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(54) **CLOTHING PROTECTOR**

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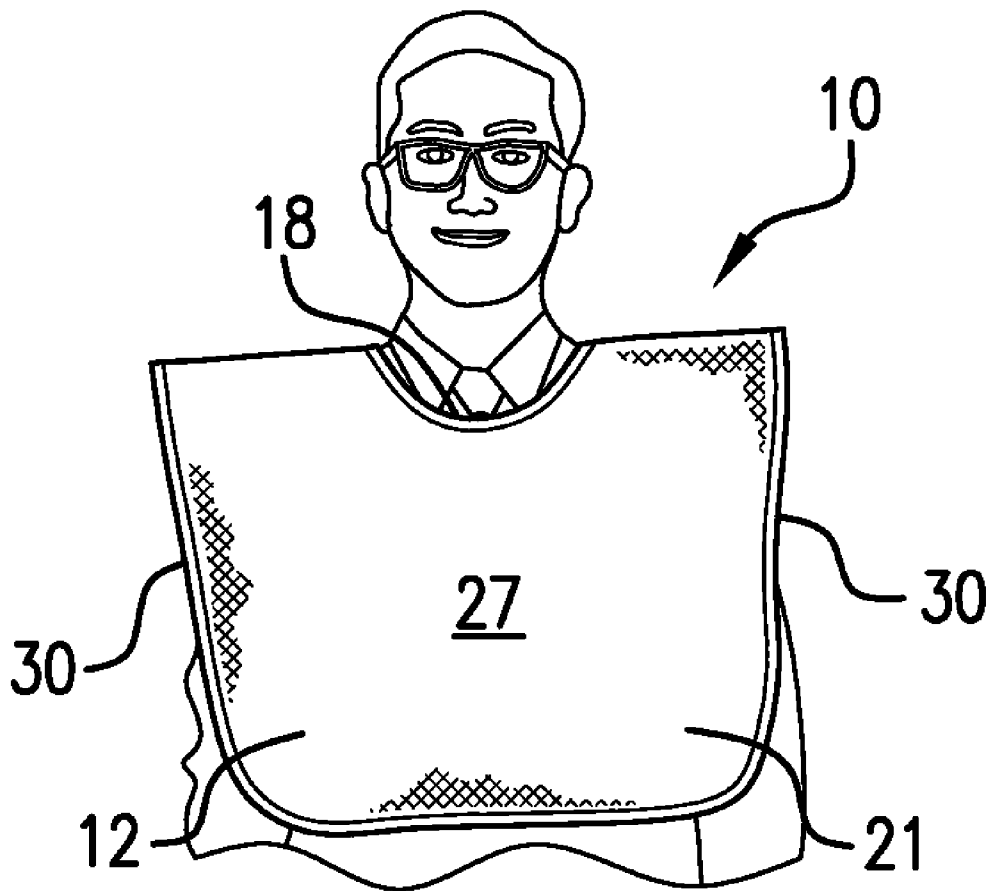
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/828,984, filed on May 30, 2013.

A clothing protector having a separation between the panels that forms a neck recess at one end so that a user, such as an adult or child, may use the protector without interfering with the user's hair, with preferred embodiments of the protector being constructed from an absorbent fabric with a second layer that contacts the user's clothing when worn having a texturized surface.



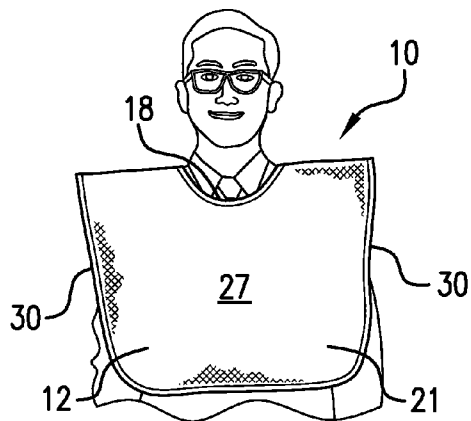


FIG. 1

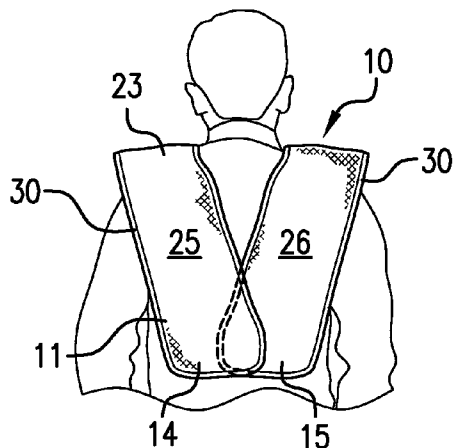


FIG. 2

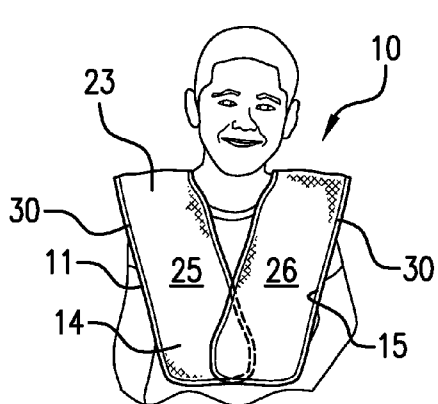


FIG. 3

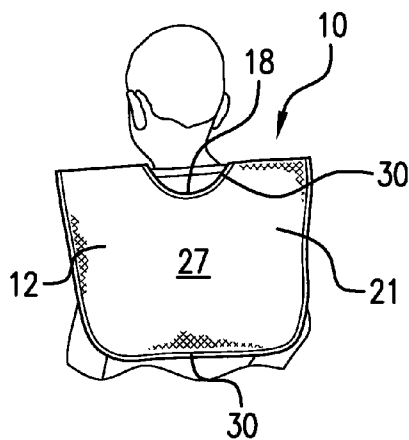


FIG. 4

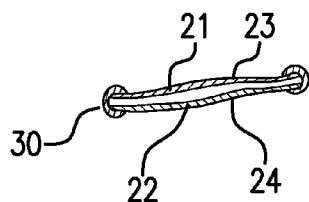


FIG. 5

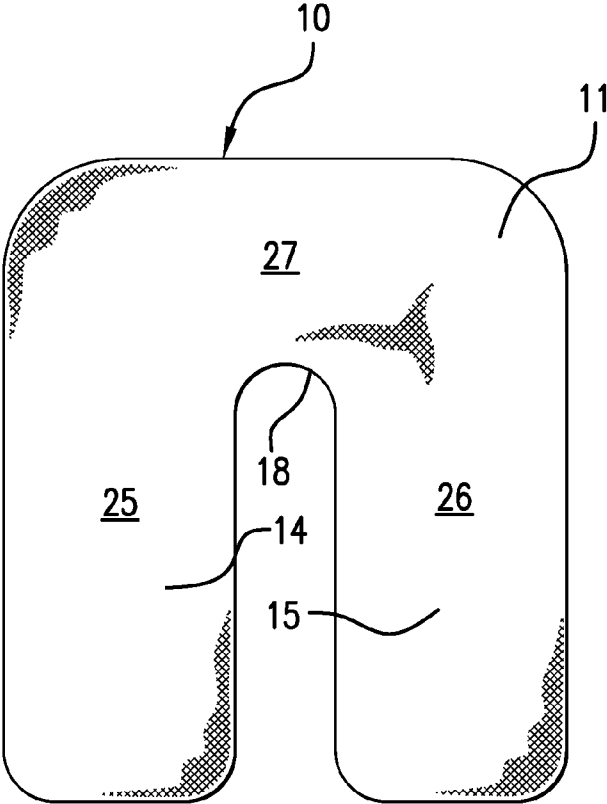


FIG. 6

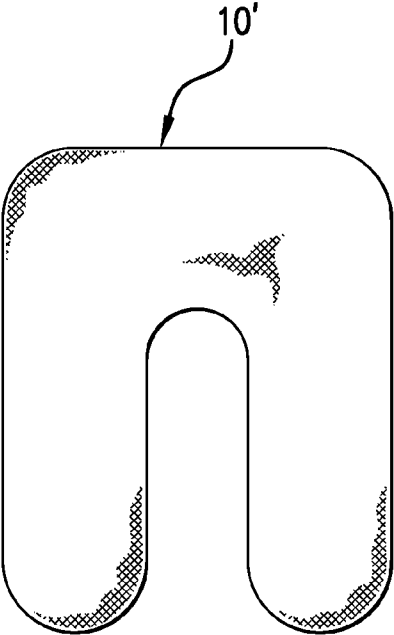


FIG. 7

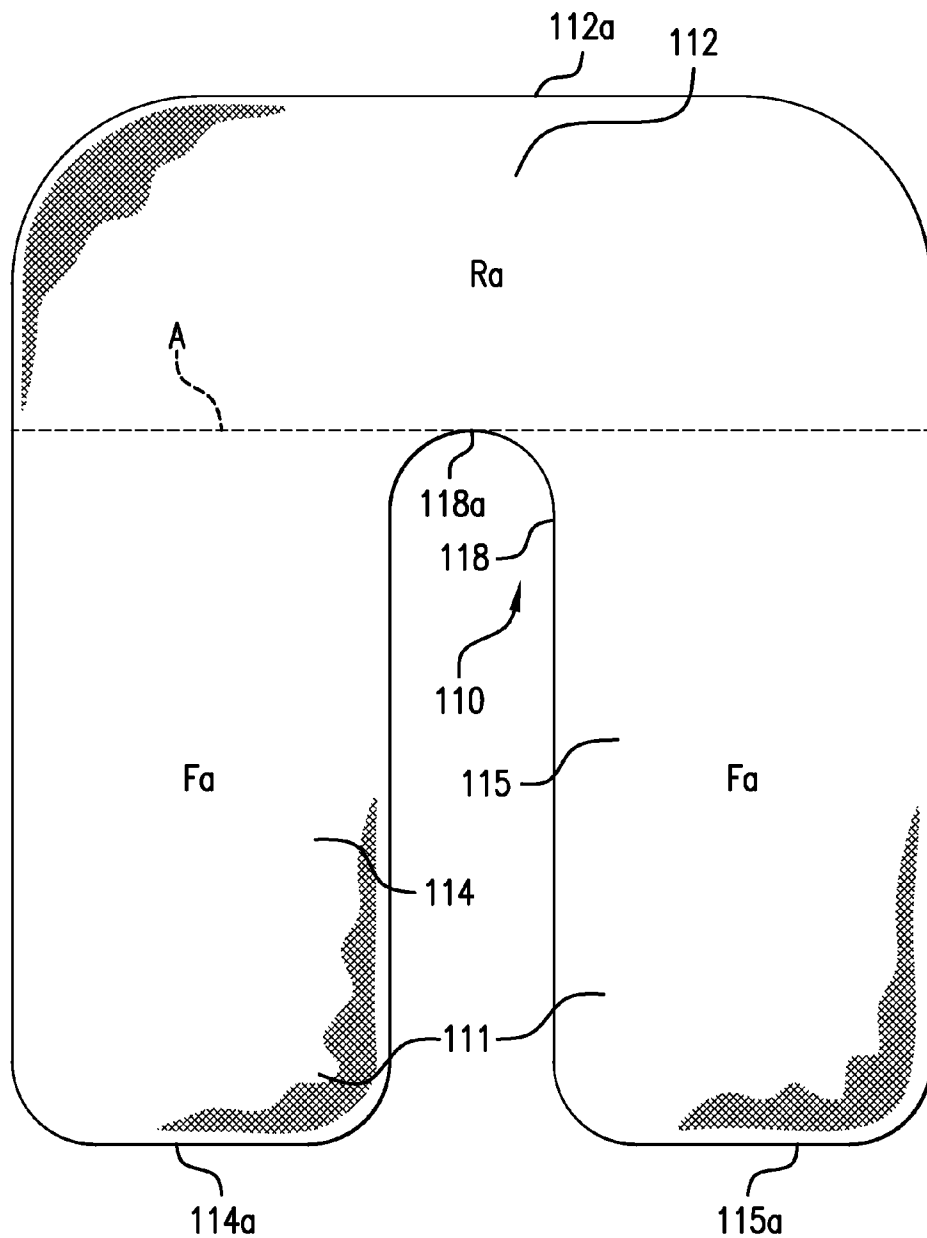


FIG. 8

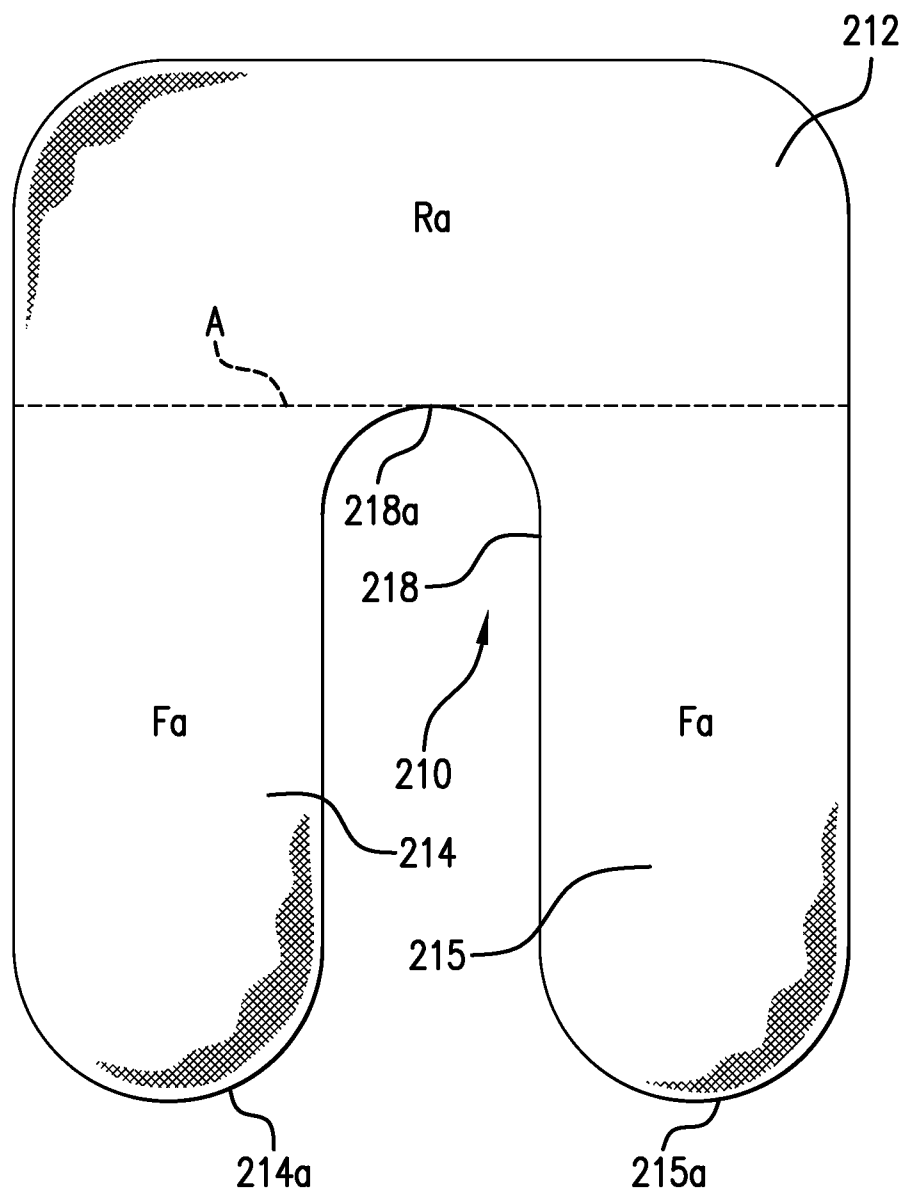


FIG. 9

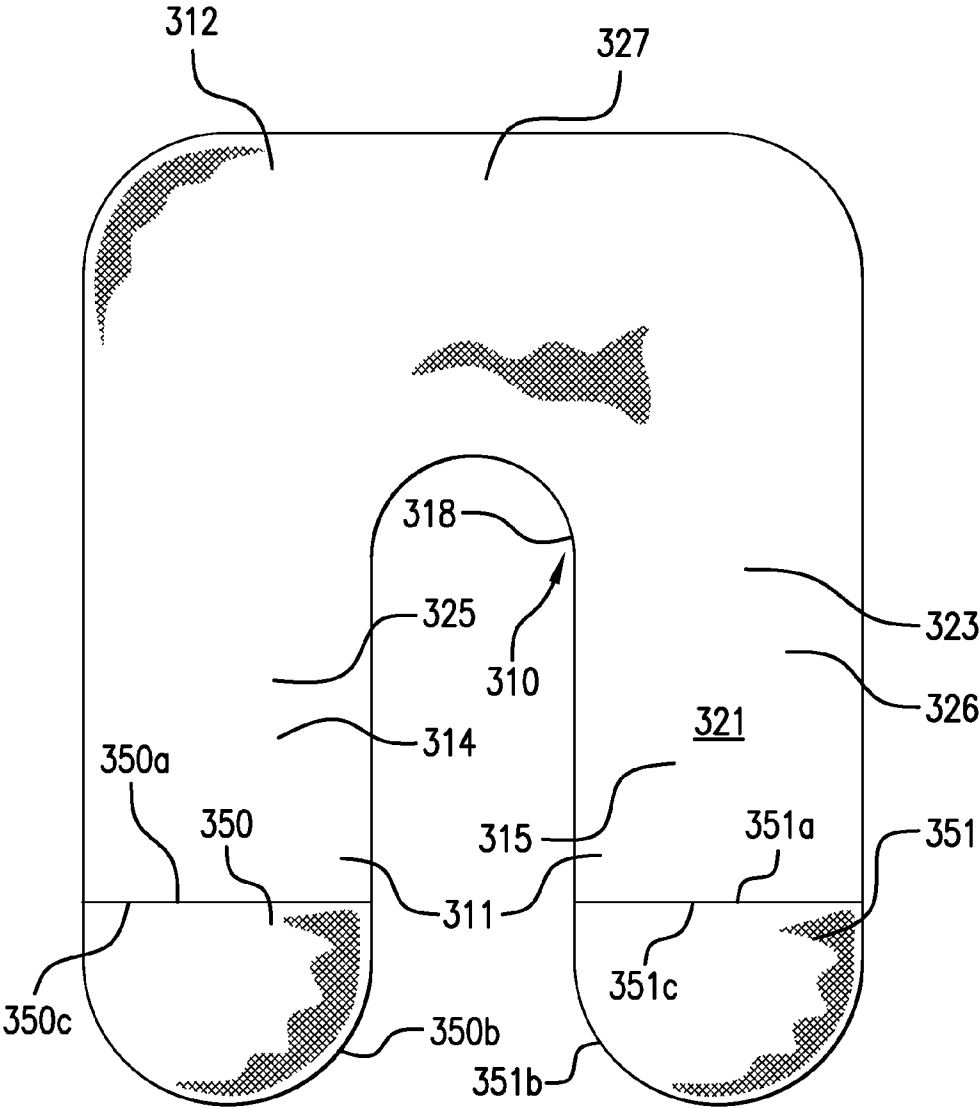


FIG. 10

CLOTHING PROTECTOR

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of and priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/828,984, filed on May 30, 2013, the complete contents of which are herein incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The field of the invention relates to protective articles worn by individuals to protect clothing.

[0004] 2. Brief Description of the Related Art

[0005] Bibs are widely used to protect children and infants from spillage of food and milk. Bibs generally have a tie, snap or fastener that secured the bib to the neck of an individual. In many cases, a parent or caretaker secures the bib to the child or infant. In the case of an adult wearing a bib, it may be awkward or not possible for the adult individual to secure the bib on the adult's neck.

[0006] A nursing garment is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,008,960 that can be placed over the shoulders of a nursing mother to provide the mother privacy while nursing the baby. The '960 garment also may be used as a burping bib. The '960 patent discloses the use of weights for holding the garment in place on the nursing mother's shoulder. The '960 discloses making the garment using a single woven process, and is provided with bunched or gathered areas where the wetness from burping a baby is expected to land when one is using the garment. The lower portion of the '960 garment is loose and open to provide ventilation.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 4,697,287 discloses a protective covering for an adult and child which is design for placement on the shoulders of an individual during the feeding of an infant to protect the individual's clothing from spills and such. The '287 garment discloses a liquid impermeable underlayer. The '287 garment also provides cut-outs at each panel end for an infant's neck and acts as a bib for the infant.

[0008] Burp protectors are also disclosed in U.S. Design patents, including U.S. Design Pat. 669,661, which discloses a caregiver and child burp protection cover-up that has two holes, one for the caregiver and another for the child. Velcro® is disclosed to secure the garment to the neck of each user. U.S. Design Pat. 666,791 discloses a baby burp cloth garment that has a hole in the center of the garment. U.S. Design Pat. 611,682 discloses a burp cloth made from what appear to be two panels attached at a corner to form an "L" shape. U.S. Design Pat. 627,952 discloses a hair cutting cape, and U.S. Design Pat. 482,846 discloses a shoulder bib for resting on a shoulder of a user. A nursing shawl is disclosed in U.S. Design Pat. 303,995. A burp cloth is disclosed in U.S. Design Pat. 585,631, and in U.S. Patent Application 2008/0263740. U.S. Pat. No. 7,082,617 discloses a mommy bib with a fastener that may be Velcro®.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] A protector to be worn by an individual to protect the individual's clothing while the individual is engaged in eating or drinking is provided. The clothing protector preferably is constructed from fabric, and according to preferred embodiments, is constructed from two fabric panels. The clothing protector may be easily used without interference

with the hair of an individual and without requiring procedures for securing it, such as, the use of ties, Velcro® (a surface of hooks and loops that are removably connectable), an elastic neck band or other fasteners. The construction of the clothing protector facilitates ease of handling by the user when placing the protector on the individual and also does not interfere with the user's hair. The clothing protector is suitable for young children as well as elderly individuals or individuals that may require less involvement to place the clothing protector in position over their shoulders for use.

[0010] According to one embodiment the protector is sized to fit a child, and according to other embodiments, the protector is sized to fit an adult.

[0011] Preferred embodiments of the inventive protector are designed to provide coverage for the chest line of the front of an individual and, in the back, on the back to the bottom of the individual's shoulder blades.

[0012] According to preferred embodiments, the clothing protector is constructed to remain on the individual while the individual engages in eating, and does not require fasteners or weights.

[0013] According to preferred embodiments, the clothing protector is reversible and has two sides from which the user may select for use.

[0014] According to preferred embodiments, the clothing protector may be made in different sizes, including one size for an adult and another size for a child. The adult-sized version may be provided for use by new parents as a clothing protector from their newborn's spills or by sick, disabled and elderly individuals who have difficulty eating without spilling. The child-sized version preferably may be configured for and used by children who may be too old for a bib but too young not to spill. Preferred embodiments of the clothing protectors may be used by men or women (boy or girl in children's sizes).

[0015] Preferably, the clothing protectors are constructed from classy and fun fabrics, and according to preferred embodiments, may be constructed from 100% cotton fabric.

[0016] One feature of the clothing protectors is that they do not require snaps, magnets or Velcro®. In addition, the clothing protectors do not go over the head of an individual when the individual desires to use it (so the clothing protectors are constructed so that they may be placed on the individual and removed from the individual without messing up or interfering with the user's hair). The clothing protectors are configured to lie nicely across the user's shoulders.

[0017] According to preferred embodiments, the clothing protector is constructed from two pieces of cotton fabric that are sewn together, and have a binding placed around the entire perimeter.

[0018] The clothing protectors may be used by new parents to provide coverage from spillage of milk and other fluids. The clothing protector also may serve to protect individuals feeding newborns, and may be used as a cover when nursing. The clothing protector also may serve as a barrier for newborns from perfumes and detergents, as well as germs that may be transmitted from the clothing of the person holding the newborn.

[0019] Another use of the present clothing protector is that it may be worn when an individual is eating, and therefore can replace a woven napkin. The clothing protector protects a user's clothes and may be used to wipe the user's face. Once, used, or soiled, the clothing protector may be laundered to clean it, and then reused.

[0020] Another use of the present clothing protector is for people who are elderly, sick or disabled. The clothing protectors provide a more dignified alternative to present bibs, which generally have stigma's or stereotypes attached to the user. Other uses for the present clothing protector include when an individual is brushing his/her teeth to protect his/her clothing from tooth paste spills. Still other uses include when children are in costumes, such as when performing a play or recital or at Halloween, and they desire to eat and drink something, or put makeup or glitter on their face or hair. In this situation the present clothing protector may be used to protect the individual's clothing or costume from getting marked or covered with inadvertent spills or sprays. The clothing protectors may be used by women applying makeup or hairspray to protect their clothing, as well as women who may have damp hair and want to protect their clothing from the dampness. The present protector may be used without disturbing the hair or head of a user.

[0021] The clothing protector is configured to be readily worn without requiring snapping, tying, Velcro® or magnets, so that the protector may be used by children, the elderly and some disabled individuals, without a great effort to place it in position for use. Also, because, the protector does not require it to be placed over the user's head, it does not mess the user's hair, and the protector may be placed into position without adverse contact with the user's hair or head. One may simply place the clothing protector around the neck. The weight of the fabric and the preferred lower panel of a flannel texture keep the protector on the individual's body, and prevent it from sliding off. Preferred embodiments may be reversible and, preferably are constructed from a washable material, such as, 100% cotton.

[0022] According to preferred embodiments, the design of the clothing protector incorporates a full cover on one end and two arms on the other end. It may be worn either way. For example, the clothing protector may be worn with a portion in the back and arms in the front, or with the arms in the back and the other portion in the front.

[0023] The clothing protector may have one or more pockets, which preferably are located at the lower end thereof for access when the user is wearing the protector.

[0024] According to some embodiments, the clothing protector is reversible, to provide alternative designs (e.g., patterns or colors) that the user may select to have face outward.

[0025] According to some embodiments, the clothing protector may be designed from fashionable or higher grade material and be provided as a high end article. According to alternate embodiments, the clothing protector may be constructed for use in hospitals, doctor's offices, nursing homes and other care facilities, and, for example, may be constructed from a hospital grade terrycloth.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING
FIGURES

[0026] FIG. 1 is an illustration of a clothing protector according to the invention shown on an individual.

[0027] FIG. 2 is an illustration of the clothing protector shown in FIG. 1, showing the rear view of the individual.

[0028] FIG. 3 is an illustration of the clothing protector shown in FIG. 1, shown worn on an individual.

[0029] FIG. 4 is an illustration of the clothing protector shown in FIG. 1, as worn in FIG. 3, showing the rear view of the individual.

[0030] FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken through the front panel.

[0031] FIG. 6 is a top plan view showing a preferred embodiment of a clothing protector according to the invention.

[0032] FIG. 7 is a top plan view showing a preferred embodiment of another clothing protector according to the invention.

[0033] FIG. 8 is a top plan view of a schematic illustration showing an example of preferred dimensions for an adult sized clothing protector according to the invention.

[0034] FIG. 9 is a top plan view of a schematic illustration showing an example of preferred dimensions for a child sized clothing protector according to the invention.

[0035] FIG. 10 is a top plan view of an alternate embodiment of a clothing protector according to the invention, shown having a pocket feature.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0036] As shown in FIGS. 1-7, a clothing protector 10 (and 10') according to my invention is illustrated. The clothing protector 10 has a front portion 11 and a rear portion 12. The front portion 11 includes a pair of aims 14, 15, which are connected to the rear portion 12, proximal to the neck opening 18.

[0037] The clothing protector 10 preferably is constructed from two layers of fabric, including a first layer 21 that faces outwardly when an individual placed the protector on the use's body, and a second layer 22 that is designed to face the user's body and rest thereon. The first layer has a first face 23 and the second layer has a second face 24. The first face 23 preferably includes a first side face 25 and a second side face 26 which are spaced apart from each other, and a third face or rear face 27, that joins with the first and second faces 25,26. The second layer 22 also includes a first side face, a second side face, and a rear face, each of which underlies a respective face, 25,26,27 of the first layer 21. In reversible embodiments, the protector may be worn so that the second layer faces are visible and the first layer faces contact the user's clothing.

[0038] Preferably, a binding 30 is provided about the perimeter of the clothing protector 10. The front portion 11 preferably is constructed from a first panel of fabric material that forms the first layer 21, and the rear portion 12, preferably is constructed from a second panel of fabric material that forms the second layer 22. The edges of the front portion 11 and rear portion 12, as shown in the sectional view of FIG. 5, preferably are covered with the binding 30. The binding 30 may be secured to the edges of the layers 21, 22 using any suitable securing means, including stitches or glue to secure the binding 30 to the edges of the front portion 11 and rear portion 12. The binding 30 preferably is constructed from a washable material, and may be made from cotton, blends or other suitable material.

[0039] A loop 40 preferably is provided, and may be secured to the binding 30 for facilitating hanging and storing of the protector 10.

[0040] According to a preferred embodiment, the clothing protector is made from a cotton fabric, with the first layer 21 being made from cotton and the second layer 22 also being made from cotton. According to preferred embodiments, the second layer 22 is constructed from a flannel material to provide a texture that facilitates holding the clothing protector on an individual. The flannel texture provides a friction surface to aid in preventing sliding of the protector 10.

[0041] According to a preferred embodiment, the second layer 22 has a finish on its surface which has suitable friction to minimize or prevent the tendency of the clothing protector to slide off of the person when worn. According to some preferred embodiments, the layer that is to contact the person's clothing, such as, for example, the second layer 22, preferably has a force of sliding friction of about 0.44 N, a coefficient of sliding friction of about 0.0907, a force of static friction of about 0.56 N (from between about 46 to 62 N), and a coefficient of static friction of about 0.1154.

[0042] According to preferred embodiments, the protector 10 is made from a material that is absorbent, and washable.

[0043] Alternate materials may be used to construct the clothing protector 10, such as, for example, absorbent microfiber material, which may be constructed from cotton, blends or other materials. According to alternate embodiments, the second layer 22 preferably has a surface 27 that is texturized to provide enhanced friction when the protector 10 is resting on a user. According to alternate embodiments, the protector 10 may be constructed with stylish material on one side, and flannel or suitably texturized material on the other side.

[0044] Preferably, the clothing protector layers 21, 22 comprise absorbent material that absorbs spills and keeps solid items from rolling off of the surface. The first layer 21 and second layer 22 preferably are made from a suitable thickness of material to provide suitable absorption of the food or liquid that the protector 10 is designed to encounter during use.

[0045] In FIG. 7, the clothing protector 10' is shown as a smaller child size version.

[0046] Illustrations of a clothing protector are shown in FIG. 8 and FIG. 9 to provide examples of the protector dimensions. According to one preferred embodiment, an adult protector 110 is shown and has dimensions as set forth in FIG. 8. According to another preferred embodiment, a child protector 210 is shown and has dimensions as set forth in FIG. 9. According to a preferred embodiment, the adult sized protector 110 preferably has a rear portion that is about 14 units, (e.g., inches), as measured from the edge 112a of the rear portion 112 to the rear edge 118a of neck recess 118. Preferably, the first arm 114 and second arm 115 are about 20 units (e.g., inches) as measured from the rear edge 118a of neck recess 118 to the respective edges 114a, 115a of the first arm 114 and second arm 115. According to a preferred embodiment, the length of the rear portion 112 preferably is greater than 50% of the length of the arms 114, 115, and more preferably about 70% greater in length than the length of the arms 114, 115. According to some preferred embodiments, the rear portion length may be 70% of the front arm length, or less. According to another embodiment, the surface area includes a rear portion surface area Ra and a front portion surface area Fa, shown separated by the broken line A. In the illustration of FIG. 8, the rear surface area is about 14 units by 26 units, or 364 units, and the front surface area of each arm 114, 115 is about 20 inches by 10 inches, or 200 units. Accordingly, the units preferably may be inches. The rear portion 112 preferably has an area ratio of about 364 to 400 relative to the front arm portions 114, 115. Expressed in alternate terms, according to preferred embodiments, the rear portion 112 is less in area and weight than the front portion 111. According to some preferred embodiments, the area of the rear portion 112 is about 91% or less than the area of the front portion (including the front arms 114, 115), and according to some embodiments, the weight of the rear portion 112 is about 91% or less

than the weight of the front portion (including the front arms 114, 115), and according to some embodiments both the area and weight of the rear portion respectively, are 91% or less than the respective area and weight of the front portion.

[0047] A smaller or child clothing protector 210 is shown in FIG. 9 having preferred dimensions smaller than the dimensions, as measured in inches, from the protector 110 shown in FIG. 8. The clothing protector 210 has a rear portion 212 that is about 9 units (nine inches) measured from the rear edge 212a of the rear portion 212 to the rear edge 218a of the neck recess 218. Preferably, the first arm 214 and second arm 215 are about 14 units (e.g., inches) as measured from the rear edge 218a of neck recess 218 to the respective edges 214a, 215a of the first arm 214 and second arm 215. According to a preferred embodiment, each arm 214, 215 is about seven units (e.g., seven inches) in width.

[0048] Referring to FIG. 10, an alternate embodiment of a clothing protector 310 according to the invention is shown having a front portion 311 and a rear portion 312. The front portion 311 includes a pair of arms 314, 315, which are connected to the rear portion 312, proximal to the neck opening 318. The clothing protector 310 preferably is constructed similar to the clothing protector 10 shown and described herein, and preferably has two layers of fabric, including a first layer 321 that faces outwardly when an individual placed the protector on the user's body, and a second layer that is designed to face the user's body and rest thereon (similar to the layer 22 shown in connection with the protector 10 of FIGS. 1 to 5). The first layer 321 has a first face 323 and the second layer has a second face. The first face 323 preferably includes a first side face 325 and a second side face 326 which are spaced apart from each other, and a third face or rear face 327, that joins with the first and second faces 325, 326. The second layer also includes a first side face, a second side face, and a rear face, each of which underlies a respective face, 325, 326, 327 of the first layer 321. The protector 310 may be provided with reversible fabric so that either side may be used as the front face when worn.

[0049] A pocket feature is provided and is shown including a pocket 350, 351, and more preferably, according to a preferred embodiment, a plurality of pockets 350, 351 are provided. According to one preferred embodiment, the front portion 311 preferably includes a first pocket 350 or 351 on at least one of the respective arms 314, 315, and may include a pocket 350, 351 on each respective arm 314, 315. Since the protector 310 may be reversible, embodiments of the clothing protector 310 may include at least one or more pockets on the front of the arms 314, 315, and preferably on the first side face 321 and second side face, and at least one pocket on the other side of the arms 314, 315 (which faces the user's body). Therefore, when the clothing protector 310 is worn in the reversible condition (opposite that shown in FIG. 10), then the pockets of the reverse side may be available for access from the alternate front of the garment 310, as reversibly worn. The clothing protectors illustrated in FIGS. 9 and 10 are shown without the binding 330, in accordance with an alternate configuration. Alternatively, a binding, such as the binding 30 shown in the clothing protector 10 of FIGS. 1 to 5 that is provided about the perimeter of the protector 310, may be provided on the clothing protector 310. According to some alternate embodiments, the edging or binding 30, though not shown in FIG. 10, may be used to secure the pocket edge 350b along with the fabric forming the anus 314, 315 and rear portion 312 of the clothing protector 310. For example, bind-

ing may join together the pocket edge **350b** and one or more fabric panels forming the front portion **311** and back portion **312**. The pocket **350** may be constructed from a panel that is secured along its edges to the front portion **311** and with an open edge **350c** forming a pocket opening **350a**. The pocket **351** may be similarly constructed (with a pocket edge **351b** and opening **351c**), and, according to some preferred embodiments, the pocket **351** preferably is constructed to match the dimensions and appearance of the pocket **350**. According to some embodiments, the pocket **350,351** may be configured to match the surface **321** of the front portion **311**. According to alternate embodiments, the pocket **350,351** may be provided to stand out and be constructed having a pattern color or appearance different from the surface **321**. These and other advantages may be realized with the present invention. While the invention has been described with reference to specific embodiments, the description is illustrative and is not to be construed as limiting the scope of the invention. For example, according to some alternate embodiments, the protector may be formed from a layer, and preferably is constructed from material that will rest on the user's clothing. According to an alternate embodiment, the first layer **21** may face outwardly and an underside of the first layer **21** may rest on the user's body (i.e., the user's clothing). Pockets **350,351** are shown in connection with the protector **310**, but may be provided in conjunction with other protector embodiments illustrated herein. The protectors may be reversible, and preferably, when reversible, the front and rear protector surfaces preferably are provided to hold the protector on the user (preferably through surface friction of the protector material). The unit dimensions are provided to illustrate a preferred configuration, including preferred ratios, and according to preferred embodiments, the unit dimensions are inches. Various modifications and changes may occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention described herein and as defined by the appended claims. It is intended that the foregoing detailed description be regarded as illustrative rather than limiting, and that it be understood that it is the following claims, including all equivalents, that are intended to define the spirit and scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A clothing protector for protecting a user's clothing from spillage, comprising:
 - a first layer;
 - a second layer;
 - securing means for securing the first layer to the second layer;
 - the first layer having a first face;
 - the second layer having a second face;
 - the protector having a front portion comprising a first arm and a second arm, and a rear portion comprising a rear panel;
 - wherein the first arm and second arm connect with the rear panel, and wherein a space is provided, said space spacing apart said arms and having a curved portion at one end thereof defining an edge of the rear panel.
2. A clothing protector for protecting a user's clothing from spillage, comprising:
 - a front portion including a first arm and a second arm;
 - a rear portion;
 - the front arms connecting to the rear portion at an intersection thereof;
 - the front arms being adjacent to one another and being separated by a space therebetween;

a neck opening formed at the intersection of the front arms and rear portion;

the neck opening having an edge thereabout and being open on one side, the open side opening into the space between the front arms.

3. The clothing protector of claim 2, wherein said first arm has an inner edge and an outer edge, wherein said second arm has an inner edge and an outer edge, wherein said space between said front arms is defined by a first portion that is a radiused portion at an edge of the rear portion proximate to the location of said intersection, said space including a second portion that is an elongated space between the inner edges of said first arm and said second arm and which is in communication with the first portion.

4. The clothing protector of claim 3, further including at least one pocket.

5. The clothing protector of claim 4, wherein said at least one pocket is provided on at least one of said front arms.

6. The clothing protector of claim 2, wherein said front portion and said rear portion are formed from a continuous fabric portion.

7. The clothing protector of claim 2, wherein said front portion and said rear portion have a front face and a rear face wherein said front face forms a first side for use of the garment in a first orientation to display said first side outwardly and wherein said rear face forms a second side so that said garment may be used in a second orientation to display said second side outwardly.

8. The clothing protector of claim 7, wherein said front face comprises a first appearance and wherein said second side comprises a different appearance thereby providing two different appearances from which to select.

9. The clothing protector of claim 1, wherein said second layer has a second face that forms the rear surfaces of the first arm, the second arm and the rear panel, and wherein said rear surfaces have a coefficient of static friction of about 0.11.

10. The clothing protector of claim 1, wherein said second layer has a second face that forms the rear surfaces of the first arm, the second arm and the rear panel, and wherein said rear surfaces are flannel surfaces.

11. The clothing protector of claim 1, including at least one pocket.

12. The clothing protector of claim 11, wherein said at least one pocket is provided on at least one of said first arm and said second arm.

13. The clothing protector of claim 2, wherein said rear portion and said front arms are balanced in weight or biased in weight toward the front arms so as to minimize or prevent the clothing protector from sliding when placed on the user's clothing.

14. The clothing protector of claim 1, wherein said front portion has a front surface area and wherein said rear portion has a rear surface area, and wherein said rear surface area is 70% or less than said front surface area.

15. The clothing protector of claim 2, wherein said front portion has a front surface area and wherein said rear portion has a rear surface area, and wherein said rear surface area is 70% or less than said front surface area.

16. A clothing protector for protecting a user's clothing from spillage, comprising:

- a front portion comprising a first arm and a second arm, and
- a rear portion comprising a rear panel;
- wherein the first arm and second arm are joined with the rear panel, and wherein a space is provided, said space

spacing apart said first arm and said second arm and having an end portion at one end thereof defining an edge of the rear panel.

17. The clothing protector of claim **16**, wherein said end portion is a curved portion.

18. The clothing protector of claim **17**, wherein said end portion is curved along a radius that positions said first arm and said second arm in an angular direction wherein at least a portion of one of said first arm and said second arm overlaps with at least one portion of the other of said first arm and said second arm.

19. The clothing protector of claim **16** including a pocket.

20. The clothing protector of claim **16**, wherein a plurality of pockets are provided, including at least one first pocket on said first arm and at least said second pocket on said second arm.

21. The clothing protector of claim **19**, wherein said first arm has a first end that joins with said rear portion and wherein said first arm has a second end, and wherein said pocket is provided at said second end of said first arm.

* * * * *