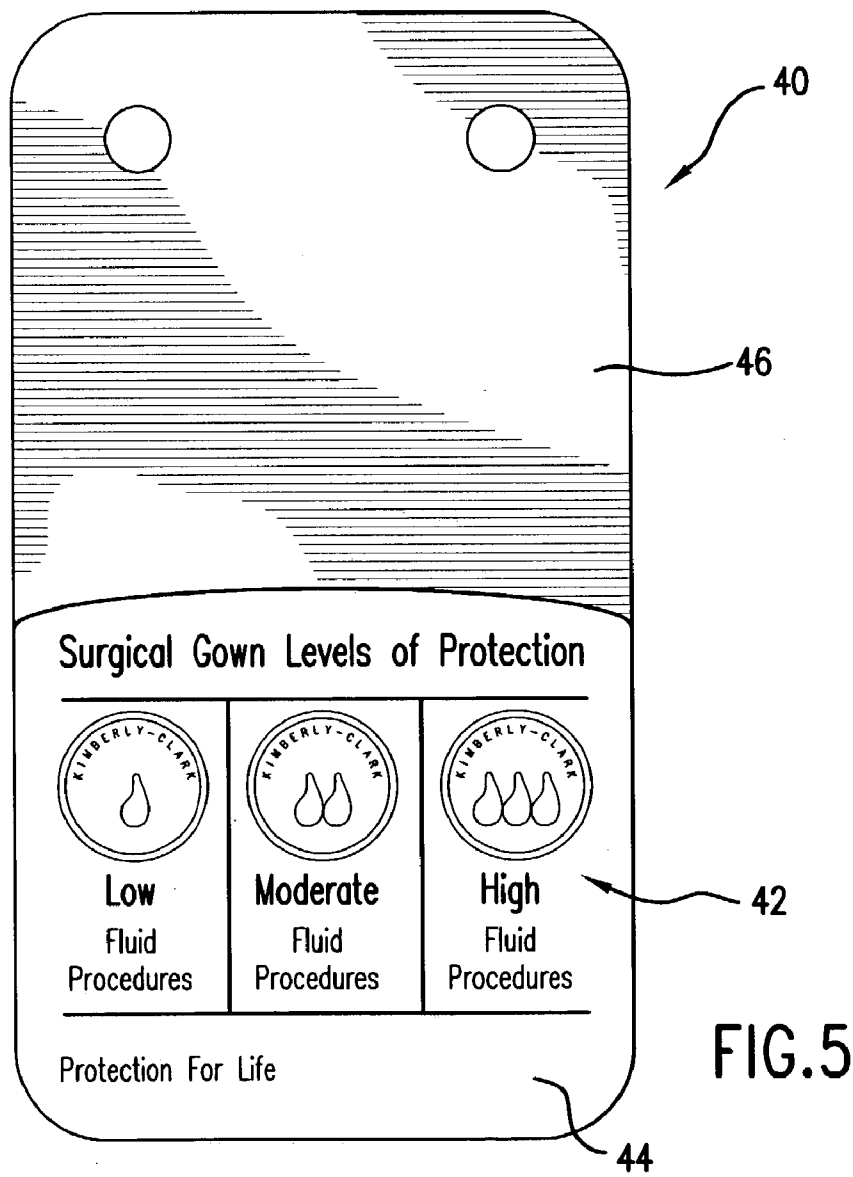


FIG. 5

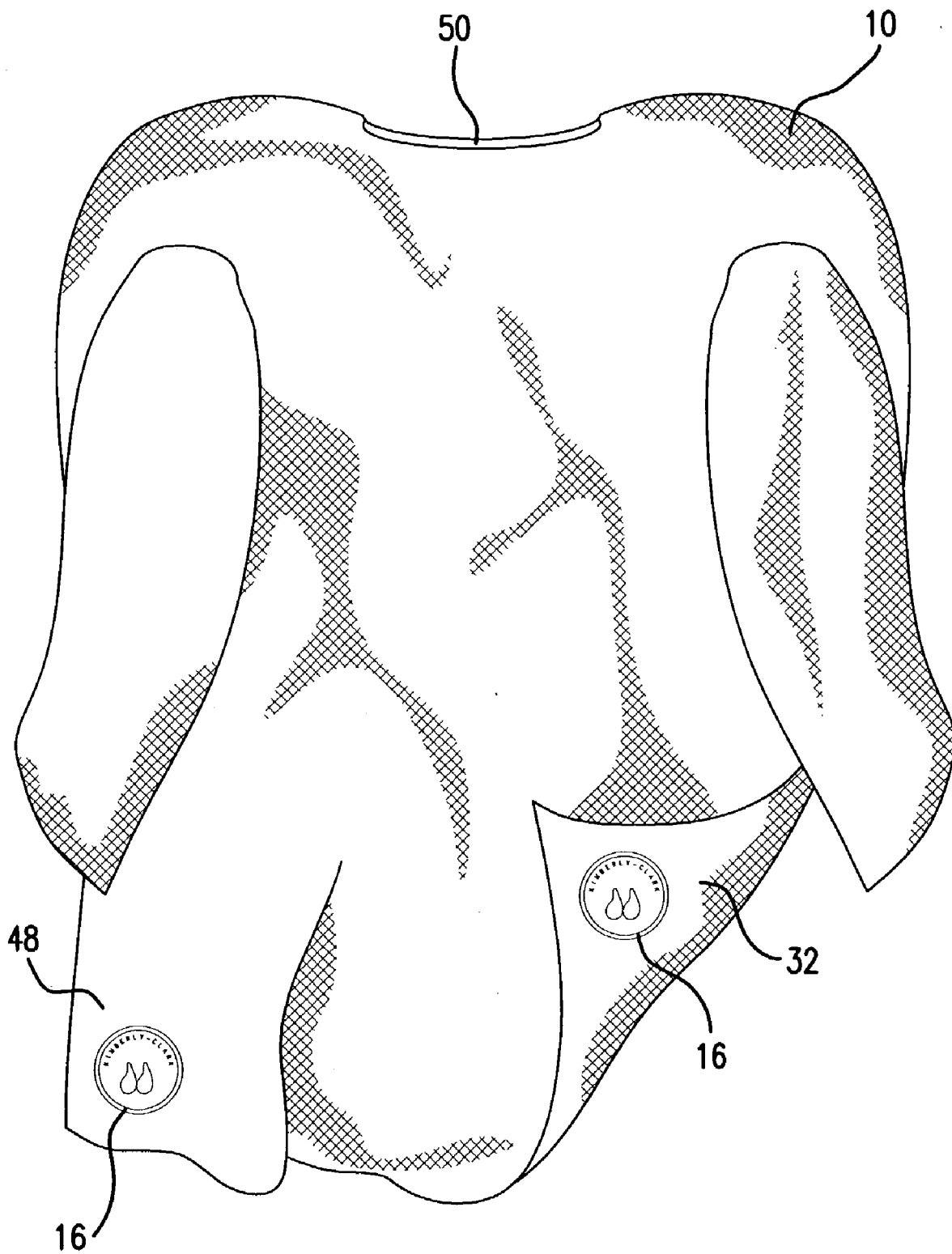
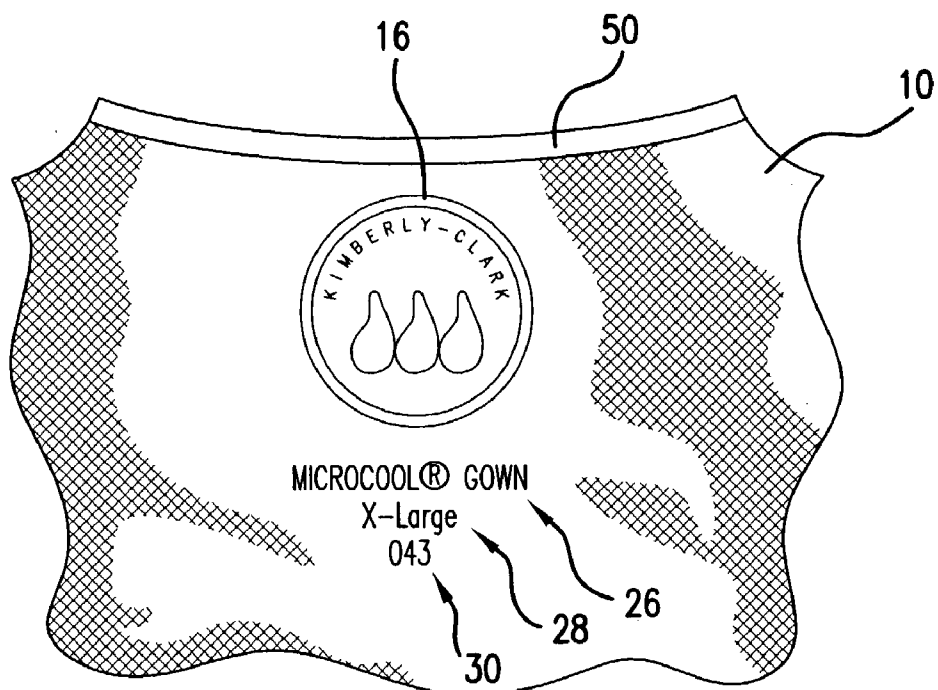
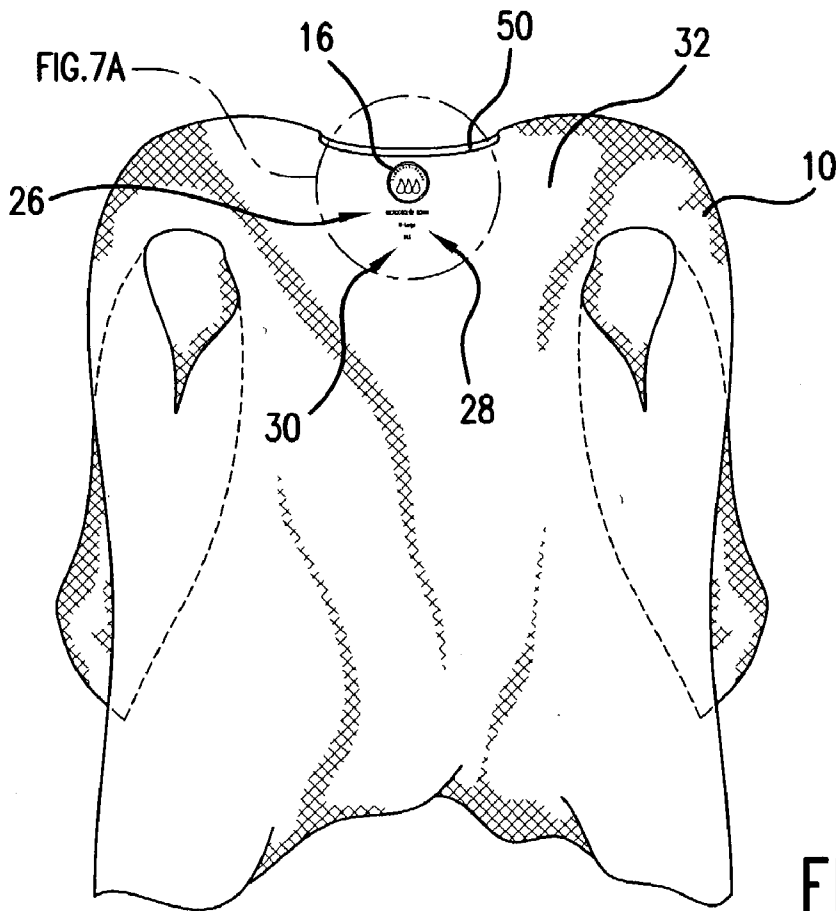


FIG. 6



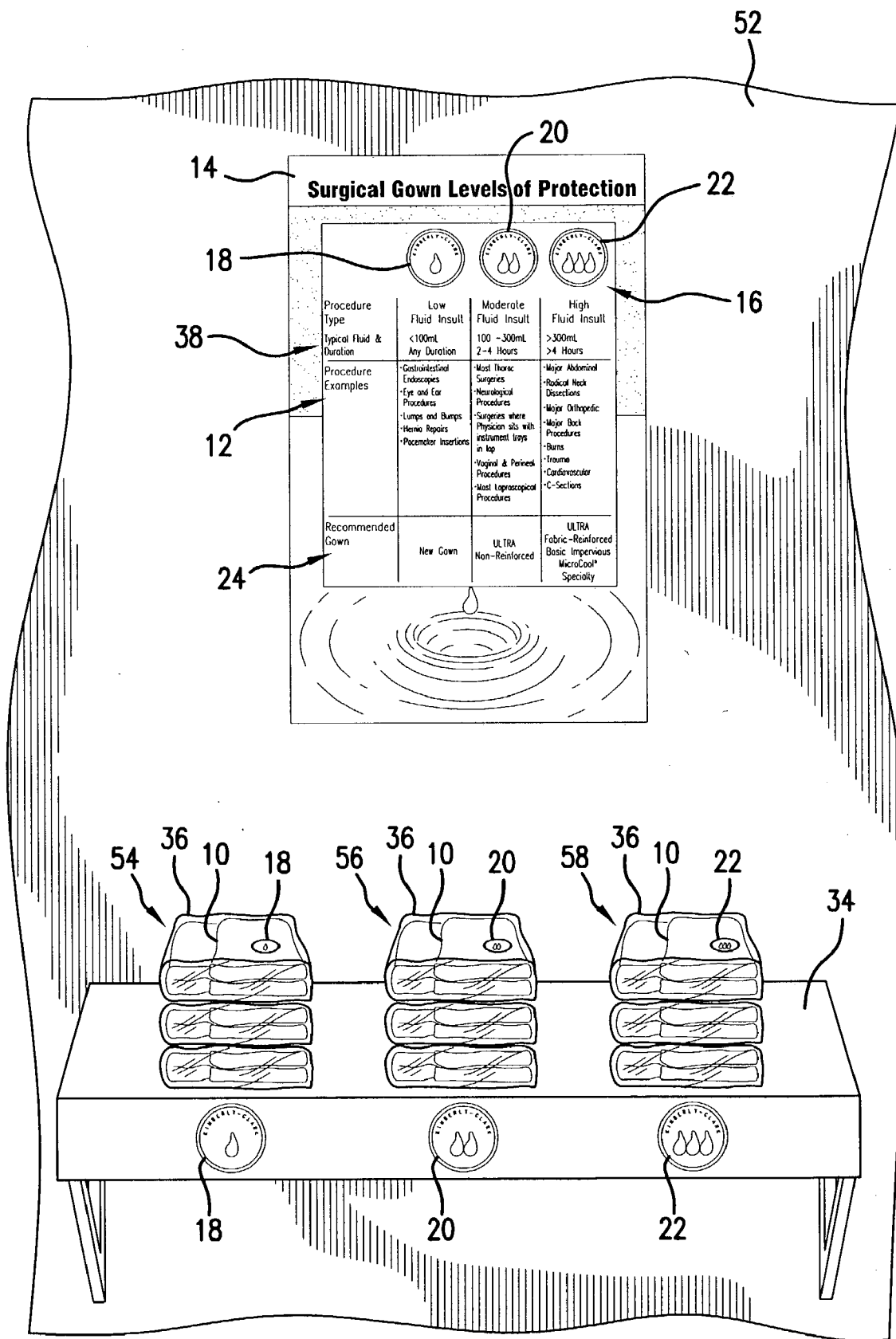


FIG.8

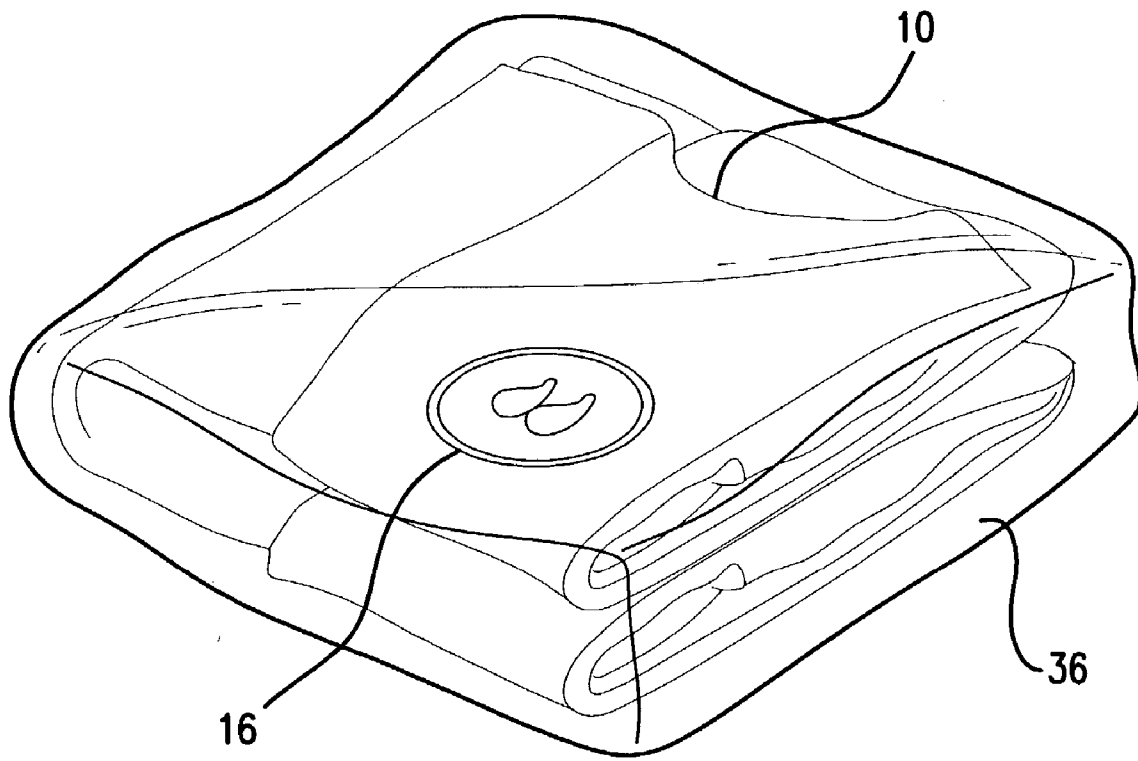


FIG. 9

14

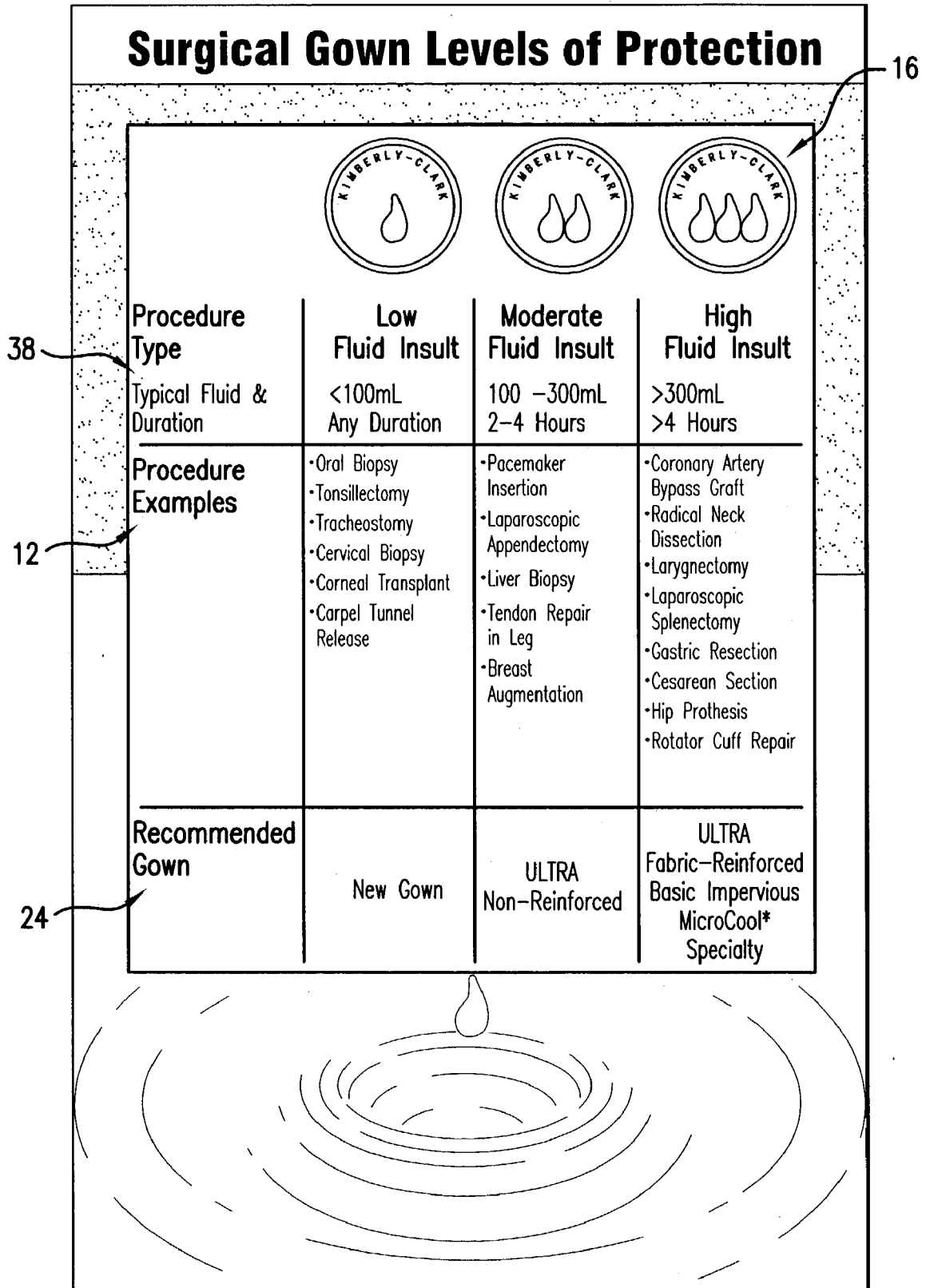


FIG.10

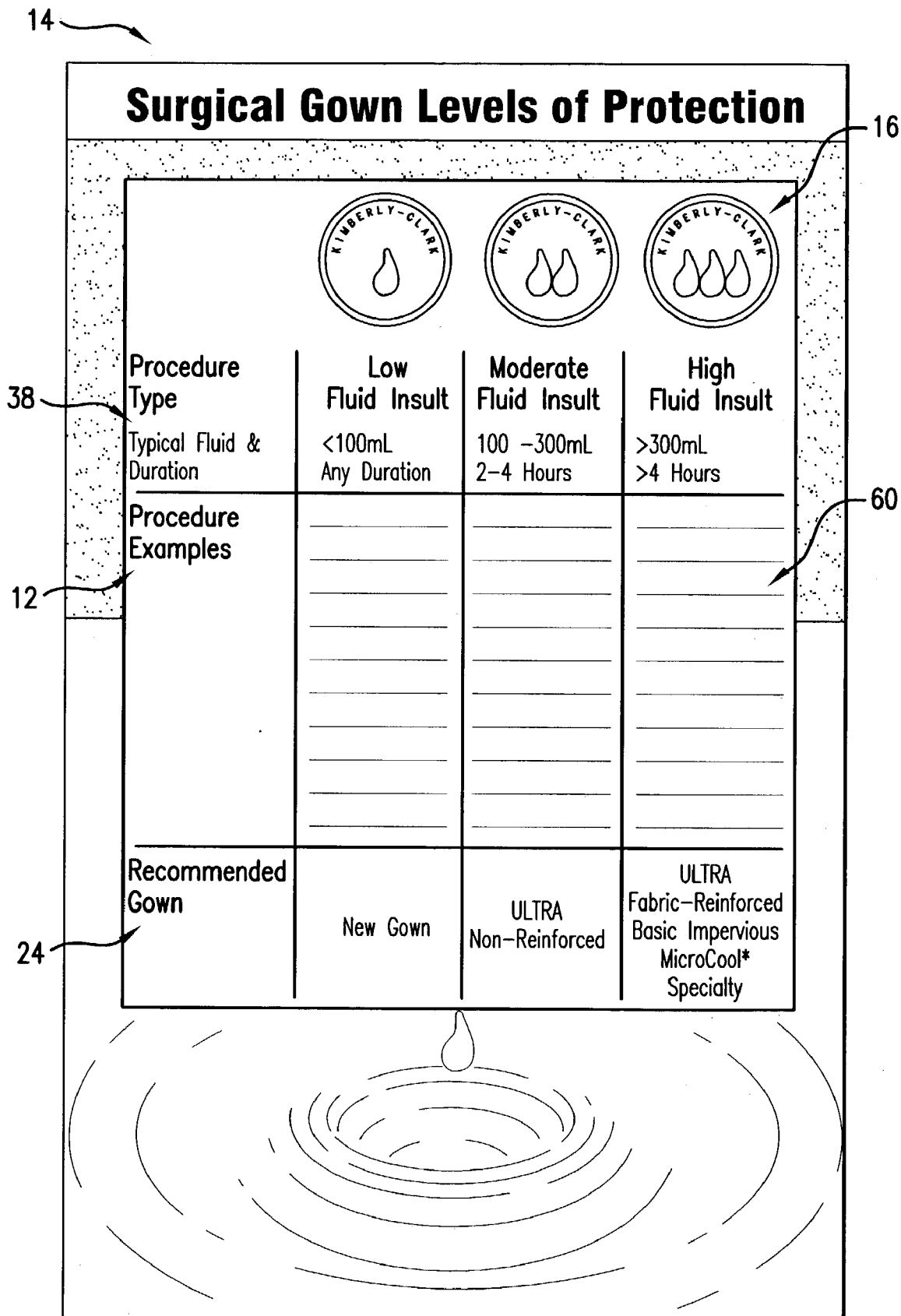


FIG.11

METHOD OF SELECTING OR IDENTIFYING A SURGICAL GOWN

BACKGROUND

[0001] Surgeons and other healthcare providers often wear an over garment during operating procedures in order to enhance the sterile condition in the operating room and to protect the wearer. The over garment is typically a gown that has a main body portion to which respective sleeves are attached. In order to prevent the spread of infection to and from the patient, the surgical gown prevents bodily fluids and other liquids present during surgical procedures from flowing through the gown.

[0002] Contamination could occur, for instance, if during surgery the surgical gown used is not sufficiently fluid repellent and becomes saturated with blood. This blood may be wicked through the surgical gown and may wet the under clothes and/or the skin of the healthcare provider. This penetration of fluid is sometimes referred to as "strike through". Microorganisms present on the skin or under clothes may then be carried outward through capillary channels in the surgical gown to the surface of the gown, consequently contaminating the gown. Therefore, a liquid path through the surgical gown may be established along which viruses, bacteria, or other contaminants may travel to and/or from the patient.

[0003] Surgical gowns were originally made of cotton or linen and were sterilized prior to use in the operating room. A disadvantage of the materials used in these types of gowns is that they tend to form lint, which is capable of becoming airborne or clinging to the clothes of the wearer, thereby providing another potential source of contamination. Additionally, since these gowns were costly, laundering and sterilization procedures were required before reuse.

[0004] Disposable surgical gowns have largely replaced the linen surgical gown and many are now made in part or entirely from fluid repellent or impervious fabrics to prevent strike through. Various materials and designs have been used in the manufacture of surgical gowns to prevent contamination in different operating room conditions. As such, surgical gowns are available in a variety of different levels of protection and comfort.

[0005] Gowns made from liquid repellent material are well known in the art. This type of material is available in a wide range of "imperviousness". While such completely impervious material provides a high degree of protection, a surgical gown constructed of this material is typically very heavy due to the weight of the material, expensive, and usually hot to the wearer. In some of these surgical gowns, certain portions such as the shoulders and back panels may be of a lighter weight material in order to provide for better breathability and help reduce the overall weight of the surgical gown. However, the higher the breathability of the material, the lower the repellency of the material. This in turn limits the use of the gown or the effectiveness of the gown in these particular areas.

[0006] Different types of surgical procedures expose the healthcare provider to various levels of blood and/or fluid exposure. As such, it is not feasible or economical to use the same type of surgical gown for every surgical procedure conducted by the healthcare provider. For instance, during

surgeries that are shorter and/or have a low amount of fluid exposure, it may be desirable to use a surgical gown that is lighter in weight and is not completely fluid impervious. This selection allows for a less expensive gown to be used in addition to providing greater comfort and mobility to the healthcare provider. Also, this selection provides for a surgical gown that works for its intended purpose. On the other hand, surgical procedures that are longer and/or expose the healthcare provider to a large amount of fluid may call for the selection of a surgical gown that is completely fluid impervious. Additionally, other surgical procedures expose the healthcare provider to levels of fluid between these extremes, therefore calling for the selection of an appropriate surgical gown as the situation dictates.

[0007] Under the current practice, surgical gowns are typically placed in a package that has a brand name located thereon. Before beginning a certain surgical procedure, the healthcare provider may select a surgical gown based on the brand name of the surgical gown printed on the package. Additionally, the healthcare provider may make his or her selection based on prior experiences in using a particular surgical gown in a particular surgical procedure. Also, it may be the case that the healthcare provider does not read the labeling of the surgical gown in detail in order to ascertain which types of surgical procedures the particular surgical gown may be employed. Variations in strike through prevention between different surgical gown manufacturers exist, further complicating the selection process based upon brand recognition.

[0008] It is the case that current practices relating to the selection of a surgical gown to be used in a particular surgical procedure are not uniform across the healthcare industry due to the fact that healthcare providers select gowns based on brand names and their own personal experiences.

[0009] There is therefore a need in the art for a method that the healthcare provider may use in order to more accurately and/or consistently select a surgical gown for use in a particular surgical procedure.

SUMMARY

[0010] Various features and advantages of the invention are set forth in part in the following description, or may be obvious from the description, or may be learned from practice of the invention.

[0011] The present invention provides for a method of selecting a gown to be worn during a surgical procedure. The method includes the step of listing information that pertains to a plurality of surgical procedures in a first location. A plurality of gown identification marks are depicted in the first location, and each gown identification mark corresponds to at least one of the surgical procedures. Additionally, a plurality of surgical gowns are provided, the gowns are subdivided into groups where each group corresponds to at least one of the gown identification marks. The individual gowns in each group are marked with indicia. The indicia corresponds the gown to the gown identification mark of the group from which the gown is selected. Also, the method includes the step of selecting the gown to be worn during the procedure based upon any of the listing of information, the gown identification mark, and the indicia.

[0012] The present invention also provides for a method of selecting a gown for a surgical procedure. This method includes the step of displaying a listing of surgical procedures and a plurality of gown identification marks at a first location. The procedures are correlated to the marks. Also, a gown from a location remote to the first location is chosen that is suited for the procedure based upon indicia at the remote location that corresponds the gown to at least one of the gown identification marks or surgical procedures.

[0013] The present invention also provides for a method of identifying a gown. This method includes the step of providing information that corresponds a plurality of procedures to a plurality of gown identification marks. A surgical gown that is to be worn during a surgical procedure is provided. The gown is configured for being used with at least one of the procedures. Additionally, the gown is labeled in a manner that is substantially similar to at least one of the plurality of gown identification marks.

[0014] The gown identification marks used in the present invention may be symbols that are at least partially pictorial. In one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, three different gown identification marks are used. Here, the first gown identification mark is a symbol corresponding to procedures having a first expected fluid exposure. The second symbol corresponds to procedures having a higher expected fluid exposure than procedures corresponding to the first symbol. Additionally in this exemplary embodiment, a third symbol is present and corresponds to procedures having a higher expected fluid exposure than procedures corresponding to the second symbol.

[0015] The present invention also provides for a method as described above where the listing of information is in the form of a chart. Further, gown identification marks in the listing of information may each be a combination of words and at least one image, in accordance with one exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] The indicia in accordance with the present invention may be located on the gown. For instance, the indicia may be located on the inside surface of the gown. Alternatively or additionally, the gown identification marks may be located at a second location that is a storage area that holds the surgical gowns. Also, the gown identification marks may be located on a package that holds the surgical gown.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] FIG. 1 is a front elevation view of an exemplary embodiment of a listing of information used for selecting a gown to be worn during a surgical procedure in accordance with the present invention.

[0018] FIG. 2 is a front elevation view of a gown identification mark in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The gown identification mark is used to identify gowns capable of being used with low levels of expected fluid exposure.

[0019] FIG. 3 is a front elevation view of an exemplary embodiment of a gown identification mark in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The gown identification mark is used to identify gowns capable of being used with moderate levels of expected fluid exposure.

[0020] FIG. 4 is a front elevation view of a gown identification mark in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. This third gown identification mark is used to identify gowns capable of being used with high levels of expected fluid exposure.

[0021] FIG. 5 is a front elevation view of a tie card that has printed information that further explains the method of selecting a surgical gown in accordance with the present invention.

[0022] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a gown having indicia attached thereto in accordance with one exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

[0023] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a gown having indicia located on the inside surface of the gown proximate to the collar of the gown according to one exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

[0024] FIG. 7A is a detailed view of the circle labeled FIG. 7A in FIG. 7. The gown is shown as having a gown identification mark, a brand name, a gown size, and a gown product code located thereon in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

[0025] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a method of selecting a gown in accordance with the present invention. Here, a listing of information is located on a wall, and various stacks of gowns are located on a storage area and identified by a series of gown identification marks.

[0026] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a gown in a package in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. Here, a gown identification mark is located on the package into which the gown is held.

[0027] FIG. 10 is a front elevation view of a listing of information that is to be used with the method of selecting a gown in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

[0028] FIG. 11 is a front elevation view of a listing of information that is to be used in accordance with the method for selecting a gown in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. Here, surgical procedures that correspond to various expected levels of fluid exposure are left blank and are to be filled in by the healthcare provider.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0029] Reference will now be made in detail to embodiments of the invention, one or more examples of which are illustrated in the drawings. Each example is provided by way of explanation of the invention, and not meant as a limitation of the invention. For example, features illustrated or described as part of one embodiment can be used with another embodiment to yield still a third embodiment. It is intended that the present invention include these and other modifications and variations.

[0030] The present invention provides for a way of selecting a surgical gown that is to be worn during a surgical procedure. In order to carry out the method, a listing of information is provided. An example of one such listing of information 14 in accordance with one exemplary embodi-

ment of the present invention is shown in FIG. 1. Here, the listing of information 14 is in a printed chart format. The listing of information 14 includes a plurality of surgical procedures 12 that are categorized as having a certain degree of expected fluid exposure 38. The different degrees of expected fluid exposure 38 may be categorized, for instance, by the amount of fluid transferred to the healthcare provider during an operation, in addition to or alternatively with the total time of fluid exposure imparted to the healthcare provider during the operation. For instance, blood, saline, lavage, and/or saliva could potentially be transferred to the healthcare provider during the operation. As can be seen in FIG. 1, the expected fluid exposure 38 is divided into categories based on both the amount and time of fluid exposure. In other exemplary embodiments of the present invention, the various degrees of expected fluid exposure 38 may be divided based on the amount of fluid exposure alone. For instance, less than 100 ml of fluid, between 100 and 300 ml of fluid, and greater than 300 ml of fluid may be used in order to categorize the various degrees of expected fluid exposure 38.

[0031] The listing of information 14 correlates the various degrees of the expected fluid exposure 38 to various surgical procedures 12. This correspondence may be made by taking the recommendations of different healthcare providers in determining the amount of expected fluid exposure 38 that is expected for a particular surgical procedure 12. For instance, in one exemplary embodiment of the present invention nurse consultants or other healthcare providers may be used in order to make the correspondence between the surgical procedure 12 and the expected fluid exposure 38.

[0032] It is not necessary to correlate the levels of expected fluid exposure 38 to the surgical procedures 12 based solely on the amount of expected fluid. For instance, in one exemplary embodiment of the present invention the expected fluid exposure 38 is correlated to the surgical procedure 12 based on various factors with the total expected fluid in the surgical procedure 12 being used only as a guide. In other instances, the amount of expected fluid is not even a factor. Various factors may be used such as the total fluid level, the duration, the operative site, the position of the patient, and the type of surgery whether minimal or traditional may all be factored in determining the amount of expected fluid exposure 38 for a particular surgical procedure 12.

[0033] The surgical procedures 12 may be listed as a particular surgical procedure 12, such as a C-section, or may be listed as a more general type of surgical procedure, such as eye and ear procedures. An example of particular and more general surgical procedures 12 are shown in FIG. 1 in which these various surgical procedures 12 are categorized as having low, moderate, or high expected levels of fluid exposure 38 based on both the amount and duration of fluid exposure.

[0034] From this information, gown identification marks 16 are assigned to each degree of expected fluid exposure 38. FIGS. 2 through 4 show one exemplary embodiment in accordance with the present invention of the gown identification marks 16 for particular levels of expected fluid exposure 38. FIG. 2 shows a first gown identification mark 18 that corresponds to low levels of expected fluid exposure

38 in FIG. 1. FIG. 3 shows a second gown identification mark 20 that corresponds to moderate levels of expected fluid exposure 38 in FIG. 1. Finally, FIG. 4 shows a third gown identification mark 22 that corresponds to high levels of expected fluid exposure 38 in FIG. 1. The first, second, and third gown identification marks 18, 20, and 22 differ from one another in that they have one, two, or three droplets, such as blood droplets, identifying a particular gown identification mark 16. Increasing the number of blood droplets, or other symbolic volumetric indication, allows a healthcare provider to more easily associate a particular gown identification mark 16 with a particular level of expected fluid exposure 38.

[0035] In accordance with other exemplary embodiments of the present invention, other designs for the gown identification marks 16 are possible, for instance, in one such exemplary embodiment higher numbers of blood droplets may be used for lower levels of expected fluid exposure 38 while fewer blood droplets are used for higher expected levels of fluid exposure 38. However, other objects besides blood droplets may be used. Also, the same type of object does not have to be used in all of the gown identification marks 16. Additionally, in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention, the gown identification marks 16 may be completely pictorial and have no text written thereon. Alternatively, the gown identification marks 16 may be completely written text, for instance the gown identification marks 16 may be "LOW", "MODERATE", and "HIGH" in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention. It is therefore the case that any design, word, color, or combination thereof may be used in place of the gown identification marks 16 shown in FIG. 1 as long as they differentiate the different levels of expected fluid exposure 38.

[0036] The listing of information 14 may also have a row listing a recommended gown example 24 for each of the different levels of the expected fluid exposure 38. The recommended gown examples 24 may be brand names of gowns 10 on the market that are capable of resisting fluid as described with respect to the amount of expected fluid exposure 38 under which the recommended gown example 24 is listed. The recommended gown example 24 therefore allows for a secondary way of identifying an appropriate gown 10 to be used with the surgical procedure 12.

[0037] The present invention also includes the step of identifying a gown 10, as seen in FIG. 6, with indicia. This indicia may be at least one of the gown identification marks 16. Although it is preferable to place the gown identification marks 16 on the gown 10, in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it is possible to identify the gown 10 without placing the gown identification mark 16 on the gown 10. It is only necessary under the scope of the present invention that the gown 10 be identified by one of the gown identification marks 16. It is not necessary that the indicia that identifies the gown 10 be exactly the same as the gown identification mark 16 on the listing of information 14. For instance, referring to FIG. 1, the gown identification marks 16 are shown as being one, two, or three blood droplets having a company name located proximate to the blood droplets, and being surrounded by a pair of circles. It may be the case that the indicia that identifies the gowns 10 only have the blood droplets and do not have the company name or circles as do the ones shown in the listing of information

14. It should be appreciated that any manner of indicia may correlate the gown **10** to the gown identification mark **16**.

[0038] The gown **10** is known to have a particular amount of resistance to fluid. The gown is then identified using the gown identification mark **16** that corresponds the amount of fluid resistance in the gown **10** to the appropriate level of expected fluid exposure **38** as shown in **FIG. 1**. A plurality of gowns **10**, made by different manufactures and having different degrees of fluid resistance, may then be labeled with the appropriate indicia.

[0039] The healthcare provider may view the listing of information **14** and find the particular surgical procedure **12** in which he or she is to be involved. From there, the particular surgical procedure **12** is correlated to a particular gown identification mark **16**. The healthcare provider may then move to the location where the gowns **10** are stored and select the proper gown **10** as identified by the matching gown identification mark **16** being the indicia on the gown **10**. In one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the listing of information **14** is on a poster that is placed in clear view, for instance, near a scrub sink or other highly visible location. The surgeon and operating room staff may enter the scrub area and begin the hand scrubbing process, which last approximately three to five minutes. In this time the surgeon or operating room staff member will be able to view the listing of information **14** and understand the correspondence between the surgical procedure **12** he or she is about to participate in and the matching gown identification mark **16**. As the surgeon or operating room staff member enters the operating room, a towel is taken and his or her hands are dried. At this point the surgical gown is selected or given to the surgeon or operating room staff member. The proper gown **10** may be selected based upon the gown identification mark **16** viewed in the listing of information **14**.

[0040] The indicia which may be for instance the gown identification mark **16** may be placed on both the outside and inside **32** of the gown **10** as shown in **FIG. 6**. Alternatively, the gown identification mark **16** may only be located on one portion of the gown **10**. The present invention includes exemplary embodiments where the gown identification mark **16** is placed in any number or at any location on the gown **10**. **FIG. 7** shows an exemplary embodiment where the gown identification mark **16** is placed on the inside **32** of the gown **10** at a location proximate to a collar **50** of the gown **10**. As can be seen in greater detail in **FIG. 7A**, the indicia being the gown identification mark **16** is substantially the same as the third gown identification mark **22** as shown in **FIG. 4**. However, additional text is printed below the gown identification mark **16** as can be seen in **FIG. 7A**. This additional text may include the brand name **26** of the gown **10**. Additionally, the gown size **28** and the gown product code **30** may be placed proximate to the gown identification mark **16**. The gown identification marks **16** along with the brand name **26**, gown size **28**, and gown product code **30** may be stamped onto the gown **10** or may be on a label that is applied to the gown **10** through adhesion. This additional information helps to ensure that the proper gown **10** is selected by the healthcare provider. Additionally, other information may be printed next to the gown identification mark **16** in accordance with other exemplary embodiments of the present invention.

[0041] Although described as being printed on a poster as shown in **FIG. 1**, the listing of information **14** may be provided to the healthcare provider in other ways in accordance with other exemplary embodiments of the present invention. For instance, the listing of information **14** may be located on a computer, on a calendar, on a printed hand out, in a manual, or on an object such as a mouse pad. Additionally, more than one such listing of information **14** may be provided. For instance, several posters displaying the listing of information **14** may be positioned around the scrub area. Additionally, the present invention is not limited to having the listing of information **14** be located at a particular location such as near the scrub sink. The listing of information **14** may be located near the operating room or may be located away from the operating room or even outside of the hospital in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention.

[0042] The surgical gown **10** shown in **FIG. 6** may be stored and/or presented to the healthcare provider in a number of ways. For instance, surgical gowns **10** are often located on a back table and are packaged and presented to the healthcare provider in a "book-fold" arrangement. In this type of arrangement, the inside **32** of the gown **10** is presented to the healthcare provider while the outside **48** of the gown **10** is largely contained inside of the folded gown **10**. Hand pockets are located on each side of the folded gown **10** for receipt of the healthcare provider's hands. As the hands are lifted up and out, the gown **10** will unfold and fall into place on the healthcare provider's body. The "book-fold" arrangement therefore helps to ensure that the outside **48** of the gown is not contaminated prior to use in the surgical procedure. Such an example of a "book-fold" arrangement is described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,862,525 to Tankersley et al. which is assigned to the assignee of the present invention, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety for all purposes. The indicia being the gown identification mark **16** may be placed on the inside **32** of the gown **10** near the collar **50** as shown in **FIG. 7**. This allows for proper identification of the gown **10** with the surgical procedure **12** without having to unfold or touch the gown **10** in order to locate the gown identification mark **16**. This in turn provides for a more sterile gown **10** than would otherwise be the case. By placing several of the gown identification marks **16** on both the outside **48** and inside **32** of the gown **10**, it is possible to reduce the probability of contamination brought about by excessive handling of the gown **10**. Additionally, the healthcare provider will be more quickly ready for the surgical procedure **12** by providing a clearly visible gown identification mark **16**.

[0043] **FIG. 9** shows the gown **10** being contained within a package **36**. The gown identification mark **16** is located on the surface of the package **36**, and not on the gown **10**. This configuration is in accordance with one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, and eliminates the need of placing the gown identification mark **16** directly on the gown **10**.

[0044] **FIG. 8** shows another exemplary embodiment of the present invention where the gowns **10** are arranged in a first stack **54**, a second stack **56**, and a third stack **58** on a shelf **34**. Each of the stacks **54**, **56**, and **58** are labeled with a respective indicia being the first, second, and third gown identification marks **18**, **20**, and **22**. In this manner, the

gowns **10** are identified without having the first, second, or third gown identification marks **18**, **20** and **22** placed directly on the gowns **10**. Additionally, the gowns **10** shown in **FIG. 8** are contained within packages **36** that have the appropriate first, second, or third gown identification marks **18**, **20**, and **22** located thereon. In other exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it may be the case that the gowns **10** also have one of the first, second, or third gown identification marks **18**, **20**, and **22** located directly on the gown **10**. The arrangement in **FIG. 8** therefore provides an easily identifiable stack of gowns **10** that are classified according to a particular first, second, or third gown identification mark **18**, **20**, or **22**. The listing of information **14** is shown as being on a poster attached to a wall **52** and located above a shelf **34**. It is to be understood that in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention, that the listing of information **14** may be located at a location more remote from the gowns **10** as opposed to being located on the same wall **52** onto which the gowns **10** are located via the shelf **34**.

[0045] The healthcare provider may employ the method of the present invention in much the same way as discussed above. For instance, the healthcare provider will identify the surgical procedure **12** in question and then will be able to note the corresponding first, second, or third gown identification mark **18**, **20**, and **22** that relates to the surgical procedure **12**. At this point, the healthcare provider may take from the appropriate stack the corresponding gown **10** that is to be employed in the surgical procedure **12**.

[0046] The indicia may be stamped onto the outside **48** of the gown **10**. This allows both the wearer of the gown **10** and other healthcare providers inside the operating room to quickly identify the type of gown **10** being used by each person in the operating room. This may be beneficial when a surgical procedure **12** is being conducted and additional assistance is required or requested. Clear display of the indicia ensure that it is easy to identify and make certain that each healthcare provider involved in the surgical procedure **12** is adequately and properly protected.

[0047] Storage for the gowns **10** may vary from hospital to hospital. In some hospitals, the gowns **10** may be placed into a bin as opposed to being located on the shelf **34**. In this instance, the indicia being for instance the gown identification marks **16** may be located on the bin in order to identify the gown **10**. Additionally, the gown identification marks **16** may be placed on the gown **10** itself and on the package **36** in order to assist with the identification and selection of the gown **10**. In another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the gowns **10** are located inside of a vending machine. The vending machine may be provided with the gown identification marks **16** such that the healthcare provider may dispense the appropriate gown **10** for the desired surgical procedure **12**.

[0048] In some instances, the gowns **10** are provided with a tie card **40** as shown in **FIG. 5**. The tie card may have a sterile section **46** and a non-sterile section **44**. Tie strings on the gown **10** are connected to the sterile section **46**, and an assistant (typically the scrub or circulating nurse) may grasp the non-sterile section **44** and pass the tie card **40** along with the tie string around the back of the gown **10**. At this point, the assistant may hand off the tie string and/or the tie card **40** to the wearer of the gown **10**. From here, the tie strings may be tied in order to properly secure the gown **10** and the

tie card **40** may be thrown away. The tie card **40** in other instances may not be thrown away but may remain in and around the operating room and be used by operating room personnel for taking notes, that are written on the tie card **40**. One such example of a tie card **40** known in the art is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,982,448 to Kogut the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety for all purposes.

[0049] The tie card **40** provides another medium by which information about the surgical gown selection procedure may be communicated to the healthcare provider. For instance, printed information **42** as shown in **FIG. 5** that relates to the method of selecting a gown **10** in accordance with the present invention may be printed on the tie card **40**. The printed information **42** may be so placed in order to further acquaint the healthcare provider with the correspondence between the gown identification marks **16** and the various levels of expected fluid exposure **38**. Alternatively, the tie card **40** may be provided with the particular indicia used to identify the gown **10** onto which the tie card **40** is attached. Although shown as being located in the non-sterile section **44** of the tie card **40**, the printed information **42** may be located on either the non-sterile section **44** and/or the sterile section **46**.

[0050] **FIG. 10** shows an alternative exemplary embodiment of the listing of information **14** in accordance with the present invention. Here, different surgical procedures **12** are listed on the listing of information **14** as compared to the surgical procedures **12** listed in **FIG. 1**. As such, the present invention is not limited to a particular correspondence between the surgical procedures **12** and the levels of expected fluid exposure **38**. Additionally, more than one listing of information **14** may be used in accordance with the present invention. For example, a particular listing of information **14** may have surgical procedures **12** that relate to eye and ear procedures while a different listing of information **14** has surgical procedures **12** that are classified as cosmetic surgeries.

[0051] Although as shown in the form of a chart in **FIG. 10**, the listing of information **14** may be set up in other arrangements in order to correspond the gown identification marks **16** to the surgical procedures **12** and the levels of expected fluid exposure **38**. For instance, the listing of information **14** may be in graphical form or may be only a listing of various surgical procedures **12** and corresponding gown identification marks **16**. It is therefore the case that in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention that the row including the expected level of fluid exposure **38** is not included in the listing of information. Additionally, the row and information concerning the recommended gown examples **24** is not necessary in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention.

[0052] **FIG. 11** shows an exemplary embodiment of the present invention where the listing of information **14** is not completed prior to delivery to the healthcare provider. In this instance, the surgical procedures are provided with a plurality of blanks **60**. The healthcare provider may fill in the blanks **60** as he or she sees fit in corresponding the surgical procedures **12** to the expected level of fluid exposure **38** and the corresponding gown identification marks **16**. This is due to the fact that different hospitals or surgical units have different views as to what type of gown **10** is appropriate for

a particular surgical procedure **12**. For instance, some healthcare providers or hospitals may be more conservative in selecting gowns **10** that are sure to provide the level of fluid resistance necessary in all instances, while other hospitals or healthcare providers are more liberal in selecting the gowns **10** so that benefits other than fluid resistance are employed.

[0053] In one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the gown identification marks **16** may be applied to the gowns **10** such that the hospital or healthcare provider is free to mark the gown **10** with the desired gown identification mark **16**. This also allows for flexibility in selecting the gown **10** based on the hospitals or healthcare provider's view of the gown's **10** ability to resist fluid. In another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, some of the surgical procedures **12** may be listed in the listing of information **14** while other surgical procedures **12** are added by the hospital or healthcare provider. However, it is to be understood that in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the listing of information **14** is provided complete to the hospital or healthcare provider along with the indicia already identifying the gowns **10**.

[0054] Although described as having three different identification marks **16** to correspond to three different levels of expected fluid exposure **38**, it is to be understood that in other exemplary embodiments of the present invention that the surgical procedures **12** may be categorized into different levels of expected fluid exposure **38** in degrees other than three. For instance, two different levels of expected fluid exposure corresponding to two different gown identification marks **16** may be used in one exemplary embodiment of the present invention while in another, four different levels of expected fluid exposure corresponding to four different gown identification marks **16** may be used.

[0055] It should be understood that the present invention includes various modifications that can be made to the embodiments of the selection method described herein as come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of selecting a gown to be worn during a surgical procedure, comprising:

listing information pertaining to a plurality of surgical procedures in a first location;

depicting a plurality of gown identification marks in the first location, each gown identification mark corresponding to at least one of the surgical procedures;

providing a plurality of surgical gowns, the plurality being subdivided into groups wherein each group corresponds to at least one of the gown identification marks;

marking the individual gowns in each group with indicia, the indicia corresponding the gown to the gown identification mark of the group from which the gown is selected; and

selecting the gown to be worn during the procedure based upon any of the listing of information, the gown identification mark, and the indicia.

2. The method of claim 1, comprising depicting the gown identification marks at least partially pictorially.

3. The method of claim 1, comprising corresponding the procedures to the gown identification marks based upon expected fluid exposure of the procedure.

4. The method of claim 1, comprising depicting the information in chart form.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of gown identification marks comprises a group of at least three distinct marks comprising:

a first symbol corresponding to procedures having a first expected fluid exposure;

a second symbol corresponding to procedures having a second expected fluid exposure greater than the first expected fluid exposure; and

a third symbol corresponding to procedures having a third expected fluid exposure greater than the said second expected fluid exposure.

6. The method of claim 5, comprising:

depicting the first symbol as a single droplet;

depicting the second symbol as two droplets; and

depicting the third symbol as three droplets.

7. The method of claim 1, comprising depicting each of the gown identification marks as a combination of words and at least one image.

8. The method of claim 1, comprising marking the gown with a gown size, a brand name, and a gown product code proximal to the indicia.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicia is located on an inside surface of the gown.

10. The method of claim 1, comprising corresponding the procedures to low, moderate, and high levels of expected fluid exposure, wherein the low level of expected fluid exposure is less than about 100 ml of fluid, the moderate level of expected fluid exposure is between about 100 ml and about 300 ml of fluid, and the high level of expected fluid exposure is greater than about 300 ml of fluid.

11. The method of claim 1, comprising labeling a second location with the gown identification marks remote from the first location, wherein the second location corresponds to a storage area for the plurality of gowns.

12. The method of claim 1, comprising packaging the gown and labeling the package with the appropriate gown identification mark.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicia is applied directly on the gown.

14. A method of selecting a gown for a surgical procedure comprising:

displaying a listing of surgical procedures and a plurality of gown identification marks at a first location;

correlating the procedures to the marks; and

choosing a gown from a location remote to the first location suited for the procedure based upon indicia at the remote location corresponding the gown to at least one of the gown identification mark or surgical procedure.

15. The method of claim 14, comprising depicting the gown identification marks at least partially pictorially.

16. The method of claim 14, comprising corresponding the procedures to the gown identification marks based upon expected fluid exposure of the procedure.

17. The method of claim 14, depicting the information in chart form.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the plurality of gown identification marks comprises a group of at least three distinct marks comprising:

a first symbol corresponding to procedures having a first expected exposure;

a second symbol corresponding to procedures having a second expected fluid exposure greater than the first expected fluid exposure; and

a third symbol corresponding to procedures having a third expected fluid exposure greater than the second expected fluid exposure.

19. The method of claim 14, comprising depicting at least one gown example corresponding to each different procedure at the first location.

20. The method of claim 14, comprising depicting each of the gown identification marks as a combination of words and at least one image.

21. The method of claim 14, comprising:

storing the gowns at the remote location; and

marking the indicia upon the gowns.

22. The method of claim 14, comprising marking the indicia on an inside surface of the gowns.

23. The method of claim 14, comprising corresponding the procedures to low, moderate, and high levels of expected fluid exposure, wherein the low level of expected fluid exposure is less than about 100 ml of fluid, the moderate level of expected fluid exposure is between about 100 ml and about 300 ml of fluid, and the high level of expected fluid exposure is greater than about 300 ml of fluid.

24. The method of claim 14, comprising packaging the gown and labeling the package with the appropriate gown identification mark.

25. A method of identifying a gown, comprising:

providing information corresponding a plurality of procedures to a plurality of gown identification marks;

providing a surgical gown to be worn during a surgical procedure, the gown configured for use with at least one of the procedures; and

labeling the gown in a manner substantially similar to at least one of the plurality of gown identification marks.

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