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[54] **IN SITU MODIFICATION OF ALGINATE**

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[58] **Field of Search** 536/3; 424/423, 444, 424/488; 604/51, 56; 514/779

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A method of modifying salts of alginic acid in situ for prevention and treatment of various intra-articular and extra-articular (spine) complications modifies the alginate in situ to an insoluble gel. This in situ modification provides a final product which can be compressed within the intra-articular space thus remaining localized. The modified material can have varied mechanical strengths and thus varied degradation times and can serve as a matrix for localizing and slowly releasing therapeutic agents. The modified material is biocompatible and biodegradable, thus requiring no reoperation for removal.

12 Claims, No Drawings