

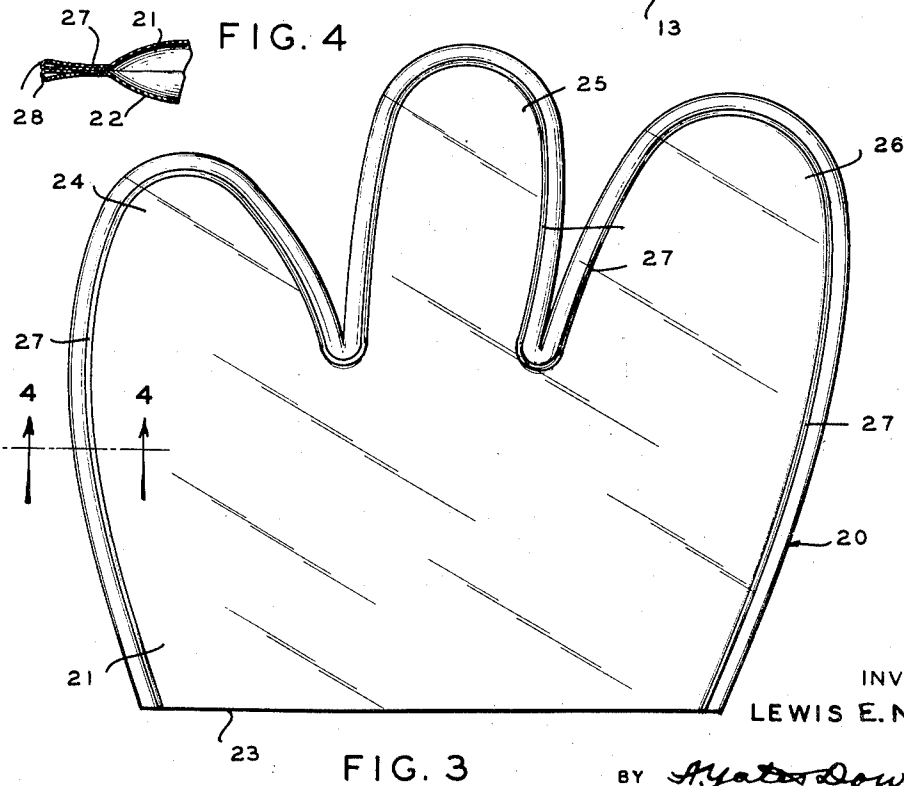
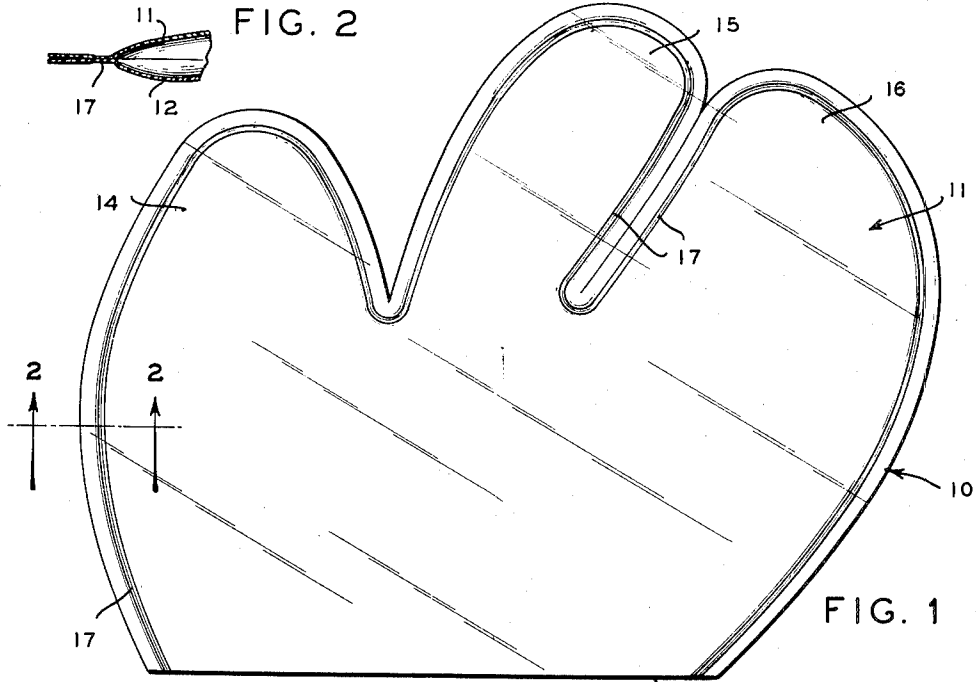
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PROTECTIVE COVERING FOR THE HANDS

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**PROTECTIVE COVERING FOR THE HANDS**

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This invention relates to food handling and more particularly to the handling of prepared items of food where, through the inherent nature thereof, difficulty may be encountered through efforts to separate meat or fowl from the carcass by the use of knife and fork and more convenient consumption is obtained when the comestible is held by the eater's fingers during the consumption thereof.

A relatively wide field in the restaurant industry has been developed in connection with the serving of such article as fried chicken, fried shrimp, corn-on-the-cob, and the like, where the serving thereof is described as "in the rough" and it is contemplated that patrons will use their fingers to hold such articles of food during the eating thereof. Similar situations exist during such festive gatherings as picnics, barbecues, or the like, and in the private homes.

No satisfactory solution has been developed for the problems of food handling of the character described hereabove whereby the articles being eaten will be maintained in sanitary condition during the consumption thereof and the hands and fingers of the eaters will be protected against the cooking substances, such as butter, oils, etc., used during the preparation of the dish, as well as against the natural food juices which are inherently present.

Accordingly, it is a major object of the present invention to provide a sterile covering for the hands which will not interfere with free use of the fingers and which will permit the ready manual handling of articles being eaten.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a novel covering for the hands which is manufactured from fluid-proof material, and which will not interfere with free use of the fingers and the ready handling of articles being eaten.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a novel covering for each hand in the form of a glove fabricated from relatively thin and highly flexible material whereby freedom of movement of the fingers of the wearer is not impeded.

It is a still further object of the invention to provide a novel covering for the hands, of the class set forth, which may be manufactured easily and economically from readily available sheet material, which will be strong and durable, and which will provide a sterile protective covering so that articles of food may be handled with maximum convenience and without possibility of contamination thereof.

Further objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing wherein:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a novel covering for the hands illustrating one embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2, a fragmentary transverse sectional view taken on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3, a plan view similar to Fig. 1 and illustrating a modified embodiment of the invention; and

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Fig. 4, a fragmentary transverse sectional view taken on the line 4—4 of Fig. 3.

As illustrated in the drawings, particular reference being had to Figs. 1 and 2 thereof, a preferred embodiment of the invention comprises a glove-like device indicated at 10 and produced in a form somewhat resembling that of a conventional glove of the so-called mitten type. Preferably, the glove 10 is manufactured from relatively thin and highly flexible sheet material having inherent fluid-proof characteristics. Desirably, such material is transparent so that full visibility of the fingers may be had.

Numerous synthetic materials which are particularly suitable for present purposes are readily available in the open market, an especially desirable material having been found to be a vinyl resin derivative which may be obtained in different gauges or thicknesses dependent upon the quality of the finished product desired. It has been found in practice that even the lightest or thinnest of such materials is highly suitable since no such stresses are placed upon the protective covering, during the normal eating processes, as to require any unusual resistance to stresses.

Each glove 10 includes complementary front and rear portions 11 and 12, respectively, each of which has a relatively straight bottom edge 13, a thumb portion 14, an intermediate finger portion 15 and an outer finger portion 16 of greater width than the intermediate portion. Desirably, the adjacent edges of the finger portions are disposed in abutting relationship, these finger portions being substantially parallel with respect to each other and being angularly and divergently disposed with respect to the thumb portion 14.

It will be obvious that the blanks 11 and 12 may be mass-produced at extremely low cost from suitable sheet material. It is contemplated that the mitten-like conformation will be such that interchangeability between the two hands is provided whereby left and right hand coverings will not be distinguishable or, if preferred, different dies or other suitable cutting means may be employed whereby a sufficiently accurate fit will be provided so that different coverings for the two hands will be produced. Under the latter circumstances, the front or inner face of the covering, or that surface, which, in use, will engage the article being held, may be of slightly lesser surface area than the rear or outer face of the covering whereby additional space will be provided interiorly to compensate for thickness of the hand of the user.

A preferable method of assembly of the hand covering comprises the positioning of the front and rear portions 10 and 11 in overlying-underlying relationship with the peripheral edges in alignment and a fluid-proof seam 17 is then provided, this seam paralleling the periphery of the glove and finger portions and stopping at the bottom edge 13. An opening is thus provided for the insertion in the glove of the hand of the user, this opening being of substantially greater width than the hand to provide a loose fit about the wrist and permit free passage of air. While many suitable ways of sealing are available, a heat and pressure seam is highly desirable, with or without the use of a solvent, whereby an effectual and permanent seal is provided having a tensile strength equal to or greater than that of the material per se from which the covering is manufactured. Such a seal has been illustrated on a slightly enlarged scale in Fig. 2 of the drawing where the aligned edges of the front and rear portions 10 and 11 are in abutting contact beyond the seal or seam 16 but are free, each from the other.

The covering for the hands produced in the manner described hereabove will not interfere with free use of

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the fingers and manipulation of articles held in the hands. The transparent nature of the material from which the covering is produced as well as the extreme flexibility thereof will add to the convenience of use, articles being supported and/or eaten will be maintained in sanitary condition and the fingers of the user will not become sticky, soiled, or the like, through contact with such articles. Since the device of the present invention may be produced at extremely low cost, it is contemplated that after a single use the device will be discarded, such disposition or destruction presenting no particular problems.

A slightly modified form of protective covering has been illustrated in Figs. 3 and 4 of the drawing. In this embodiment of the invention, the glove-like device 20 remains of mitten-like configuration and includes front and rear portions 21 and 22, respectively, each of which has a relatively straight bottom edge 23, a thumb portion 24, an intermediate or index portion 25 and an outer finger portion 26 of greater width than the intermediate portion 25. In this form of the invention, the axis of the intermediate or finger portion 25 approaches the vertical and both thumb portion 24 and outer finger portion 26 diverge away from said intermediate portion.

The peripheral edges of the front and rear portions 21 and 22 are heat sealed, with the exception of the open bottom edge 23, to provide a fluid-proof protective covering. As particularly illustrated in Fig. 4 of the drawing, on a slightly enlarged scale, the aligned peripheral edges of front and rear portions are bent backwardly upon themselves as indicated at 28 to provide a double thickness of the material of said front and rear portions throughout the seal 27. Desirably, this seal terminates at the straight bottom edge 23 and is accomplished under heat and pressure, with or without a solvent, and provides a substantial weld between the two pieces of sheet material from which the covering is formed.

The invention herein described provides an effective solution to the vexing problems inherent to the sterile handling of comestibles and is susceptible of many practical uses in addition to those detailed hereabove. The loose-fitting nature of the protective covering provides no difficulties in connection with the placing upon the hands or the discarding thereof and permits maximum freedom of use of the fingers through the nature of the material employed and the configuration of the finished articles.

It will be obvious to those skilled in this art that various

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changes may be made in the invention without departing from the spirit and scope thereof and therefore the invention is not limited by that which is shown in the drawing and described in the specification but only as indicated in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A glove-like protective covering for the hand of a wearer which will permit the free handling of comestibles for consumption, said covering being of greater width than length and comprising front and back identical portions produced from substantially thin fluid-proof, transparent and highly flexible sheet material, each of said portions having a relatively straight bottom edge, convex outer side edges and an upper edge formed with two spaced re-entrant portions of substantial depth so as to define a thumb receiving portion, an intermediate index finger receiving portion and an outer portion for receiving the remaining fingers of the hand, the thumb and outer portions being substantially of the same width and each being of greater width than the width of the intermediate portion, the peripheral edges of said front and back portions being substantially aligned and provided with a fluid-proof seal, said seal being inwardly spaced from said edges and following the peripheral contour of said front and back portions to provide a stiffening reinforcement of the same, said seal terminating at said straight bottom edge to provide an opening which extends substantially the full width of the glove-like covering to facilitate the placing of the covering on the hand.

2. A protective hand covering as set forth in claim 1, wherein the peripheral edges of said front and back portions are bent backwards upon themselves to provide double thickness of material except for the straight bottom edges of said portions, and said peripheral seal is provided through said double thicknesses of material.

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