

March 16, 1965

E. C. MAZZONI ETAL

3,173,420

GARMENT FOR USE FOLLOWING BREAST SURGERY AND THE LIKE

Filed Jan. 8, 1962

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

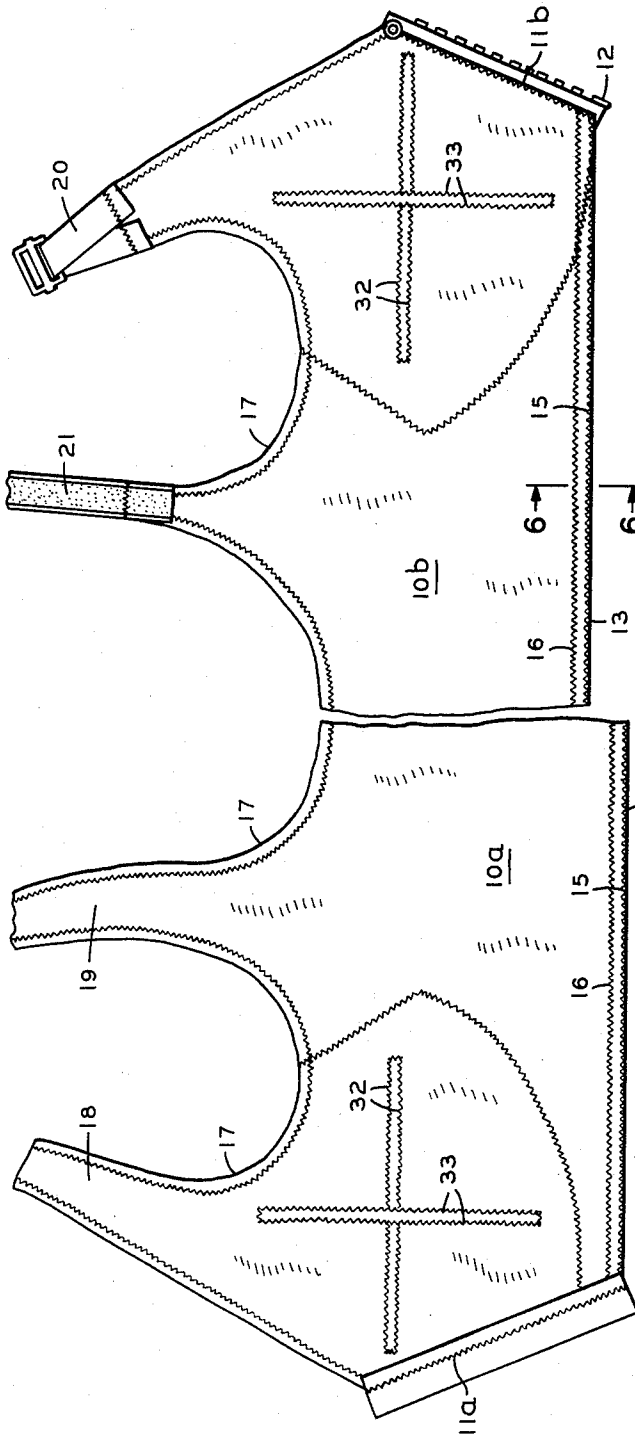


FIG. 1B

FIG. 1A

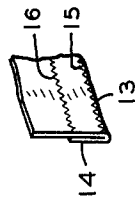


FIG. 6

INVENTORS
ELINOR C. MAZZONI
ARLEAN TAYLOR

BY

Jerome A. Cross
ATTORNEY

March 16, 1965

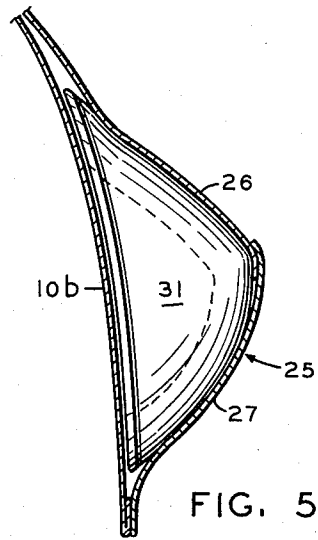
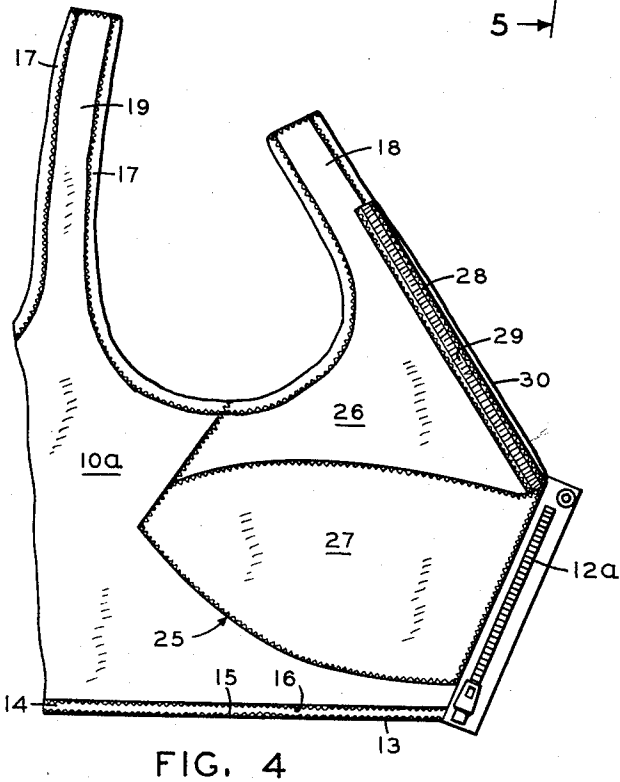
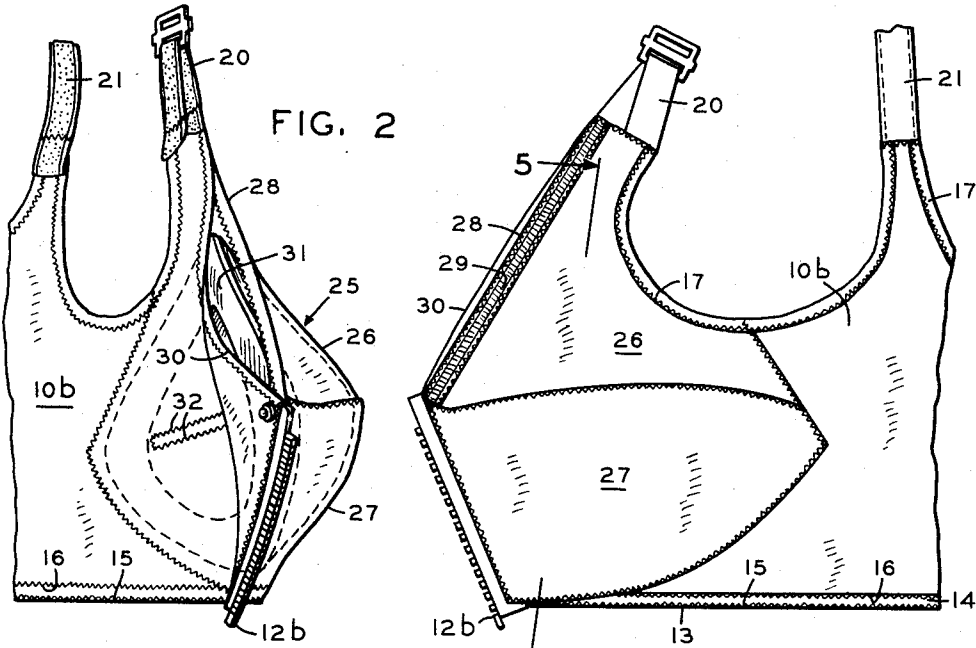
E. C. MAZZONI ETAL

3,173,420

GARMENT FOR USE FOLLOWING BREAST SURGERY AND THE LIKE

Filed Jan. 8, 1962

2 Sheets-Sheet 2



INVENTORS
ELINOR C. MAZZONI
ARLEAN TAYLOR
BY *Jerome A. Cross*
ATTORNEY

3,173,420

GARMENT FOR USE FOLLOWING BREAST SURGERY AND THE LIKE

Elinor C. Mazzone, Ladue, and Arlean Taylor, Creve Coeur, Mo.; said Taylor assignor to said Mazzone
 Filed Jan. 8, 1962, Ser. No. 164,699
 3 Claims. (Cl. 128—478)

This invention relates to garments for use following breast or chest surgery and for affording comfort under conditions of extreme tenderness of various portions of the upper part of the body.

Unlike ordinary post-mastectomy brassieres worn to improve personal appearance and the fit of clothing, the principal criterion of the present invention is to relieve the nearly intolerable discomfort which breast surgery patients frequently experience. In so doing, the present invention provides a garment which may be worn as a bed garment immediately after surgery, and as a sleeping garment thereafter; and yet also fills the style requirements of a post-operative brassiere. Furthermore, the present garment is useful when one or both breasts have been wholly or partially removed.

It is usual practice in the design of brassieres, to give form and structure by the use of hems, seams and stitching; and to use relatively firm fabrics and elasticized material, alternately to provide firmness and elasticity. The present invention goes contrary to this practice.

As shown in the drawings and more fully described hereafter, the present invention provides a garment having a body portion much like an abbreviated vest made of a single piece of soft fabric material. A material such as knitted jersey is chosen, having resiliency in more than one direction. Except at the center front fastenings, the edges are stitched with expansible stitching. Breast region overlays over the body portion provide spaces for prosthetic pads. The body portion beneath each overlay has finished lines of expansible stitching along which it may be readily cut to accommodate an unoperated breast or a remaining breast portion. To secure the overlays to the body of the garment along their outer and lower edges, expansible stitching is used. The edge of each overlay which extends from the center front fastening to the shoulder strap is free from the body of the garment, forming openings through which prosthetic pads, etc. may be inserted and removed. Along this free edge each overlay may have an elastic reinforcement to carry the tension load from shoulder strap to front fastening and hold the free edge closed against the corresponding edge of the body portion beneath, retaining a prosthetic pad in place.

In the accompanying drawings:

FIGURE 1A is a plan view of the right one-half of a garment embodying this invention, showing details being of an embodiment preferred for immediate post-operative use.

FIGURE 1B is a similar view of the left one-half of a substantially similar garment, showing details of a slightly different embodiment preferred for use after recovery from surgery.

FIGURE 2 is a view from the right edge of FIGURE 1B, showing the garment as held loosely and an inserted prosthetic pad.

FIGURE 3 is a front view of the garment portion shown in FIGURE 1B.

FIGURE 4 is a front view of the garment portion shown in 1A.

FIGURE 5 is a sectional view taken along line 5—5 of FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 6 is a fragmentary view, partly in section, taken along line 6—6 of FIGURE 1B, the surface shown

in said fragment being the same surface as shown in FIGURE 1B.

Referring to the portions of the garment by detail part numbers, the garment consists principally of a one-piece body portion generally referred to by the numeral 10; but marked 10a in FIGURE 1A and 10b in FIGURE 1B. The body portion 10b for use after recovery from surgery may be of somewhat lesser depth than that for immediate post-surgical use. Either such body portion 10a, 10b resembles an abbreviated vest, made of a soft fabric material having resiliency in more than one direction, such as knitted jersey. It extends from a center front margin 11a at the right side of the garment, sideward, around the back of the garment, and thence forwardly to the other center front margin 11b. Since FIGURES 1A and 1B show the inner side, the positions appear as reversed; likewise the margins 11a and 11b appear to be diagonal, but it will be recognized that this follows from depicting the garment as opened and laying out flat. On the wearer, these margins will extend substantially vertically upward along the breast bone, and hence sometimes are referred to hereinafter as the "substantially vertical" center front margins. The margins 11a, 11b are releasably secured to each other with a center front fastening, preferably a disengageable fastener or zipper generally designated 12, having a right half 12a (shown at the left of the drawing) including an underlaying protective tape, and a left half 12b including the complementary parts which engage the right half 12a. The region of the breast bone is likely to be less sensitive, after breast surgery than adjacent regions, and discomfort is lessened by locating the fastener in the manner shown. The zipper halves 12a, 12b may be tightly sewn to the margins 11a, 11b by ordinary straight lock-stitching.

In no other area, however, is straight lock-stitching utilized. As will be apparent to those familiar with lock-stitch sewing, its laying out of two non-elastic threads in straight lines limits the lengths to which the garment may be extended. In the present construction, the body portions 10a, 10b are sewn generally with expansible stitching, as with a zig-zag machine stitch. Thereafter, when the resilient fabric is extended, zig-zag lines along which the two threads are laid, will be extensible. The body portions 10a, 10b have a straight lower edge 13 which may follow the texture of the material, when bi-directional materials such as jersey are used. To finish the lower edge 13 without the bulk of a conventional hem, the material is folded outward and upward in a lower fold 14, and secured by two zig-zag stitching lines 15, 16. The fold is to the outer side of the garment as shown in FIGURE 6, so that the wearer shall experience a minimum of discomfort. To finish the upper edge of the body portions 10a, 10b at the back and beneath the armpits, are upper outward folds 17 sewn with zig-zag stitching as illustrated.

In the embodiment of FIGURE 1A, to avoid pressure in sensitive areas near the shoulders, the body portion 10a continues upward in the formation of integral front and rear shoulder strap portions 18, 19 respectively, on both the left and right sides of the garment; and in this embodiment, the upper edge folds 17 will continue into and serve as the edging for such integral shoulder strap portions. Such integral shoulder strap portions 18, 19 may be adjustably fastened merely by overlapping and pinning together.

The construction shown in FIGURES 1B, 2, 3 and 5, intended for dress wear well after recuperation from surgery, or in surgical cases of less severity, uses on both left and right sides a conventional front buckle-type shoulder strap 20 and a conventional rear shoulder strap 21.

Pockets for the insertion of the prosthetic pads, etc. are fashioned in the following manner:

An outwardly-projecting front overlay generally designated 25 is provided in the breast region on each side of center. The overlay as shown consists of two pieces of preferably the same resilient material which is used for the body portion 10. These pieces are designated as left and right upper overlay portions 26 and left and right lower overlay portions 27; and are so sewn to each other and to the body portion 10 as to project to the front, thus creating pocket-like spaces situated beneath the front ends of the shoulder between the overlays 25 and the body portion 10. These spaces extend downward along the center front margin 11, then sidewardly outward of the front shoulder strap portions 18, 20. In the case of the construction designed for immediate post-operative use, as shown in FIGURE 4, the upper overlay portion extends upward to the full extent of the integral front shoulder strap portion 18, to serve as a reinforcement therefor. Except along the center front margins 11, all the sewing is by the same expansible stitching as described.

Each upper overlay portion 26 has an upper inner front overlay edge 28 which is reinforced on its outer side by an elastic tape 29. The overlay edge 28 is in registration with a corresponding unfolded edge 30 of the body portion, but they are not sewed or otherwise secured together. Thus is provided an opening or access-way into the spaces or pockets between the overlays 25 and the body portion 10.

Within each such space a prosthetic pad 31 may be readily inserted or removed, as might be done if both breasts were completely removed. Such a pad 31 is conventionally formed of soft foam imitation rubber to the contours shown in the cross-section FIGURE 5. The elastic tape 29 on the outer surface of the overlay edge 28 serves as an elasticized reinforcement which, when the garment is being worn, affords sufficient force to prevent the prosthetic pad 31 from working out of position, as above mentioned.

Since either or both breasts may be surgically removed in whole or in part, it is desirable the garment as manufactured be adaptable to individual conditions. Although the fabric of the body portion 10 will yield to a significant extent, without being cut or slit open, we provide pairs of closely spaced lines of expansible stitching in those parts of the body portion 10 over which the overlays 25 are sewn. Between these lines the body portion 10 may be cut or slit to the extent desired. Such lines of stitching are shown best in FIGURES 1A and 1B as the pair of horizontal lines 32 and the pair of vertical lines 33 which cross them. Even to accommodate a normal breast, it may be necessary to cut between the horizontal lines 32 only. Cuts between such lines 32, 33 may also be made for the purpose of accommodating bandages and other requirements.

The invention described is inherently capable of a variation to meet varying needs from the immediate post-operative period, when dressings and bandages must be held, to the period after recuperation when the appearance and fit of outer clothes are important factors. Obviously, changes may be made in the details of construction without departing from the scope of this disclosure. Therefore, the invention is not to be construed narrowly, but rather as broadly co-extensive with the claims which follow.

We claim:

1. A garment for use following breast surgery and the like, comprising
 - an abbreviated vest-like body portion having substantially vertical margins at center front and extending from one of said margins sideward around the back of the garment and thence forwardly to the other said margin,

a center front fastening along the two center front margins,

left and right shoulder strap portions extending upward at the front and rear sides of said body portion, and an outwardly projecting front overlay sewed to the body portion sidewardly adjacent to each said center front margin and situated beneath the shoulder strap portion, whereby to provide a space between the body portion and each front overlay portion,

said garment being characterized in that the body portion is formed of a soft fabric material having resiliency in more than one direction, and has upper and lower edges which edges have expansible stitching, whereby to permit the material of the body portion to elongate and contract resiliently, further characterized in that

those parts of the body portion over which the outwardly-extending overlays are so sewed, are provided with lines of expansible stitching along which cuts may be made at the option of the user, thereby to accommodate within the space under such front overlay an unoperated breast or a breast portion not surgically removed.

2. A garment for use following breast surgery and the like, comprising

an abbreviated vest-like body portion having substantially vertical margins at center front and extending from one of said margins sideward around the back of the garment and thence forwardly to the other said margin,

a center front fastening along the two center front margins,

left and right shoulder strap portions extending upward at the front and rear sides of said body portion, and an outwardly projecting front overlay sewed to the body portion sidewardly adjacent to each said center front margin and situated beneath the shoulder strap portion, whereby to provide a space between the body portion and each front overlay portion, said garment being characterized in that

the body portion is formed of a soft fabric material having resiliency in more than one direction, and has upper and lower edges which edges have expansible stitching, whereby to permit the material of the body portion to elongate and contract resiliently, further characterized in that

each said overlay has an upper front edge extending from the center front fastening to near the shoulder strap portion adjacent to and in registration with but not secured to a corresponding edge of the body portion,

whereby to provide an opening into the said space under said overlay through which a pad may be inserted and removed.

3. A garment as defined in claim 2, further characterized in that

the said unsecured edge of the overlay is provided with an elasticized reinforcement extending from the upper end of the center front margin to the shoulder strap portion,

whereby to retain an inserted pad securely in place.

References Cited by the Examiner

UNITED STATES PATENTS

65	1,825,579	9/31	Christoff	-----	128—425
	2,540,631	2/51	Nelson	-----	128—479
	2,717,602	9/55	Radler	-----	128—479
	2,880,730	4/59	Lilienfeld	-----	128—498
	2,953,133	9/60	Seller	-----	128—479
70	3,014,484	12/61	Osborn	-----	128—479

RICHARD A. GAUDET, *Primary Examiner.*

JORDAN FRANKLIN, *Examiner.*