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(54) **BREAST FEEDING SUPPORT DEVICE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

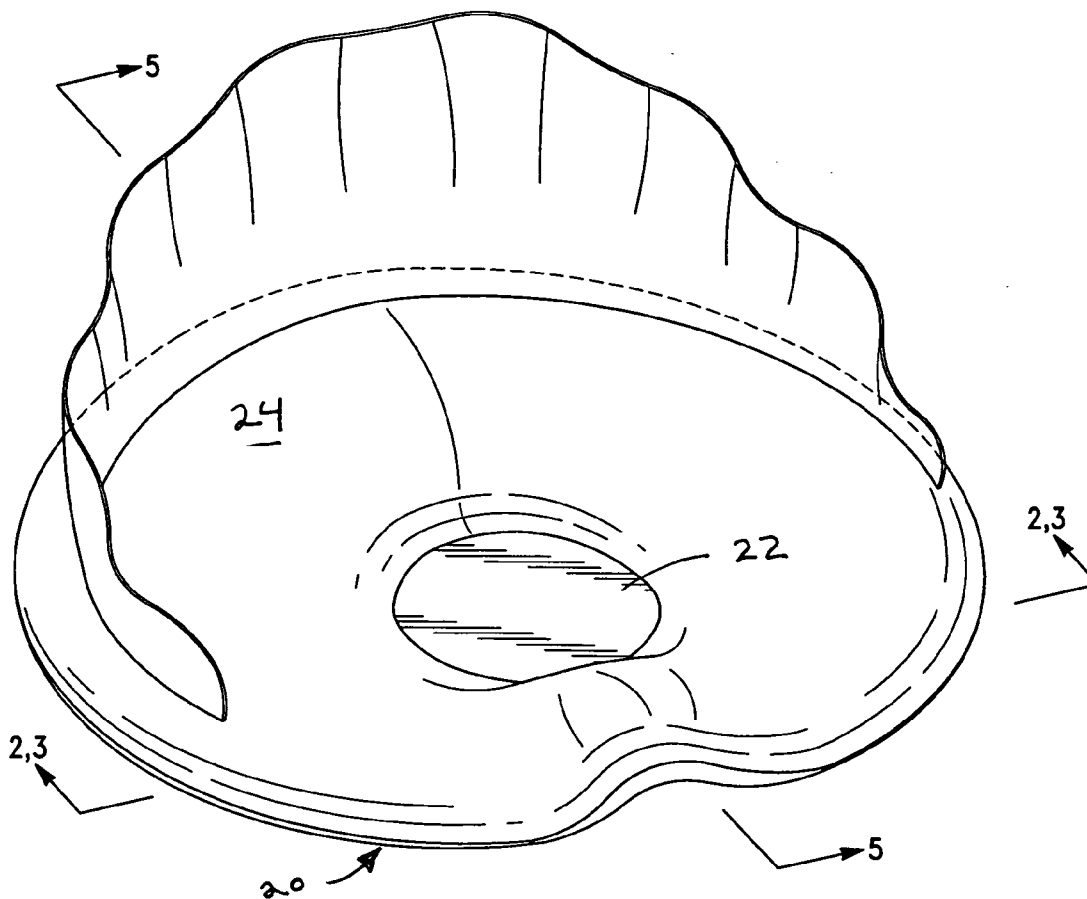
Disclosed herein is a breast feeding support device having a central depression with a cross section of a very small thickness and an outer periphery filled with fiber. The cross section of the outer periphery is many times thicker than the cross section of the central depression. The cross section of the outer periphery having a front portion for supporting the neck of the infant while the central depression supports the head. The outer periphery has a back portion with a notch sized and shaped to fit compatibly with the arm of the mother to support the mother while nursing. The device includes a privacy skirt for providing privacy when the mother is nursing using the device.

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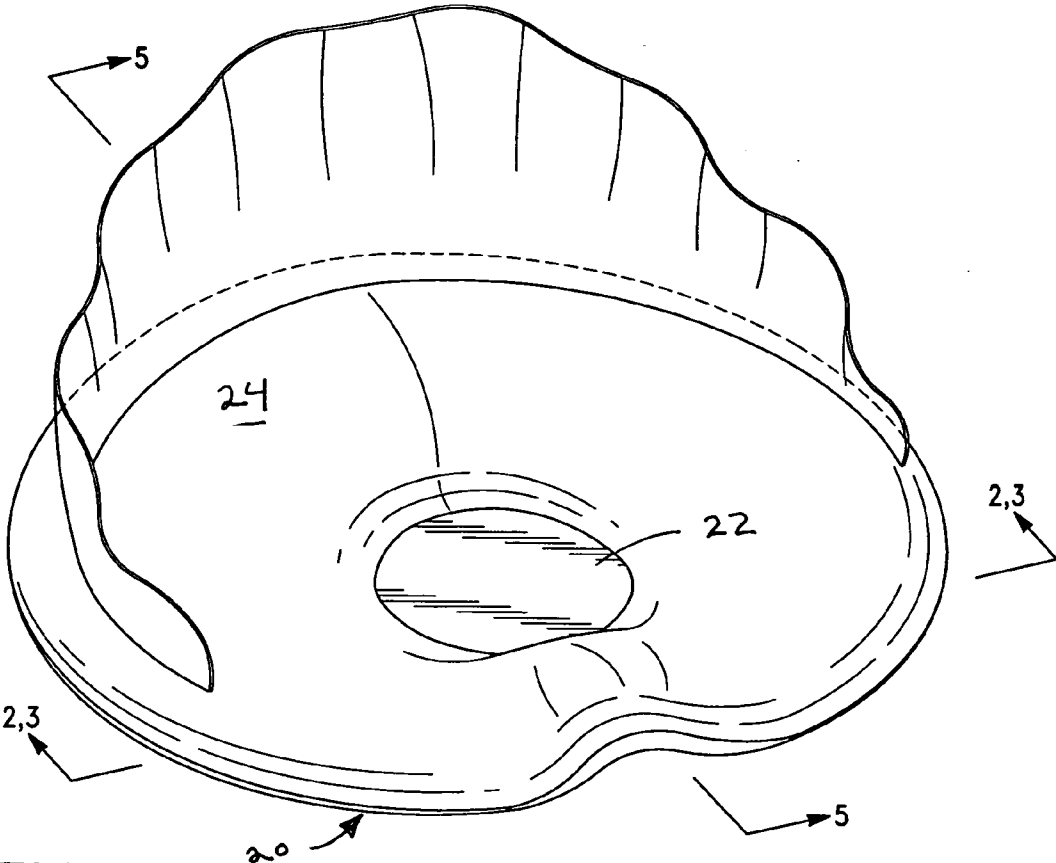


FIG.-1

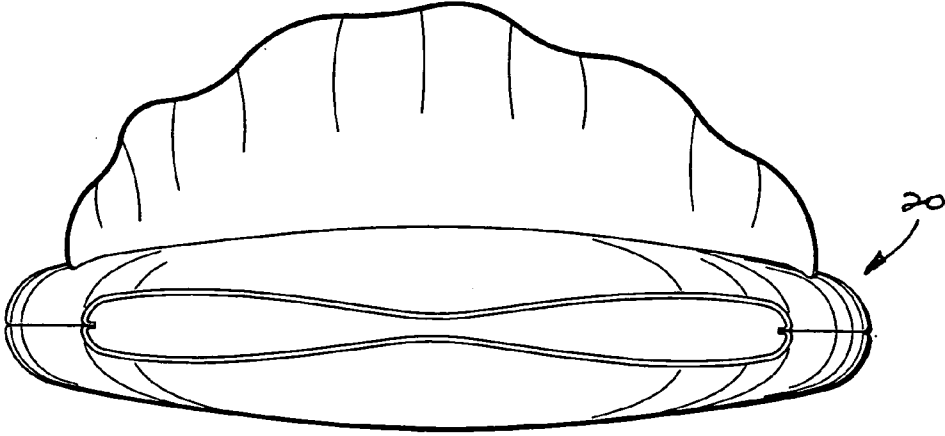


FIG.-2

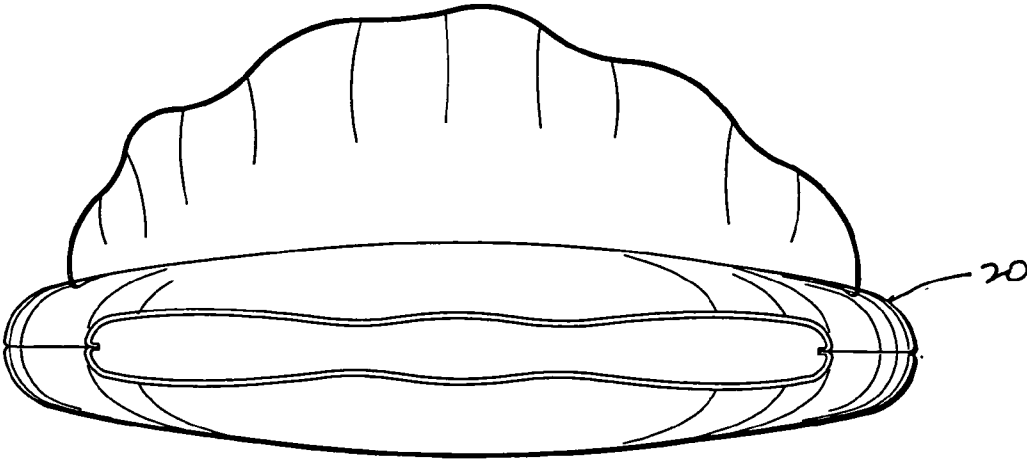


FIG.-3

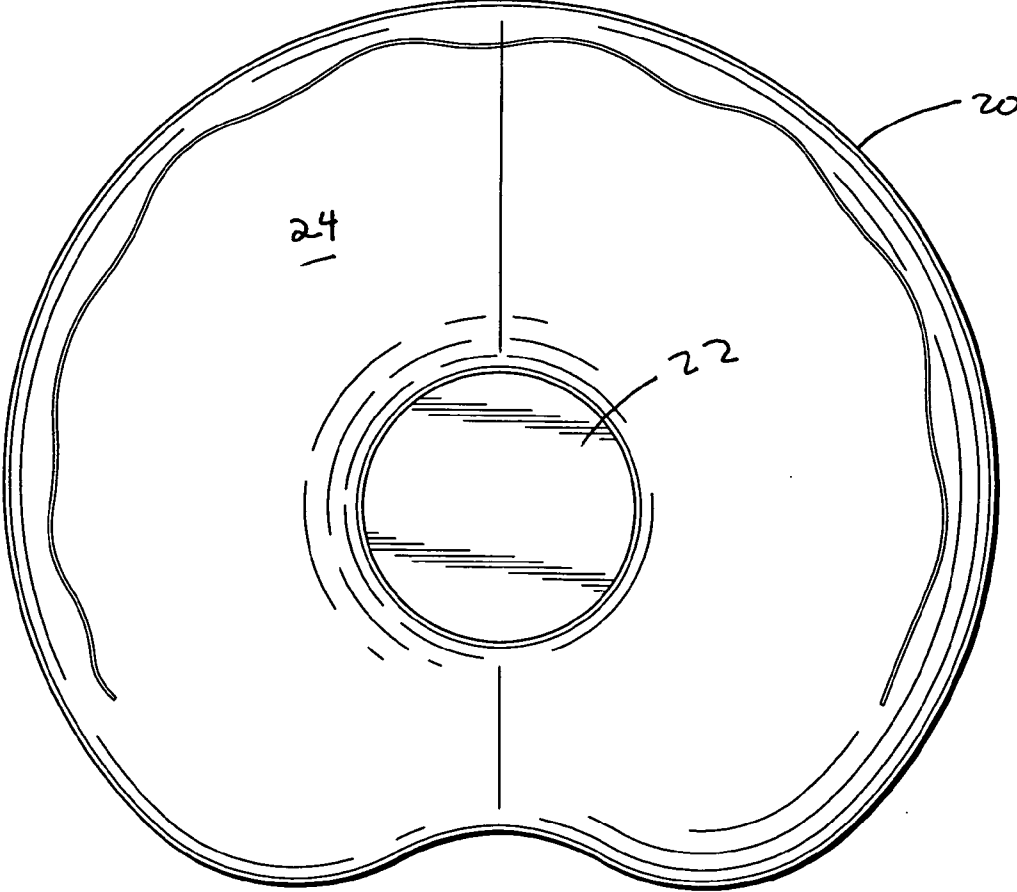


FIG.-4

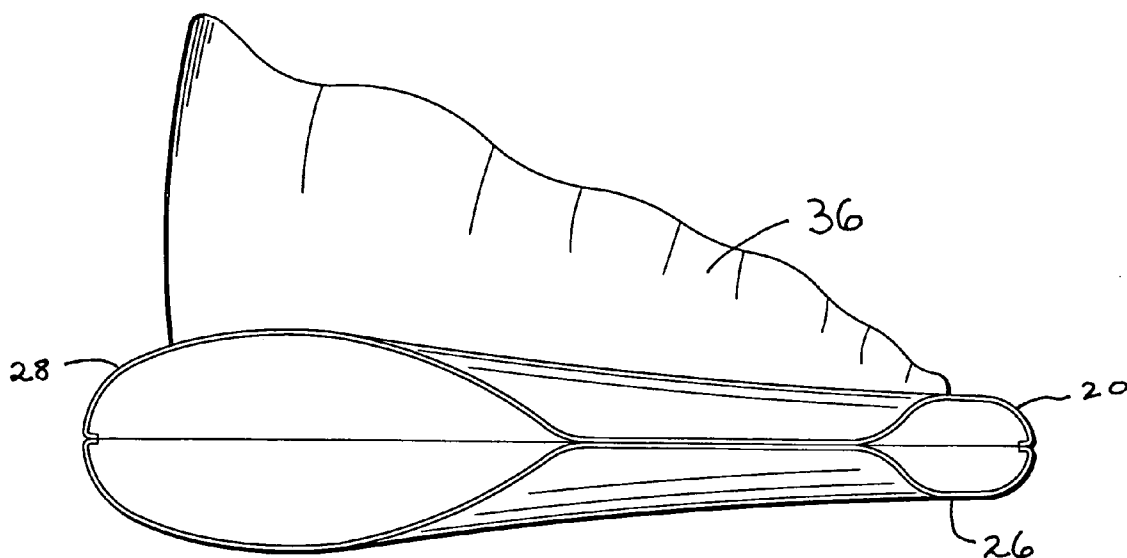


FIG.-5

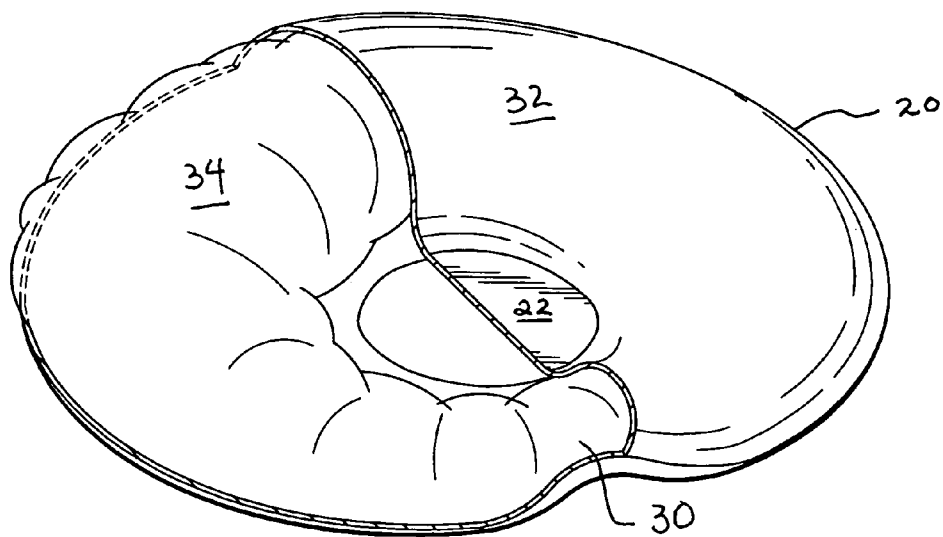


FIG.-6

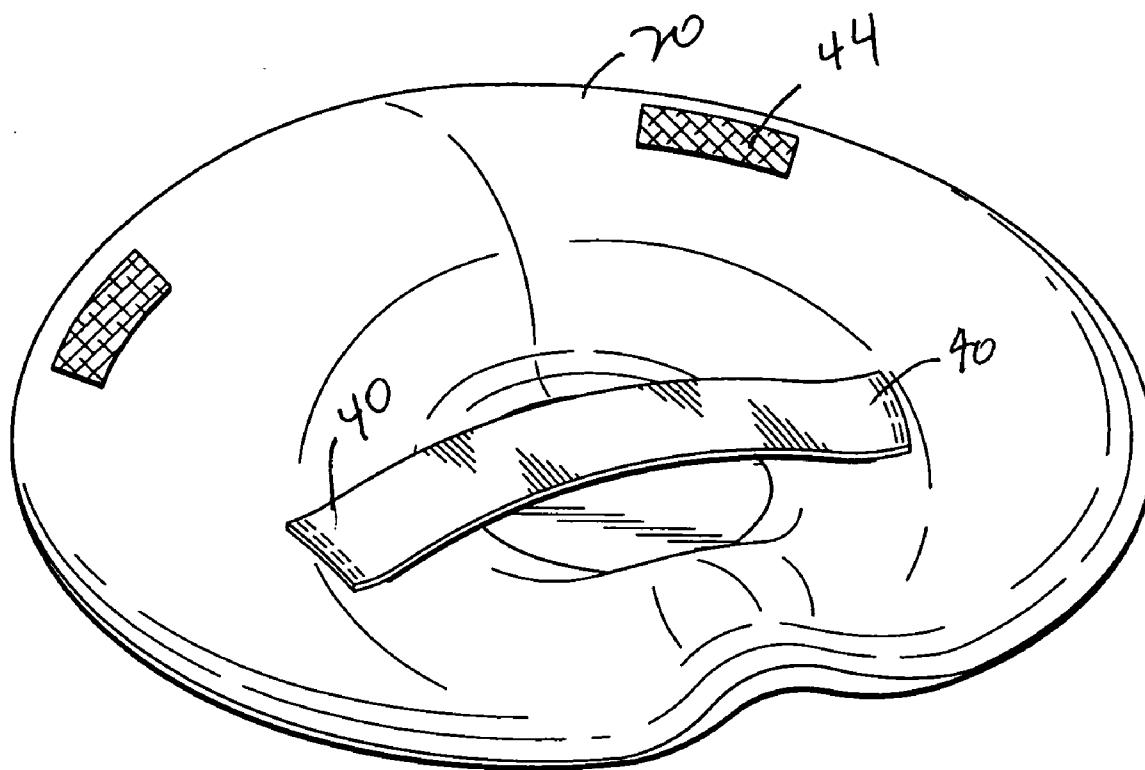


FIG.-7

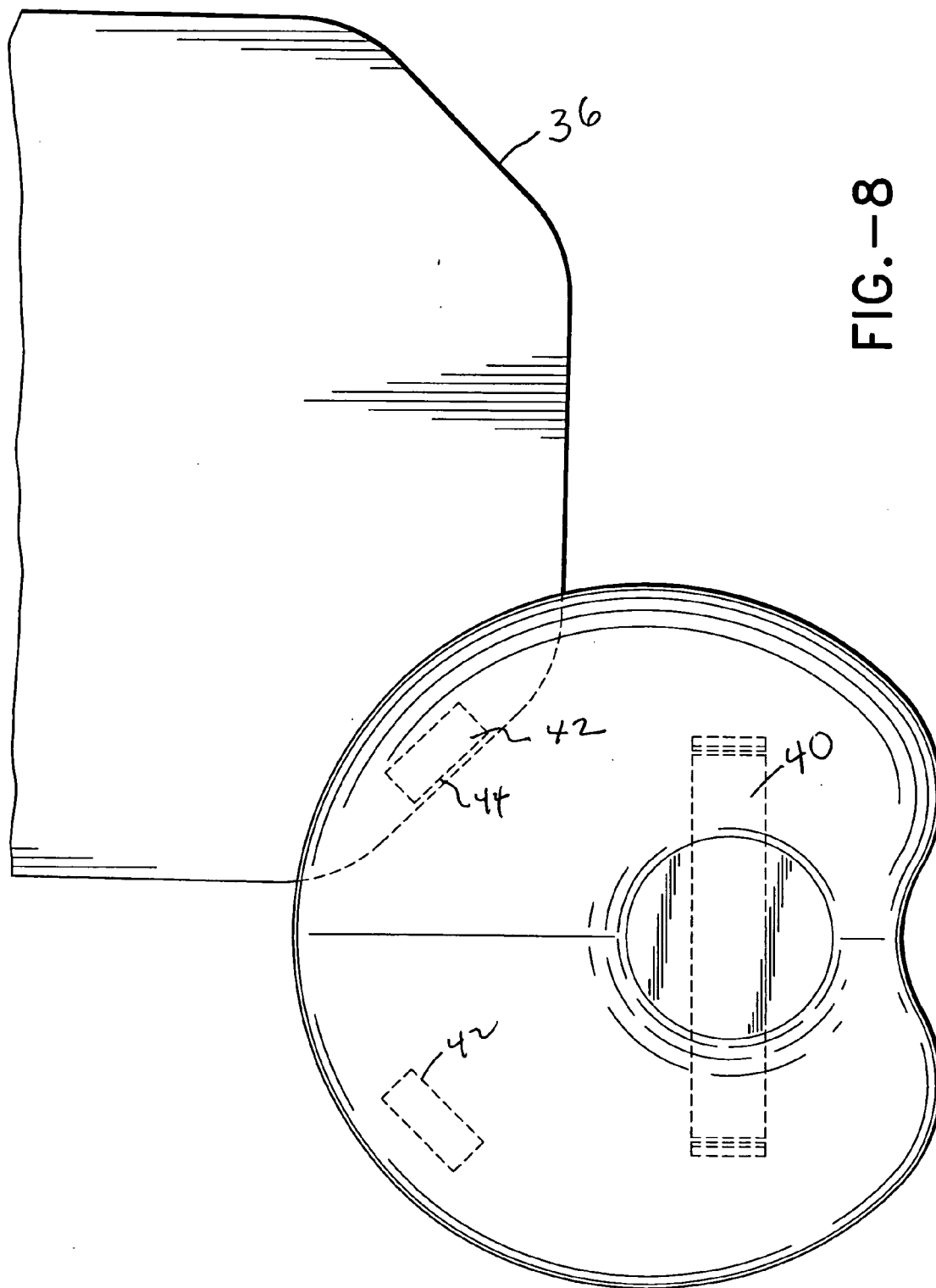


FIG.-8

BREAST FEEDING SUPPORT DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention relates to a support pillow. More particularly, this invention relates to a support pillow that is used by women who breast feed to support themselves and their infant children in a relaxed and effective feeding position.

[0003] 2. Previous Art

[0004] There have been a variety of support pillows in the past. For example, chiropractors regularly recommend orthopedic or cervical pillows to support their patients' necks during rest. These pillows preserve the cervical curve and generally allow the patient to have increased vigor and a healthier life.

[0005] Various improvements in pillows have recognized the beneficial effects supporting an individual's neck in the proper position to promote the cervical curve. For example, Torbik, U.S. Pat. No. 5,708,998, describes a cervical pillow to provide proper support for users on their side or back. The pillow includes a central depression and sides filled with fiber.

[0006] Other support pillows have included a headrest, namely, Monti et al, U.S. Pat. No. 4,617,691 which has a rectangular shape and which is removably placed around a user's neck to support the neck and head. This pillow is wedge shaped and has lateral supports and a fastener to keep it removably around the neck.

[0007] Yet another pillow is specifically designed for infants, namely, Chang, U.S. Pat. No. 6,536,058, which has a base with a depression and a supplement member. The depressed segment is used to support the infant's neck.

[0008] Another pillow, namely, Meyer et al, U.S. Pat. No. 5,088,141 is a therapeutic pillow for supporting the neck and head of the user. The pillow has a generally rectangular shape. All four sides are concaved toward a depressed central hollow.

[0009] Yet another support pillow by Fanto-Chan, U.S. Pat. No. 5,519,906 is specifically designed for nursing mothers. This pillow wraps around the nursing mother and encloses the infant and supports the arms and back of the mother and the infant while nursing. As one can imagine traveling with such a large structure as this pillow can be cumbersome and awkward. It should be noted that a nursing mother carries a plethora of articles related to the baby. The intent of the instant invention is to facilitate breast feeding. This includes facilitating breast feeding when the mother is busy and taking short and long trips. A smaller, more compact device which still provides support for mother and baby is a long felt need in this art.

[0010] As noted by the sheer number of pillows describe briefly above, there is a growing need to provide proper back and neck support for people in general. Just generally it has been found that providing such support makes a person happy and healthier. In the case of a nursing mother and infant, providing proper support is not simply a desire, but rather a critical need. If the mother or infant is uncomfortable and cannot complete the cycle of breast feeding, there

will be an increased chance that baby will not receive the proper nutrition. Additionally, if mother does not completely empty her breasts of milk, there may well be a decrease in milk production and a shorter period for nursing.

[0011] Clearly, the art described above has recognized the need to provide a device to facilitate thorough and complete breast feeding. In order to accomplish this, the nursing mother and infant must be relaxed and comfortable. The mother must be able to feel comfortable enough to finish her cycle of breast feeding, while baby must be properly supported without placing an undue burden on the nursing mother so that the cycle can be completed in comfort and in a relaxed fashion.

[0012] The art as indicated above by the described references appears indicative of the art. The art clearly shows a desire and in fact, a long felt need to provide the nursing mother with a support device which can allow her and baby to be comfortable throughout the entire feeding cycle. The art does not provide such a device, which is easily portable and, yet provides the necessary support for mother and baby. Additionally, the art does not provide for a device, which takes into account the mother and baby's need for privacy while nursing. In many states and localities, folks have become offended by the sight of a woman publicly breast feeding her child. So much so that certain areas have passed laws against such public breast feeding. What is needed is a device, which provides the necessary support and comfort for a mother to complete her breast feeding cycle while also providing a means to create privacy for the act of breast feeding.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0013] It is an object of the present invention to provide a breast feeding support device that is inexpensive and effective for a large portion of the population of nursing mothers.

[0014] It is another object of the present invention to provide a breast feeding support device, which is compact and which can be easily transported with the nursing infant.

[0015] It is an additional object of the present invention to provide a breast feeding support device which is an inexpensive, yet effective in encouraging complete and thorough feeding for baby and a relaxed and comfortable position for mother.

[0016] It is an additional object of the present invention to provide breast feeding support device, which allows the mother to cover herself and her nursing baby providing privacy for mother and baby during the breast feeding cycle.

[0017] In accordance with the aforementioned objects and those that will be mentioned and will become apparent below, a breast feeding support device according to the present invention comprising:

[0018] a compact pillow-type device, sized and shaped to fit comfortably between the user's arm and torso,

[0019] the compact pillow-type device having

[0020] a central depression, the central depression having a cross section and that cross section being relatively thin; and

[0021] an outer periphery concentric with the central depression, the outer periphery having a cross section, that cross section being many times thicker than the cross section of the central depression, the outer periphery being suitable to support the head and neck of the nursing infant against the arm and torso of the mother.

[0022] In an exemplary embodiment of the breast feeding support device according to the present invention, the outer periphery has a front and a back. The cross section of the outer periphery is thicker at the front than the back and the cross section generally decreases linearly from front to back defining a reverse wedge shape.

[0023] In another exemplary embodiment of the breast feeding support device, according to the present invention, the back of the outer periphery has a notch suitable for facilitating supporting the mother in a relaxed position while breast feeding.

[0024] In another exemplary embodiment, the device includes a privacy skirt attached to the outer periphery. The skirt when properly positioned covers the sensitive areas of the mother and provides baby with a warm and comforting environment away from the harsh glare of either lights or the sun. The outer periphery is provided with a set of fasteners, such as Velcro fasteners, which can be positioned in a variety of ways throughout the surface of the outer periphery. The skirt can then be provided with a compatible set of fasteners to enable the skirt to be removably attached to the device and yet positioned in a variety of ways to cover the sensitive areas of the mother while providing baby with a warm and comforting environment.

[0025] An advantage of the present invention is to provide an inexpensive and effective device for allowing mother to be in a comfortable and supported position throughout the entire breast feeding cycle.

[0026] Another advantage of the present invention is to provide a support pillow which includes a privacy skirt to allow mother and baby privacy during each breast feeding cycle without having to resort to another device or finding another piece of clothing or further and additional equipment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0027] For a further understanding of the objects and advantages of the present invention, reference should be given to the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like parts are given like reference numerals and wherein:

[0028] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of the breast feeding support device in accordance with this invention.

[0029] **FIGS. 2 and 3** are side cut away view drawn substantially along line 2-2 of **FIG. 2** and looking in the direction of the arrows. **FIGS. 2 & 3** are side perspective views.

[0030] **FIG. 4** is a top plan view of the breast feeding support device in accordance with this invention.

[0031] **FIG. 5** is a perspective partially cut-away side view of the breast feeding support device in accordance with this invention drawn along line 5-5.

[0032] **FIGS. 6** partially cut-away side perspective view of the breast feeding support device in accordance with this invention revealing the fiber fill of the outer periphery.

[0033] **FIGS. 7** is a bottom perspective view of the breast feeding support device in accordance with this invention illustrating the fastening structure for the privacy skirt.

[0034] **FIG. 8** is a top plan view of the breast feeding support device in accordance with this invention illustrating the privacy skirt attached to the support device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0035] There is perhaps no more important function in an infant's life than proper breast feeding. Getting the proper nutrition is critical especially for a small infant. It has been said the colostrum in the early days of an infant's life provides the life long building blocks for a healthy immune system and thus, in general, for the child's physical well being throughout his/her life. Colostrum is obtained by the infant through breast feeding from the mother in the very early days of life. A device such as the instant invention, facilitates such breast feeding and moreover, because it allows the mother and infant to breast feed in a comfortable and relaxed position, the breast feeding is complete. Thus, the nursing mother can more completely empty her breasts and the nursing infant gets a full and satisfactory feeding and the nutrition baby needs to become a healthy adult.

[0036] With particular reference to **FIG. 1**, there is shown an exemplary embodiment of the breast feeding support device, generally indicated by the numeral **20**. The breast feeding support device **20** is a compact support pillow made for use in nursing infants. The pillow **20** is sized and shaped to fit comfortably between the arm of the nursing mother and her torso. The pillow **20** supports the mother's arm and the infant's neck and head as will be apparent hereinafter.

[0037] The pillow **20** includes a central depression **22** for supporting the head of the infant in a relaxed and comfortable position to promote full and complete nursing. The central depression **22** is surrounded by an outer periphery **24** concentric with the central depression **22**.

[0038] The central depression **22**, as shown best in **FIGS. 2 and 5**, has a thin cross section. As noted above, the central depression **22** is sized and shaped for supporting the head of the infant. This will be more fully appreciated with respect to the description of **FIG. 6** below.

[0039] The outer periphery **24** has cross section, as best seen in **FIGS. 2, 3 and 5**, which is many times greater than the cross section of the central depression **22**. The cross section is sufficient to support the weight of the infant's neck while the infant's head is supported generally by the central depression **22**.

[0040] As shown best in **FIG. 5**, the outer periphery **24** has a front portion **26** and a back portion **28**. The front portion **26** has a larger cross section than the back portion **28**. The cross section decreases linearly as it goes from the front portion **26** to the back portion **28**. The cross section of the outer periphery **24** forms a reverse wedge. The front portion **26** of the wedge supports the head and neck of the infant. The rear portion **28** provides the nursing mother with the needed support during the nursing process. It has been found

empirically that such support can best be achieved by providing a thinner cross section than the front portion 26.

[0041] The exemplary embodiment of the back portion 28 has a notch 30. The notch 30 is provided to support the arm of the nursing mother. The notch 30 is sized and shaped to fit compatibly with the area of the nursing mother adjacent the elbow. The arm then fits within the notch 30 and the remaining portion of the outer periphery 24 supports the bulk of the weight of the arm. The reverse wedge provides the correct support for the nursing mother enabling her to remain comfortable and relaxed to give baby a complete feeding.

[0042] As shown in FIG. 6, the outer periphery 24 has an outer cover 32, which covers a fill material 34 enabling the outer periphery 24 to have a relatively large cross section. The exemplary embodiment of the pillow 20 contemplates pillows of various levels of firmness. For example the more fill that is held by the cover, assuming the fill to be of comparable density, the greater the firmness of the pillow. Thus stuffing the cover with less fill also means that such a pillow will have greater softness, again assuming a comparable density of the fill material.

[0043] The fill material 34 is a standard pillow fill in the exemplary embodiment. Various fills can be used including down and non-animal materials. Hypo-allergenic and natural materials can be easily substituted and pillows in accordance with this invention can be custom made in other exemplary embodiments.

[0044] The outer cover 32 is made from a standard pillow case material, such as a high quality cotton. Again various materials are contemplated for the outer cover 32 within the spirit and scope of the pillow of this invention.

[0045] It will be appreciated that the central depression 22 cross section has the thickness of two layers of whatever material is used for the outer cover 32. This contrasts with the outer periphery 24 cross section, which has the thickness of the two layers of outer cover 32 material plus the fill material. Clearly, the front portion 26 has far more fill material between the two outer cover 32 layers than the back portion. Therefore, the difference between the cross section thicknesses of the front and back portions, 26 and 28, respectively.

[0046] The breast feeding support device 20 in accordance with the invention includes a privacy skirt 36. The privacy skirt 36, in the exemplary embodiment, is removably connected to the outer periphery 24 as illustrated in FIGS. 7 & 8. In order to accommodate various angles for the mother and infant, a variety of location spots for fasteners 38 are formed in the outer periphery 24. The attachment mechanism or fasteners 38 are a series of hooks and loops, known commonly as Velcro. The hooks comprise male end, while the loops comprise female ends. Each of the privacy skirt 36 and the outer periphery 24 may have either male or female ends providing that the skirt 36 and periphery 24 have compatible ends for releasable mating connection.

[0047] In another exemplary embodiment, the privacy skirt 36 is permanently attached to the outer periphery 24. For example, the privacy skirt 36 is sewed on the outer periphery 24. Additionally, other forms of removable attachment of the skirt 36 to periphery 24 are contemplated within the spirit and scope of the instant invention.

[0048] FIG. 7 illustrates the pillow 20 having a bottom with a fastening structure or strap 40. The strap 40 can be permanently secured to the pillow 20 by sewing or removably fastened by having appropriate male and female Velcro ends on the pillow 20 and strap 40. FIG. 7 illustrates the embodiment having the strap 40 permanently secured to the pillow 20 by sewing as shown.

[0049] The strap 40 enables the mother securely hold the infant to her breast. The strap provides a secured and comfortable structure for both baby and mother while obtaining all the benefits of the pillow 20.

[0050] With respect to FIG. 8, there is shown the pillow 20 having removable privacy skirt 36. As shown in the embodiment in FIG. 8, at least one edge of the periphery of the skirt 36 includes a Velcro strip 42, as shown. The outer periphery 24 has two Velcro strips 44. The Velcro strips 42 and 44 are compatible for locking and removal. This means that one of the strips includes male hooks while the other strip includes compatible loops. As will be appreciated, while only two strips 44 are shown, it will be appreciated that additional strips may be provided on the outer periphery 24 in as many locations as desired. Likewise the same is true for the skirt 36 and having multiple Velcro strips.

[0051] In this way, the privacy skirt 36 and the fastener 40 can be positioned to maximize the comfort of mother and the security of the infant. Thus the pillow can be used to promote feeding, nurturing and security for both mother and infant.

[0052] While the foregoing describes several exemplary embodiments of a breast feeding support device in accordance with the present invention, it is to be understood that the above description is illustrative only and not limiting of the disclosed invention. It will be appreciated that it would be possible for one skilled in the art to modify a number of aspects of the breast feeding support device within the spirit and scope of the invention. Additionally, the specific dimensions of the thickness or the cross sections and the overall size of the pillow are illustrative and may be modified within the spirit and scope of the invention. The important aspect of the size is that it is compact and readily available for travel to stores and the like as well as long trips. Additionally, the specific firmness of the pillow can be adjusted within the spirit and scope of this invention. Accordingly, the present invention is to be limited only by the claims as set forth below.

What is claimed is:

1. A breast feeding support device, comprising:

a compact pillow-type device, sized and shaped to fit comfortably between the user's arm and torso,

the compact pillow-type device having

a central depression, the central depression having a cross section and that cross section being relatively thin; and

an outer periphery concentric with the central depression, the outer periphery having a cross section, that cross section being many times thicker than the cross section of the central depression, the outer periphery being suitable to support the head and neck of the nursing infant against the arm and torso of the mother.

2. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the outer periphery has a front portion and a back portion, the front having a thicker cross section than the back portion.

3. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 2, wherein the cross section of the outer periphery forms a reverse wedge from front portion to back portion.

4. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 2, wherein the front portion cross section is sized and shaped to support the head and neck of a nursing infant.

5. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the device includes a privacy skirt connected to the outer periphery.

6. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 5, wherein the privacy skirt is connected to the outer periphery via use of male and female Velcro fasteners.

7. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 2, wherein the back portion of the outer periphery has a notch sized and shaped for comfortable fit with the mother's arm.

8. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the outer periphery has an outside and an inner chamber and wherein the inner chamber is filled with a fiber material for supporting the neck of the infant.

9. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 8, wherein the inner chamber comprises a single chamber.

10. The breast feeding support device as set forth in claim 8, wherein the outer periphery has a cover, which covers the fiber material.

* * * * *