TANK TOP NURSING BRA

A tank top nursing bra for a nursing mother which provides breast support and which also allows the nursing mother to easily and discreetly breast feed her baby wherein the tank top can be worn in public without the need to be covered. The tank top nursing bra includes an inner frame for securing the tank top on the nursing mother and for properly positioning the tank top relative to the breasts of the nursing mother. The inner frame includes an elastic waist or chest band which extends about the torso of the mother and below the breasts of the mother. The elastic band having a front portion and a rear portion. The inner frame further including a front sling having a pair of openings for allowing access to the woman's breasts for nursing. The sling extending from the elastic band to a set of shoulder straps which support the inner frame on the shoulders of the woman. The shoulder straps having back edges which are joined either directly or indirectly to the elastic band. The tank top nursing bra further including at least one breast supporting inner nursing flap having a bottom edge joined to the elastic waistband and a top edge which is selectively interengageable with the inner support structure. The tank top nursing bra further including an outer tank top having a front and back portion. The front portion of the tank top being attached to the at least one nursing flap and the back portion being attached to the inner frame.
FIG. 2
(PRIOR ART)
TANK TOP NURSING BRA


[0002] The invention of this application relates to the art of nursing bras and, more particularly, to a combination nursing bra and tank top which can be worn as an outer garment even though it provides the necessary breast support and allows for access to the breast for nursing a baby.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0003] The present invention relates to an outer garment which has a built-in nursing bra that provides support for the breasts while allowing easy access for nursing. In this respect, Alberts 2,679,048; Williams 4,390,024; Kunstadtter 4,878,879; Weber-Unger 5,624,296; and, Pearson 6,083,079 all show nursing bra designs which provide breast support for the nursing mother while allowing easy access to the breast for nursing which are hereby incorporated by reference as background material showing the same. Fildan D412,462 shows a clip design which can be used in connection with a nursing bra or other clothing article to selectively attach a flap to the article and is also incorporated by reference as background material for showing clips. Marino 3,176,692; Meyers 3,611,439; Friedman 4,564,015; Clark 4,048,404; Witzel 5,461,725; Vera 6,282,719; and, Louissier D462,156 show different types of clothing articles which allow access to the breast for nursing and which are also incorporated by reference as background material.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention is for an outer garment which can be worn by a nursing mother to provide breast support and which allows easy access to the breasts for nursing. It is, of course, well known that a bra can be modified to allow access to the breasts for nursing a baby. In this respect, this type of bra, namely, a nursing bra utilizes traditional materials and designs to support the breast, however, the bra further includes some form of selectively securing device to allow a portion of the bra to be moved away from the breast to provide access to the breast for nursing a baby. Some prior art nursing bras utilize an inner support layer which includes an inner cup frame that supports the breast wherein the cup frame further includes a small access hole for nursing a baby. An outer flap is utilized to selectively cover the access hole and to provide a place to position a nursing pad, however, the outer flap is not intended to provide support. This is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 2,679,048. Other nursing bras utilize an inner sling configuration which maintains the bra relative to the woman’s chest while only providing minimal or no support for the breast of the nursing mother. In this particular design, the nursing bra further includes a selectively engageable flap which covers the openings in the sling and which provides the majority of the support for the breast. This is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 4,878,879. Even yet another design includes only an inner strap layer to hold the nursing bra relative to the woman’s shoulder wherein the flap provides all support for the breast and even helps position the bra. This is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 5,624,296. Furthermore, some nursing bra designs include a combination of these three support designs.

[0005] Outer garments or clothing articles have also been designed which provide easy access to the breasts of the nursing mother to allow the nursing mother to nurse her baby without removing the garment. This can be particularly helpful for nursing in public areas to allow the nursing mother to discretely nurse her baby. While these clothing articles allow access to the breasts, they rely on a nursing bra worn beneath the garment to provide breast support. As a result, the nursing mother must still manipulate two different articles, namely, the nursing bra and the outer garment, to nurse her baby.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In accordance with the present invention, provided is a tank top nursing bra combination for a nursing mother that provides breast support and which allows the nursing mother to easily and discretely breast feed her baby wherein the tank top can be worn in public without needing to be covered. In this respect, a tank top nursing bra in accordance with the present invention includes an inner frame for securing the tank top on the chest of the nursing mother and for properly positioning the tank top relative to the breasts of the nursing mother. The tank top nursing bra further includes a selectively engageable nursing flap secured to the inner frame which covers and supports the breast of the nursing mother and which can be easily moved from a closed support position to an access position for allowing the nursing mother to quickly and discretely nurse her baby. Furthermore, a tank top nursing bra in accordance with the present invention has the appearance of a traditional tank top which can be worn in public even though it provides breast support and breast access.

[0007] The tank top nursing bra in accordance with the present invention further includes an inner frame that utilizes a sling configuration that provides complete access to the mother’s breasts for nursing her baby. Prior art cup frame designs, which merely include an access hole for the mother’s nipple, fail to provide adequate access to the breast for manipulating the baby’s mouth relative to the mother’s nipple. Furthermore, the sling design in accordance with the present invention also prevents the baby’s face from engaging the clothing article during nursing which can cause irritation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] The foregoing will in part be obvious and in part be pointed out more fully hereafter in connection with a written description of preferred embodiments of the present invention illustrated in the accompanying drawings in which:

[0009] FIG. 1 is a front view of a prior art nursing bra wherein both breast flaps are in the closed position;

[0010] FIG. 2 is a front view of the nursing bra shown in FIG. 1 wherein one of the nursing flaps is in the access position;

[0011] FIG. 3 is a side view of the nursing bra shown in FIG. 1 wherein the securing clip has been detached;

[0012] FIG. 4 is a front view of the nursing bra shown in FIG. 1 wherein both nursing flaps are in the access position;

[0013] FIG. 5 is a prior art nursing bra and tank top design wherein both nursing flaps are in the closed position;
FIG. 6 is a front view of the garment shown in FIG. 5 wherein one nursing flap is shown in the access position;

FIG. 7 is a front view of the garment shown in FIG. 5 wherein the inner support structure, including the cup frames, is shown in hidden lines;

FIG. 8 is a side sectional view of the garment shown in FIG. 5;

FIG. 9 is a front view of a tank top nursing bra in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 10 is a front view of the tank top nursing bra shown in FIG. 9 wherein one flap is in the access position;

FIG. 11 is a front view of the tank top nursing bra design shown in FIG. 9 wherein both nursing flaps are shown in the access position;

FIG. 12 is a front view of the tank top nursing bra design shown in FIG. 9 wherein the support structure is shown in hidden lines;

FIG. 13 is a front view of another embodiment of the present invention which shows the support structure in hidden lines;

FIG. 14 is a front view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 13 wherein one of the nursing flaps is shown in the access position;

FIG. 15 is a front view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 13 wherein both nursing flaps are shown in the access position;

FIG. 16 is a side, partially sectional view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 13;

FIG. 17 is a sectional view taken along line 17-17 in FIG. 13;

FIG. 18 is a sectional view taken along line 18-18 in FIG. 16;

FIG. 19 is an enlarged view of the clip structure used for securing the nursing flap shown in FIG. 13; and,

FIG. 20 is a sectional view taken along line 20-20 in FIG. 19.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now in greater detail to the drawings wherein the showings are for the purpose of illustrating preferred embodiments of the invention only, and not for the purpose of limiting the invention, FIGS. 1-4 show a prior art nursing bra, FIGS. 5-8 show a prior art nursing garment, FIGS. 9-12 show a first embodiment, and FIGS. 13-20 show another embodiment of the invention of this application.

Referring to FIG. 1-4, shown is a prior art nursing bra 10 which includes an inner frame 12, straps 14 and 16, and a unified front flap 20 which has a left and right flap section 30 and 40, respectively. Section 30 is selectively engageable to strap 14 by clip 35. Similarly, flap 40 is selectively engageable with strap 16 by clip 45. Nursing bra 10 is intended to be worn underneath either an outer garment or even a nightwear garment to provide breast support and to provide access to the breasts for nursing. Nursing bra 10 is a separate clothing article from the outer garment or nightwear and, therefore, the outer garment or nightwear must include access for nursing or must be removed for nursing.

Nursing bra 10 utilizes flap 20 to support the breast wherein inner frame 12 includes a sling 54 having sling openings 50 and 52 which provide full access to the mother's breast for nursing her baby. The primary function of the sling is to position the nursing bra relative to the woman's breasts and to maintain this positioning. Inner frame 12 further includes an elastic waistband 56 which extends below the woman's breast and which provides a lower structural feature for the breast support of the nursing bra. In this respect, the bottom ends of the sling are attached to waistband 56. In addition, the bottom edge of flap 20 is also secured to waistband 56. Flap 20 is made from elastic material and can extend from the elastic waistband up to the shoulder straps of the nursing bra when in the closed position. Clips 35 and 45 retain the nursing flap sections 30 and 40 in the closed position, respectively, and are adjustable to provide adjustment for differently sized women. The elastic material in the nursing flap provides the support for the woman's breast and the flap also covers the openings in the inner sling.

Referring to FIG. 4, the nursing flap design of nursing bra 10 allows both breasts to be exposed wherein the nursing flap can be easily positioned out of the way. As can be further appreciated from FIG. 4, the sling design for the nursing bra provides complete access to the woman's breasts.

FIGS. 5-8 show a prior art version of a nursing bra design which has been incorporated into an outer garment. This is the design disclosed in International Application No. WO 02/030221 A3. Clothing article 100 includes an outer garment 100A and a built-in nursing bra wherein the invisible nursing bra is mostly internal. In this respect, the external portion of the nursing bra includes shoulder straps 105, nursing flaps 103, and the outer garment 100A and 100B. Article 100 further includes an inner support structure which includes cup frames 102 that provide support for the woman's breasts. In this respect, it is well known in the art that there are generally two types of support structures for bras. The first type is a cup frame design which is designed to lift and shape the woman's breasts based on the configuration of the cup frame. The second is a sling design which is not intended to lift, shape and support. The inner support structure of article 100 includes a cup frame and is intended to support the woman's breasts while the article is being worn and further is intended to support the woman's breasts even during nursing. Cup frame 102 is permanently joined between a waistband 115 and straps 105 and, therefore, cannot be removed for nursing. The cup frame design only allows for limited access for nursing the baby via a nursing hole. Nursing flaps 103 merely cover the access hole in cup frames 102 and can be utilized for holding a nursing pad. Cup frames 102 are attached to elastic band 115 and work in connection with straps 105 to lift and support the woman's breasts and also to maintain the positioning of the nursing bra portion of this clothing article. As a result, the cup frame must be made from an elastic material which is likely to come in contact with the nursing baby's face and which can, therefore, cause facial irritation.
FIGS. 9-12 show a first embodiment of the invention of this application. In this respect, shown is a nursing tank top 210 having an outer garment 220 and an inner frame structure 230. Outer garment 220 is made from a stretchy, elastic material so it can work in connection with the inner support structure and so it can conform to the changing shape of the nursing mother.

Inner frame structure 230 includes straps 232 and 234 which are both adjustable. The adjustability of the straps can be any conventional adjustment mechanism known in the art and can be either positioned on the front or the back of the shoulder straps. Inner frame structure 230 further includes sling 240 which is essentially M-shaped having a center leg 242 and outer legs 244 and 246 thereby forming openings 250 and 252. Outer leg 244 is connected to center leg 242 by sling top 260 which is connected to strap 232. Similarly, outer leg 246 is connected to center leg 242 at sling top 270 which is in turn attached to strap 234. Inner frame 230 further includes a chest band 280 which extends about the chest of the woman below the woman’s breasts. Sling legs 242, 244 and 246 are attached to elastic band 280. Furthermore, straps 232 and 234 can also extend downwardly and connect with elastic band 280 to complete the inner frame structure. Essentially, the inner frame structure secures the clothing article on the woman in the proper position. Furthermore, it maintains the position of the clothing article relative to the woman’s breasts and provides minimal support.

FIGS. 9-12 show a first embodiment of the invention of this application. In this respect, shown is a nursing tank top 210 having an outer garment 220 and an inner frame structure 230. Outer garment 220 is made from a stretchy, elastic material so it can work in connection with the inner support structure and so it can conform to the changing shape of the nursing mother.

Inner frame structure 230 includes straps 232 and 234 which are both adjustable. The adjustability of the straps can be any conventional adjustment mechanism known in the art and can be either positioned on the front or the back of the shoulder straps. Inner frame structure 230 further includes sling 240 which is essentially M-shaped having a center leg 242 and outer legs 244 and 246 thereby forming openings 250 and 252. Outer leg 244 is connected to center leg 242 by sling top 260 which is connected to strap 232. Similarly, outer leg 246 is connected to center leg 242 at sling top 270 which is in turn attached to strap 234. Inner frame 230 further includes a chest band 280 which extends about the chest of the woman below the woman’s breasts. Sling legs 242, 244 and 246 are attached to elastic band 280. Furthermore, straps 232 and 234 can also extend downwardly and connect with elastic band 280 to complete the inner frame structure. Essentially, the inner frame structure secures the clothing article on the woman in the proper position. Furthermore, it maintains the position of the clothing article relative to the woman’s breasts and provides minimal support.

Tank top nursing bra 210 further includes support flaps 290 and 292 that are joined to one another at the center of the garment thereby having a unified bottom edge 293 which is connected to elastic band 280. Support flaps 290 and 292, in connection with inner frame structure 230, provide the support for the woman’s breast when in the closed position. Tank top 210 can further include an inner back panel extending between the straps and the elastic band which is also joined to flaps 290 and 292 thereby providing additional support. Support flaps 290 and 292 further include first clip portions 294 and 296, respectively, of clips 295 and 297, which are attached to flap top 298 and 300. Clips 295 and 297 can be any clips known in the art for selectively attaching a clothing flap. Clips 295 and 297 further include second clip portions 302 and 304, respectively. First clip portions 294 and 296 work in connection with second clip portions 302 and 304, respectively, to secure flaps 290 and 292 in the closed position and complete the support structure of the garment. Flaps 290 and 292 are similar to left and right flap sections 30 and 40 of nursing bra 10 shown in FIGS. 1-4. However, flaps 290 and 292 are integrally connected to outer garment 220 which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Outer garment 220 includes a front top edge 320, a rear top edge 322 and side top edges 324 and 326. Front edge 320 defines an upper edge of front clothing flaps 330 and 332. Support flaps 290 and 292 are secured to clothing flaps 330 and 332, respectively, so that the support flaps and the clothing flaps move in unison between the access position and the closed position. In order to minimize the appearance of support flaps 290 and 292, they can be connected to clothing flaps 330 and 332 by also connecting clothing flaps 330 and 332 to first clip portions 294 and 296, respectively, of clips 295 and 297. In another embodiment, clothing flap 330 and 332 can be stitched to support flaps 290 and 292 at or near upper flap portions 260 and 270, respectively. FIG. 9 shows the clothing article with both flaps in the closed position while FIG. 10 shows the clothing article with one flap in the closed position and one in the access position. FIG. 11 shows both flaps in the access position. By connecting flaps 290 and 292 to flaps 330 and 332, respectively, one clip for each flap can be utilized to uncover both the clothing flap and the supporting flap thereby making access easier for the nursing mother. Furthermore, by utilizing flaps and 290 and 292 which provide full support, a sling design can be used with the inner frame structure to allow full access to the woman’s breasts and comfortable nursing for the baby.

Rear edge 322 defines the upper limits of a back panel 340 which is secured to straps 232 and 234 to support the rear portion of the clothing article. Top edge 324 defines the upper limits of side 342 and, similarly, top edge 326 defines the upper limits of side 344. Sides 342 and 344 do not need to be directly connected to the inner frame structure.

Referring to FIGS. 13-20, shown is a second embodiment that includes an inner frame structure which still provides the necessary support and access while being even more hidden from the outward appearance of the garment. In this respect, shown is a tank top nursing bra 410 having an outer clothing article 420 and an inner frame structure 422 similar to the tank top 210. However, tank top 410 includes support flaps 430 and 432 which have inner support layers which are shaped and constructed similarly to the outer visible layers. This configuration provides a more attractive outward appearance for the clothing article.

This more attractive outward appearance is accomplished by utilizing support flap 430 which includes an outer flap layer 434 and a commonly shaped inner flap layer 436. Support flap 430 also includes an outer flap layer 438 and a commonly shaped inner flap layer 440. Outer flap layers 434 and 438 are part of article 420 while inner flap layers 436 and 440 are part of inner frame structure 422. More particularly, outer garment 420 extends between a base edge 450 and top edges 452, 454, 456, and 458. Outer garment 420 can be a unified piece of material or can be made from multiple clothing panels such as a front panel and a rear panel. The clothing article for this application will be described as having a front panel 460 and a rear panel 462 wherein front panel 460 extends between bottom edge 450 and top edge 452 and rear panel extends between bottom edge 450 and top edge 454. With respect to the flaps, outer and inner flap layers 434 and 436 of support flap 430 have common top edges which are a portion of top edges 452 and 456. In similar fashion, outer and inner flap layers 438 and 440 of support flap 432 have common top edges which are a portion of top edges 452 and 458. This configuration essentially makes the support layer hidden when the flaps are in the closed position. This is especially true since outer garment 420 is allowed to freely move relative to inner frame structure 422 except for the connection at the top edges.

Inner frame structure 422 comprises front sling 470, elastic chest band 480, and a portion of straps 490 and 492. Straps 490 and 492 are adjustable for adjusting the frame structure 422 to fit women of different sizes. While straps 490 and 492 can be any known adjustable strap known
in the art, and can even have the adjustable portion on the front or the rear of the straps, straps 490 and 492 are shown to have adjustment portions 494 and 496 respectively. Front edges 500 and 502 of straps 490 and 492, respectively, can be secured to sling 470 by clips 506 and 508 or stitched directly to sling 470.

[0042] Sling 470 is M-shaped and includes a center sling leg 510 and outer sling legs 512 and 514. Sling leg 512 and center leg 510 are joined to another by a first sling top apex 520. Center leg 510 is joined to outer leg 514 by second sling top apex 522. Center sling 510 has a bottom 511 which is joined to elastic chest band 480. In similar fashion, outer sling leg 512 has a bottom 513 and outer sling 514 has a bottom 515 which are both connected to chest band 480. Sling leg 512, sling top 520, center sling 510 and a portion of chest band 480 define a first sling opening 530. Similarly, center sling 510 together with sling top 522, outer sling leg 514 and another portion of chest band 480 form second sling opening 532.

[0043] Straps 490 and 492 further include a back edge 542 and 544 which can be directly connected to the bottom portion of chest band 480. Sling 470, chest band 480, and straps 490 and 492 essentially make up the inner frame structure 422 for garment 410. However, frame structure 422 can further include inner back panel 550 extending between strap back edges 542 and 544 and chest band 480. This particular structure, which is shown in FIGS. 13-20, eliminates strap show-through of straps 490 and 492 when they extend to chest band 480. Back panel 550 is connected to at least top edge 454 of back panel 462. Furthermore, back panel 550 can extend about the side of the woman and can engage inner flap layers 436 and 440 to provide additional support which is the preferred configuration.

[0044] With particular reference to FIGS. 13-15, inner frame structure 422 secures and positions the tank top nursing bra 410 relative to the woman’s breasts, however, the breasts are fully exposed for nursing in the access position (FIG. 15). In the access position, the tank top nursing bra is providing little or no support of the breasts in order to provide complete breast access and to minimize the contact between the nursing baby’s face and the material of the garment. While both breasts can be exposed, the individual flaps can be operated separately for exposing each breast independently (FIG. 14). Referring to FIG. 13, the flaps are shown in a closed position wherein the flaps provide the majority of the support for the breast while the mother is not nursing her baby.

[0045] In another embodiment of the present invention, the fabric of outer garment 420 is a stretchable fabric. In this respect, as can be appreciated, due to the weight changes associated with the pregnancy, it is desirable to have nursing garments which are made from elastic material to conform with the changing shape of the nursing mother. As a result, elastic materials, such as, cotton/lycra, nylon, microfiber, or similar stretchable fabrics can be used in connection with clothing worn by the nursing mother to help the clothing article change its shape. It has been found that this elastic material can also be used to provide additional breast support. This helps create a more lightweight and comfortable garment even though it provides adequate support for the breast of the nursing mother. More particularly, both inner flap layers 436 and 440 and outer flaps layers 434 and 438 are made from the same or similar elastic material. By utilizing elastic material for the outer garment, a lightweight comfortable clothing article is created which is capable of providing the necessary breast support while having a good outward appearance. Furthermore, the clothing article will conform to the shape of the nursing mother as her body changes. By incorporating the support feature in the flaps, a more natural look is also achieved by the more lightweight design.

[0046] While considerable emphasis has been placed on the preferred embodiments of the invention illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated that other embodiments can be made and that many changes can be made in the preferred embodiments without departing from the principals of the invention. Accordingly, it is to be distinctly understood that the foregoing descriptive matter is to be interpreted merely as illustrative of the invention and not as a limitation.

Having thus described the invention, it is so claimed:

1. An article of clothing for a nursing mother which provides breast support while allowing easy and discrete access to the breasts for nursing wherein the article of clothing can be worn in public without needing to be covered, the article of clothing comprising:

an inner frame structure for securing the article of clothing on the woman and for properly positioning the article of clothing relative to the woman’s breasts, the frame structure comprising a first and second adjustable straps having front and back portions, a sling connected to the adjustable straps at sling tops and a chest band having a front and back portion;

selectively engagable support flaps which are individually movable between a closed position and an access position, wherein the support flaps are connected to one another at center of the garment having a unified bottom edge and wherein the unified bottom edge is connect to the chest band; and

an outer garment having clothing flaps which are integrally connected to the support flaps and work in connection with the support flaps to provide easy and discrete access to the breasts of the nursing mother wherein the outer garment includes a front top edge, a rear top edge and side top edges, the front top edge defining the top edges of the clothing flaps.

2. The article of clothing according to claim 1 wherein the sling provides little or no breast support and is essentially M-shaped and comprises a center leg and two outer legs forming openings which extend substantially about the breasts and allow full access to the breasts.

3. The article of clothing according to claim 2 wherein the center leg extends between the woman’s breasts and two outer legs extending about the outer edges of the woman’s breasts and connect to the center leg at sling tops positioned above the breasts so that the sling legs form openings about the breasts and allow full access to the breasts.

4. The article of clothing according to claim 1 wherein the chest band extends about the woman’s chest and below the woman’s breasts and wherein center sling leg and outer sling legs are attached to the front portion of chest band.

5. The article of clothing according to claim 4 wherein back portions of shoulder straps extend down and attach to the back portion of the chest band.
6. The article of clothing according to claim 5 wherein the inner frame structure includes an inner back panel extending between the adjustable straps and the chest band and joined to the support flaps providing additional breast support.

7. The article of clothing according to claim 1 wherein the unified bottom of support flaps is connected to front portion of chest band and the support flaps can be individually moved between a closed position and an access position.

8. The article of clothing according to claim 7 wherein the support flaps include first clip portions and the sling tops include second clip portions wherein first clip portions work in connection with second clip portions to secure flaps in a closed position providing full breast support.

9. The article of clothing according to claim 8 wherein the outer garment includes front clothing flaps and wherein the front top edge of the outer garment defines an upper edge of the clothing flaps.

10. The article of clothing according to claim 9 wherein each front clothing flap is integrally connected to the corresponding support flap such that the support flap and clothing flap move in unison between an access position and a closed position.

11. The article of clothing according to claim 9 wherein front clothing flaps are connected to first clip portions such that clothing flaps and support flaps can be selectively moved in unison between a closed position and an access position.

12. The article of clothing according to claim 10 wherein the support flaps are entirely connected to the front clothing flaps and provide full breast support while the flap is in the closed position and provide full breast access for nursing a baby while the flap is in the access position.

13. The article of clothing according to claim 1 wherein the outer garment is made from a stretchy elastic material such that it may conform to the changing shape of the nursing mother.

14. A tank top nursing bra for a nursing mother wherein easy and discrete access to the woman’s breasts is provided and the tank top can be worn in public without needing to be covered, the tank top comprising:

- an inner frame structure for securing the tank top on the woman relative to the woman’s breasts;
- support flaps connected to the inner frame structure wherein the support flaps can be individually moved between a closed position and an access position; and
- an outer garment having outer flaps wherein the outer flaps are integrally attached to the support flaps such that the outer garment flaps and support flaps are moved in unison between the closed position and the access position.

15. The tank top nursing bra according to claim 14 wherein the inner frame structure comprises:

- adjustable shoulder straps having a front portion and a back portion wherein the adjustable shoulder straps are positioned over each of the woman’s shoulders;
- an M-shaped sling including a center leg positioned between the woman’s breasts and two outer legs positioned along the outside of each of the woman’s breasts wherein the sling provides little or no support and full access to the breasts;
- an elastic chest band having a front and a back portion wherein the chest band extends about the woman’s chest and below the woman’s breasts wherein the sling legs are attached to the front portion of the chest band and the back portion of the adjustable straps are attached to the back portion of the chest band.

16. The tank top nursing bra according to claim 15 wherein the support flaps are connected to one another at the center of the garment forming an unified bottom edge whereby the support flaps are connected to the front portion of the chest band and wherein each support flap includes a clip for retaining the support flap in a closed position.

17. The tank top nursing bra according to claim 14 wherein the support flaps are commonly shaped to the outer garment flaps so that a more attractive outward appearance is provided.

18. The tank top nursing bra according to claim 17 wherein the inner support flaps and outer garment flaps have common top edges so that the inner support flaps are essentially hidden and outer garment is allowed to freely move relative to the inner support structure.

19. The tank top nursing bra of claim 14 wherein the outer garment is a unified single piece of material.

20. The tank top nursing bra of claim 14 wherein the outer garment is made from multiple clothing panels.

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