

19. The gel-in-matrix of claim 17 wherein said matrix is a porous: plastic, ceramic, metal, flexible plastic foam, rigid plastic foam, or mass of nonwoven fibers.

20. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said matrix is a reticulated open-cell porous plastic foam.

21. The gel-in-matrix of claim 19 wherein said matrix is a reticulated open-cell porous plastic foam.

22. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said matrix is a polyurethane foam.

23. The gel-in-matrix of claim 21 wherein said matrix is a polyurethane foam.

24. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said matrix contains about 20-200 pores per square inch.

25. The gel-in-matrix of claim 23 wherein said matrix contains about 20-200 pores per square inch.

26. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said matrix is a mass of nonwoven fibers.

27. The gel-in-matrix of claim 19 wherein said matrix is a mass of nonwoven fibers.

28. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said composition is in the form of a thin sheet, a strand, a cylindrical plug, a cylindrical annulus, a disc, or beads.

29. The gel-in-matrix of claim 19 wherein said composition is in the form of a thin sheet, a strand, a cylindrical plug, a cylindrical annulus, a disc, or beads.

30. The gel-in-matrix of claim 25 wherein said composition is in the form of a thin sheet, a strand, a cylindrical plug, a cylindrical annulus, a disc, or beads.

31. The gel-in-matrix of claim 27 wherein said composition is in the form of a thin sheet, a strand, a cylindrical plug, a cylindrical annulus, a disc, or beads.

32. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said hydrogel further comprises at least one buffer, conventional hydrogel additive, or organic solvent in an amount or of a type which is miscible with an aqueous medium from which said hydrogel has been formed.

33. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said hydrogel further comprises a solid or immiscible liquid immobilized within it.

34. The gel-in-matrix of claim 19 wherein said hydrogel further comprises a solid or immiscible liquid immobilized within it.

35. The gel-in-matrix of claim 21 wherein said hydrogel further comprises a solid or immiscible liquid immobilized within it.

36. The gel-in-matrix of claim 23 wherein said hydrogel further comprises a solid or immiscible liquid immobilized within it.

37. The gel-in-matrix of claim 27 wherein said hydrogel further comprises a solid or immiscible liquid immobilized within it.

38. The gel-in-matrix of claim 1 wherein said hydrogel contains at least one biologically active component immobilized within it.

39. The gel-in-matrix of claim 4 wherein said hydrogel contains at least one biologically active component immobilized within it.

40. The gel-in-matrix of claim 9 wherein said hydrogel contains at least one biologically active component immobilized within it.

41. The gel-in-matrix of claim 13 wherein said hydrogel contains at least one biologically active component immobilized within it.

42. The gel-in-matrix of claim 19 wherein said hydrogel contains at least one biologically active component immobilized within it.

43. The gel-in-matrix of claim 25 wherein said hydrogel contains at least one biologically active component immobilized within it.

44. The gel-in-matrix of claim 30 wherein said hydrogel contains at least one biologically active component immobilized within it.

45. A method for manufacturing the gel-in-matrix of claim 1 comprising creating the fractures in said gel by partially dewatering said hydrogel in situ within said matrix.

46. The method of claim 45 wherein said hydrogen is dewatered until it contains about 10-90% of its original weight prior to said dewatering.

47. The method of claim 45 wherein said hydrogel is dewatered until it contains about 15-50% of its original weight prior to said dewatering.

48. A gel-in-matrix produced by the method of claim 45.

49. The gel-in-matrix produced by the method of claim 46.

50. A gel-in-matrix produced by the method of claim 47.

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