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contact pads are covered with another layer of an electrical insulating material which includes through holes that allow portions of the contact pads to be exposed through said another layer of electrical insulating material.

25. A micro-hotplate according to claim 23, wherein said contact pads include electrical leads. 5

26. A micro-hotplate according to claim 23, wherein said contact pads comprise aluminum.

27. A micro-hotplate according to claim 21, wherein said micro-hotplate has a size of between about  $2.5 \times 10^3$  and  $6.4 \times 10^5$  square microns. 10

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28. A micro-hotplate according to claim 21, wherein said support substrate comprises silicon.

29. A micro-hotplate according to claim 28, wherein said silicon support substrate comprises a silicon wafer or chip.

30. A micro-hotplate according to claim 21, wherein said heating element comprises polysilicon.

31. A micro-hotplate according to claim 21, wherein said conductive heat distribution plate comprises aluminum.

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