

V. The general sterilization procedures are those recommended by the FDA for high acid foods:

- A. The maximum amount of time and temperature is 4 to 5 minutes at about 100° C.; or
- B. Fill cans hot and hold for 2 minutes at 88° C. and then allow to cool; or
- C. Pass through a steritort to give a sterilization procedure similar to A. above.

VI. Alternatively the product can be packaged in a flexible packaging system, such as a plastic container or retortable pouch. A plastic container with a port fitment attached would eliminate the need of transferring the canned product to a plastic gavage bag for nasogastric feeding. A retortable pouch (FDA approved) has been found to be very acceptable. Preliminary results also indicate that plastic laminate composed of polyvinylidene chloride (0.6 mil), oriented Nylon (0.6 mil), ethyl vinyl alcohol, and polyethylene is very acceptable. Examples of unacceptable plastics are (1) 2.5 mil Saron polyester Saron with 1 mil 4% ethylvinyl alcohol/Polyester, (2) Low linear density polyester.

It should be understood that the above Example is merely illustrative of the invention being disclosed herein. Given this disclosure, variations will occur to

those skilled in the art. Accordingly, it is intended that the invention being disclosed herein should be limited only by the following claims.

I claim:

1. A ready-to-use aqueous elemental diet composition comprising, based on the total calories of the composition, a carbohydrate component ranging in amount from about 50 to 90%, an amino acid component ranging in amount from about 5 to 30%, and a lipid component ranging in amount from 10 to 50%, the composition being non-browning at 38° C., having a pH ranging from about 3.0 to about 4.4 and having the lipid component in the form of a stable emulsion consisting of lipids, an emulsifier selected from the group consisting of mono and diglycerides and a corn starch modified with succinate anhydride in quantities sufficient to maintain emulsion stability in the pH range of about 3.0 to 4.4.

2. The composition of claim 1 wherein the amino acid component comprises either pure L-amino acids or about 77.5 weight % of compounds having 1-3 amino acid residues, about 14.7 weight % of compounds having 4-6 amino acid residues, and about 8 weight % of compounds having 7 or more amino acid residues.

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