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INVENTION

## Current U.S. Patents

First patent for a combination oral contraceptive was granted to a product containing both progestational and estrogenic hormones that has been on the market more than a year.

➤ ONE OF THE "PILLS" used by many thousands of women in the United States for planning the size and timing of their families has been granted a patent.

Patent 3,230,142 is the first to be awarded for a combination oral contraceptive, containing both progestational and estrogenic hormones. Known as "Provest," this pill has been on the market for more than a

Although the compound is intended primarily for human use, it may also be effective in controlling conception in other mammals, as well as birds. The combina-tion is known chemically as 6-alpha-methyl-17-alpha hydroxyprogesterone 17-acetate and ethinyl estradiol.

George B. Spero of Kalamazoo, Mich., assigned patent rights to The Upjohn Company, Kalamazoo, which markets the drug. Whether or not birth control pills cause harmful side effects remains a subject of controversy.

## Foam Shield for Reentry

A plastic foam that is applied in space to form a shield for reentry into the earth's atmosphere, especially useful for a man but also applicable for instruments from a

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satellite, satellites themselves or rocket boosters, has been devised by John Henry Quillinan of Ambler, Pa.

The heat shield would be applied in the substantially zero gravity environment of space. In the case of emergency reentry for a man, the foam would be applied around his spacesuit.

Such a foam shield would protect not only against the heat of reentry but could also absorb some of the shock from the impact of landing, either on land or water.

Mr. Quillinan assigned rights to patent 3,229,936 to General Electric Company. The plastic material would be stored unfoamed, then changed into a foamed plastic as desired for protection from reentry heat.

The foaming plastic, a form of urethane, has successfully undergone tests in earth-bound simulated space chambers, Mr. Quillinan said.

## Other Interesting Patents

The "father" of the inertial guidance systems now widely used in rockets, airplanes, ships and submarines, Dr. C. Stark Draper, head of the department of aeronautics and astronautics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., was awarded patent 3,229,533, with Ernest B. Dane Jr. of Belmont, Mass., for their improved gyroscopic system. They stated the system is more easily produced, less expensive and more reliable than previous instruments. They assigned rights to Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

For this method of producing an electron beam of large current and small diameter, which is also stable and self-focusing, Dr. Willard H. Bennett of North Carolina State of the University of North Carolina, Raleigh, earned patent 3,230,419. The invention may be used by the Government without royalty payments.

Three scientists have invented a method for mapping the density distributions in gases at extremely low pressures. Drs. Stanley R. Meilozarek, Chevy Chase, Md., David C. Schubert, Silver Spring, Md., and Ladislaus L. Marton, Washington, D.C., assigned rights to patent 3,230,366 to the Government through the Secretary of the

A magnetic apparatus for confining the extremely hot plasma for the fusion reactions by which the energy of the oceans' supply of hydrogen fuel may one day be harnessed has been patented. The inventors, Drs. Harold P. Furth of Berkeley, Calif., and Marshall N. Rosenbluth of San Diego, Calif., assigned rights to patent 3,230,145 to the Government through the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

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