

# • New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **REAGENT BOTTLES** have "built-in" polyethylene dust caps that help store standard solutions without deterioration. The special caps provide an air-tight closure that prevents breathing, evaporation and contamination of the solution. The O-ring is also protected from solvents and vapor. No lubrication and no separate dust caps are required with the cap-type stoppers.

• Science News Letter, 85:224 April 4, 1964

⚙️ **GENERAL PURPOSE CUTTER** for household use does the work of ordinary snippers twice their size and with less effort. The nine-inch long cutter has slip-resistant serrated blades which cut straight lines or curves. The cutters, provided with vinyl grips and thumb-operated catch, can be used on rubber, asphalt or vinyl tile, screening, cord, wire and many other materials.

• Science News Letter, 85:224 April 4, 1964

⚙️ **FLEXIBLE SPRAY UNIT** that is hand-operated and designed to give immediate relief from contamination of the eyes, face or body is useful in laboratories and industry. The spray head, activated by a quick-opening valve, produces a soft, controlled water spray at a safe six gallons per minute. It is provided with a six-foot heavy duty hose.

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⚙️ **WREN BIRDHOUSE**, shown in photograph, allows young and old bird lovers to watch birdlife close at hand from inside the living room. The wren house, which attaches directly to the window pane, is provided on one side with a one-way mirror that lets a viewer observe the birds build their nest, hatch eggs and feed the young without being seen. The house, 7 x 5¼ x 5 inches in size is made of lightweight plastic.

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⚙️ **IMPROVED NEEDLE VALVE** for use with burets, separatory funnels, distilling heads and similar applications in the laboratory eliminates the danger of breakage or contamination. Made of corrosion resistant Teflon, the valves are suitable for precise control of acids, alkalis and other highly corrosive fluids under high vacuum. Connecting tubes are made of heavy wall Pyrex for strength.

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⚙️ **AUTOMATIC BOTTLE WARMER** equipped with a thermostat prevents overheating baby's bottle. The unbreakable warmer, made of high impact blue plastic, automatically cuts off when the formula reaches feeding temperature. It is also suitable for cooking eggs.

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⚙️ **SEAT BELT RETRACTOR** usable with all seat belts up to two inches in width, keeps belts clean and out of the way. Made of high impact nylon and powered by a stainless steel spring, the retractor simply slips onto the installed seat belt. When the belt is not in use it automatically winds up on the reel to form a neat compact coil at the back of the seat. It does not interfere with the function of the belt.

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# • Doctors Are Reading •

## Drugs for Diabetes

➤ **DIABETES CAN BE** treated successfully by a combination of oral drugs instead of by insulin injections. The drugs cost twice as much as insulin, however.

A long-term study by Dr. Samuel H. Beaser of Harvard Medical School, Boston, has shown that failures with the presently used single drugs, tolbutamide and chlorpropamide, can be overcome by the addition of phenformin.

Combined drugs kept more than 100 patients in good condition for more than four years, Dr. Beaser reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 187:887, 1964. Phenformin, also known as DBI, was developed by the U.S. Vitamin and Pharmaceutical Corporation of New York.

## Pill Imprints Urged

An imprinted code on all pills and capsules has been urged by a team of physicians from the Columbus (Ohio) Poison Control Center to improve identification of unlabeled drugs.

One recommendation has advised stamping the manufacturer's trade marks or initials on one side of a tablet and a three-digit code on the other. A more elaborate proposal calls for general therapeutic classification, year of production, dosage, manufacturer and other data.

Dr. William O. Robertson, now at the University of Washington, with Joseph G. Caldwell, Alfred F. Shoman Jr. and Charles B. Hurst Jr., in *JAMA*, 187:951, 1964, referred to a drug identification guide published in *JAMA*, 182:1145, 1962, as best among available identification schemes.

## Premarital Laws Skirted

Rising divorce rates and increase in venereal disease were laid to the skirting of state laws requiring premarital physical examinations and blood tests for syphilis.

Thirty-seven states have such laws but they are not properly enforced, largely because of the cost, Dr. Sylvester W. Trythall of Crittenton General Hospital, Detroit, said in *JAMA*, 187:900, 1964.

The 13 states lacking requirements for physicals and blood tests for both parties to a marriage are: Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Vermont, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, South Carolina and Washington.

## Gelatin for Fingernails

The taking of gelatin to correct brittle fingernails was questioned by Dr. Albert M. Kligman, a Philadelphia dermatologist, in *JAMA*, 187:968, 1964.

The gelatin claim cannot be refuted, Dr. Kligman says, but neither has it been proved.

"Theoretically, it does not make any sense at all," he told a fellow physician who brought up the problem of dietary deficiency. "Subjects with brittle nails have no known protein deficiency, and if they did, the nails would be among the last objects to be involved."

One study showed nail hardness increased in 15 persons in one month, but since it takes three months for nails to grow, the results are "worrisome," the dermatologist said.

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