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Leung et al.

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(54) **FAST DISSOLVING ORALLY COMSUMABLE FILMS**

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(*) Notice: This patent issued on a continued prosecution application filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d), and is subject to the twenty year patent term provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2).

Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(58) **Field of Search** 424/404, 434, 424/435, 405, 407, 410, 443, 439, 441, 444, 49, 55

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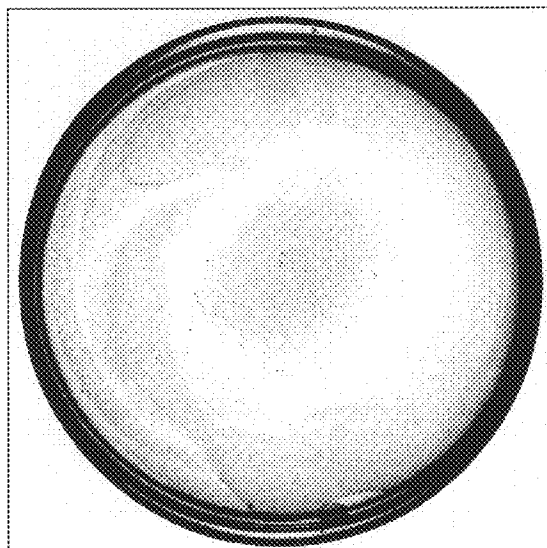
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Physiologically acceptable films, including edible films, are disclosed. The films include a water soluble film-forming polymer such as pullulan. Edible films are disclosed that include pullulan and antimicrobially effective amounts of the essential oils thymol, methyl salicylate, eucalyptol and menthol. The edible films are effective at killing the plaque-producing germs that cause dental plaque, gingivitis and bad breath. The film can also contain pharmaceutically active agents. Methods for producing the films are also disclosed.

20 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets



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FIG-1

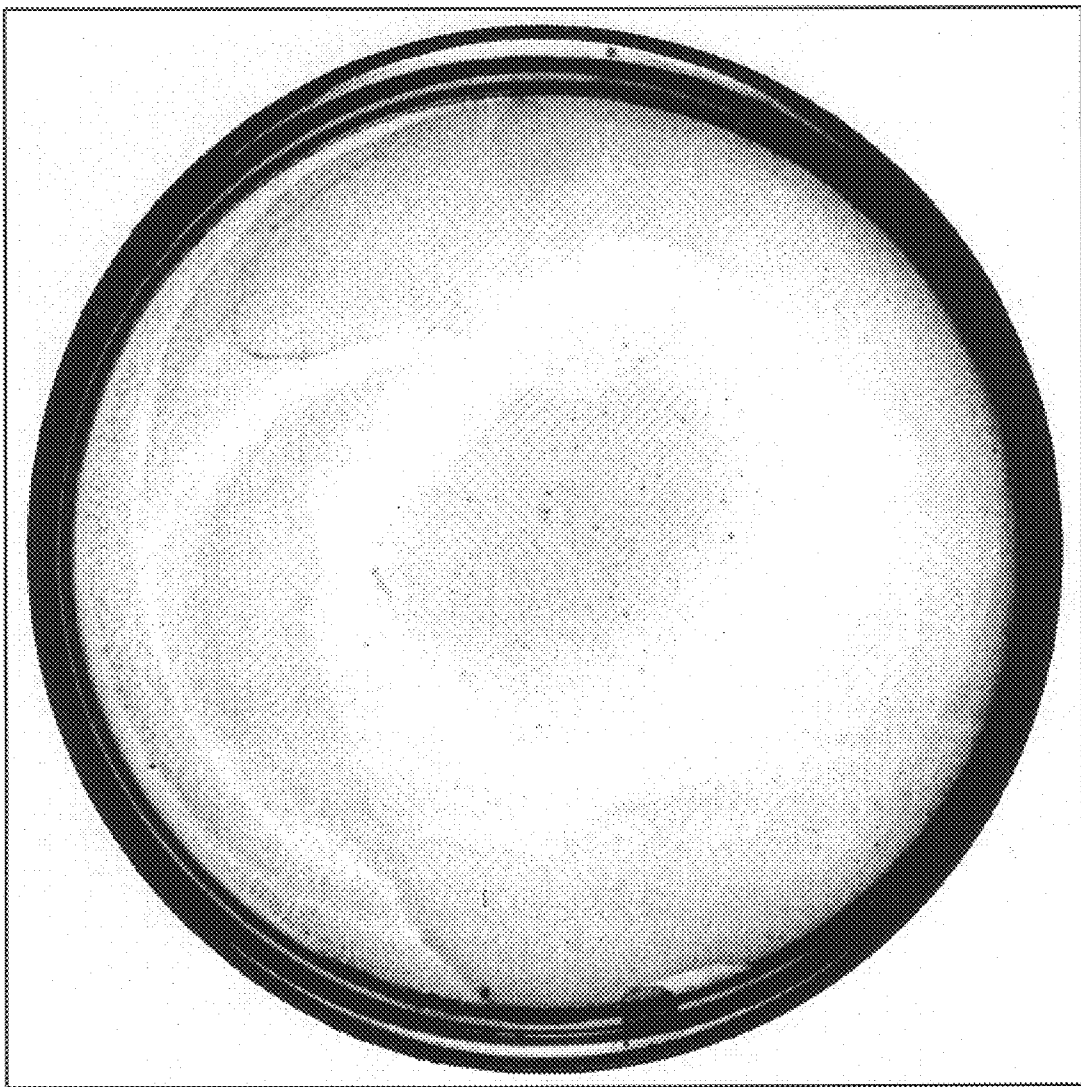
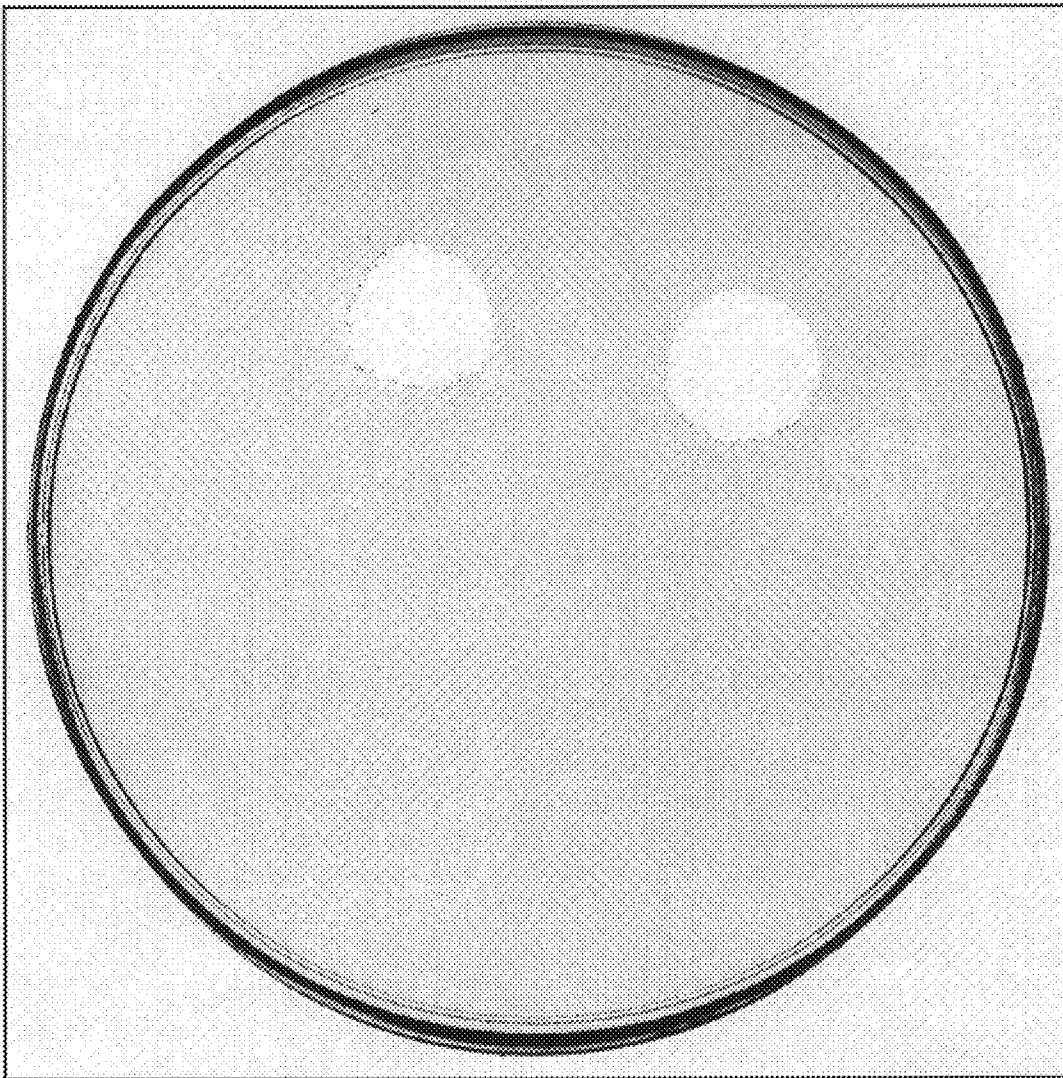


FIG-2



FAST DISSOLVING ORALLY CONSUMABLE FILMS

This application claims the benefit of Provisional Application No. 60/101,798, filed Sep. 25, 1998.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to fast dissolving orally consumable films. The films are used to deliver breath deodorizing agents, antimicrobial agents and salivary stimulants to the oral cavity. The films can also be used to deliver pharmaceutically active agents.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In a more perfect world, people would thoroughly cleanse their mouths after each meal as part of their routine oral hygienic practices. Unfortunately, several factors conspire to prevent widespread compliance with this basic requirement of a good oral cleaning regimen.

Oral cleansing can be difficult or inconvenient at times, depending on the nature of the cleansing and the situation in which the cleansing must occur. Brushing, flossing, cleaning your tongue and gargling using a variety of devices and compositions well-suited for the privacy of one's home are common oral care practices. However, the devices and compositions used in oral cleansing practices are less convenient to use away from home, where bathroom facilities might be scarce, unavailable or unsanitary.

As brushing, flossing, cleaning your tongue and gargling in public are not considered to be socially acceptable behaviors in many, if not all cultures, a variety of less obtrusive oral cleansing products have been developed. These include breath-freshening gums and lozenges. Although gums and lozenges have been formulated to achieve a variety of beneficial effects, they are not always socially acceptable. For example, gum is expressly banned from certain institutions, such as schools as well as in certain countries, such as Singapore. Gums and mints are used over extended periods of time, and they require an amount of sucking or chewing action on the part of the consumer, which can be distracting, tedious and undesirable.

Another portable oral cleansing product is a mouthspray. Like a mouthwash, a mouthspray can provide the consumer with a quick burst of strong breath-freshening action, which might be overwhelming in an extended-consumption product like gum or lozenges. On the other hand, mouthsprays are obtrusive. Spraying a mouthspray typically generates a noise, which undesirably draws the attention of the public to the consumer. Moreover, mouthsprays are typically packaged in relatively expensive and complex metal canisters, which can clog in use and are not environmentally friendly. Furthermore, misdirecting the spray not only wastes the product, but can result in irritated eyes, a sticky face and/or stained clothing.

It has been proposed to use an edible film as a vehicle for unobtrusively delivering breath-freshening agents. See JP 5-236885. This Japanese patent application does not, however, teach the inclusion of antimicrobial agents in the film, using the film to decrease the amount of undesirable bacteria within the oral cavity, or stimulating saliva. Furthermore, this patent application does not disclose employing its film for purposes other than breath freshening or within cavities other than the mouth.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,518,902 to Ozaki et al. (Hayashibara) discloses high pullulan content products, such as edible

films, dentifrices and pharmaceuticals (column 3, lines 44-56 and Example B-8). The products can include a variety of ingredients in addition to pullulan, such as other polysaccharides, polyhydric alcohols, antiseptics and flavor-imparting agents (column 4, line 58 to column 5, line 11). None of the essential oils, such as thymol, eucalyptol, methyl salicylate or menthol, are mentioned as suitable ingredients.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,411,945 to Ozaki et al. (Hayashibara) discloses a pullulan binder and products produced therewith, including edible films (Example B-2). The products can include a variety of ingredients in addition to pullulan, such as other polysaccharides, antibacterial agents, flavor-imparting agents and pharmaceutically active substances (column 4, lines 5-15). None of the essential oils are mentioned as suitable ingredients.

U.S. Pat. No. 4,851,394 to Kubodera discloses glucomannan/polyhydric alcohol edible films, which can comprise pullulan (column 3, line 59 to column 4, line 21). The films are contrasted with existing pullulan-based films, which are said to lack resistance to water (column 1, lines 40-44). None of the essential oils are mentioned as suitable ingredients.

U.S. Pat. No. 3,784,390 Hijiya et al. discloses pullulan films and their use in coating and packing materials for foods, pharmaceuticals and other oxygen sensitive materials. All of the examples in this patent teach mixing pullulan in hot water.

U.S. Pat. No. 4,623,394 Nakamura et al. discloses a gradually disintegrable molded article that can be a film made with pullulan. The articles contain a particular heteromannan, which can be locust bean gum.

U.S. Pat. No. 4,562,020 Hijiya et al. discloses a process for producing a self-supporting film of a glucan, which can be pullulan.

Japanese Patent Document JP5-1198 discloses films made of polyvinyl alcohol and at least one of carrageenan, water-soluble cellulose alpha-starch and water-soluble polysaccharides.

WO 99/17753 discloses rapidly dissolving films for delivery of drugs to be adsorbed in the digestive tract.

WO 98/26780 discloses a flat, foil, paper or wafer type presentation for the application and release of active substances in the buccal cavity. The specific active ingredient disclosed in WO 98/26780 is buprenorphine.

WO 98/20862 discloses a film for use in the oral cavity that can contain a cosmetic or pharmaceutical active substance.

WO 98/26763 discloses a flat, foil, paper or wafer like presentation for release of active substances into the buccal cavity. The particular active disclosed is apomorphine.

Despite the existence of rapidly dissolving orally consumable films in the prior art, there is still room for improvement in such films, and in processes for making them.

All references cited herein are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention provides a physiologically acceptable film, which is particularly well adapted to adhere to and rapidly dissolve in the mouth of a consumer. In a first embodiment of the invention, the film delivers at least one oral care agent, such as antimicrobial agents and salivary stimulants. The antimicrobial agents are effective against germs that cause

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