NURSING GARMENT, NURSING JACKET OR TOP

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ABSTRACT

A nursing garment is formed as a nursing jacket or top that provides privacy to a nursing mother and entirely receives and covers a nursing baby. The nursing garment comprises a front panel, back panel, waist panel, and side portions. At least one elongated side placket is integrated within at least one of the side portions. The elongated side plackets extend substantially along an entire length of each side portion. At least one elongated slit is integrated within at least one of the elongated side plackets. Preferably, an elongated slit extends substantially along substantially the entire length of each side placket. The elongated slits are of a size so that an infant can pass completely through the slit and be entirely housed within the garment. Side plackets are of a depth sufficient to provide coverage to the infant and the mother, so that nursing is not visible.
Figure 2
NURSING GARMENT, NURSING JACKET OR TOP

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to nursing garments; and, more particularly, to a nursing jacket, hooded jacket or top tailored to provide privacy to a nursing mother.

2. Description of the Related Art

Nursing during gatherings or in public can be challenging for mothers. Discretion is often difficult and some type of nursing cover or blanket must be used. Nursing mothers experience such problems as the infant pulling the cover away and exposing the breast, causing the mother to become stressed and/or embarrassed.

Another problem is that many cover-ups are bulky and unattractive, leaving a mother feeling frumpy and large. Further, current cover-ups lack style and versatility. Many covers pull over the head or fasten in the back of the neck, while others require the assistance of others in securing the cover over the mother because her hands are not free. It additionally draws attention to the nursing mother rather than allowing her to feel secure in her social environment. A major concern of mothers with nursing in social environments is one, not being isolated and away from social situations while nursing and two, not attracting attention to themselves. It is important for a nursing mother to be able to quietly quiet the baby without drawing attention to nursing and thus freeing others to feel comfortable with a nursing mother around.

Putting on a bib-like cover often requires help, distracts, draws attention, takes away the platform of perhaps a speaker, pastor, or the like, and focuses attention away from where it needs to be. This is socially awkward and stressful for everyone in the room, not just the nursing mother. Yet another problem with nursing cover-ups is that they have to be worn, which can pose style issues; but if they are not worn they must be packed in a diaper bag.

Conventional nursing cover-ups are bulky and unattractive. In many cases, nursing cover-ups simply involve a throw type article that essentially covers the mother from neck to waist/hip and encases the baby. One common problem encountered with these types of cover-ups is that they are bulky and must be carried along when traveling or otherwise away from the home. Further, use of the bulky throw type cover-up generally leaves the mother feeling frumpy and large. Problems with these throw type coverings are exacerbated by their inability to mask the nursing function. It is frequently quite apparent that a mother is hiding a nursing baby under the throw.

Another conventional nursing cover-up article involves clothing, typically a shirt or dress, that includes a hole near the breast area covered with a flip away panel. Typical construction involves holes in the breast region on the front area of the shirt or dress with the discrete panels over the holes. One problem associated with these types of coverings is that the wearer must be very careful to ensure that the discrete panels do not inadvertently open and expose the breast area. This can become a problem if the woman rubs against a friction surface or if the baby pulls on the panels while carrying the infant. Another problem associated with these types of constructs is that the panels are discrete in nature so that they are relatively small. The panels do not provide much, if any, coverage for the woman while the baby is nursing. Further, the baby is not actually capable of being covered by the panel. As a result, onlookers may be able to see the baby feeding. Still further, with such panel designs, the baby is oftentimes exposed to the environment, which may contain drafts or be uncomfortably cold.

Other nursing cover constructs are provided as poncho or bib constructs that generally fit around the woman’s neck and or shoulders and simply drape over her body; generally these constructs do not have sleeves or body shaping characteristics. As a result, many women find wearing these types of articles to be rather unflattering as they are bulky in nature. Poncho and bib type nursing covers do not have separate arm holes—but are merely unilateral portions that slip over the head of the mother. In operation, the baby is slipped under the bottom of the poncho or bib and covered by the poncho/bib. These types of constructs encounter similar problems, as the poncho is oversized and often is not considered entirely flattering to one’s figure. Further, the bib constructs are generally tied behind the mother’s neck, and thus must be separately carried when not in use. Tying a bib on, for a grown woman, is not generally considered appealing, especially in a public setting.

There exists a need in the art for a nursing garment formed as a nursing jacket or hooded jacket, or top, which provides privacy for a nursing mother while imparting fashion style and comfort. In addition, there exists a need in the art for a nursing garment which, owing to its stylish, fashionable features, can be worn as part of a nursing mother’s daily wardrobe even after nursing ceases. Further still, there is a need in the art for a nursing garment that is constructed in a manner that provides the ability to slip a baby into the jacket or top in a discrete manner without exposing the mother or infant.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a nursing cover garment formed as a nursing jacket or hooded jacket to provide privacy to a nursing mother while imparting fashion style and comfort. The nursing garment is generally constructed having a front panel, back panel, and waist panel, wherein the front panel and back panel include side portions forming elongated side plackets with elongated slits. These elongated side plackets are generally similar to length sleeves, but instead of forming around the arms, they are open via an elongated slit sown or attached to the waist panel at the hip of the wearer. In other embodiments, there is included a hood or other type of head and neck covering, and a front opening with a securing mechanism (i.e. zipper, or the like).

The subject nursing cover/jacket can be worn in a stylish manner while providing a discrete cover for a mother during nursing and even after nursing ceases. The nursing cover/jacket provides the ability for a mother to effortlessly breast feed in a discrete manner while providing a hip, stylish and comfortable jacket.

The nursing garment comprises a front panel, back panel, waist panel, and side portions. At least one elongated side placket is integrated within at least one of the side portions, preferably both. The elongated side plackets extend substantially along an entire length of each side portion. At least one elongated slit is integrated within at least one of the elongated side plackets, preferably both. The elongated slits extend substantially along an entire length of each side placket. The elongated slits are of a size so that an infant can pass completely through the slit and be entirely housed within the garment. Side plackets have a depth sufficient to provide
coverage to the infant and the mother, so that nursing is not visible, and additionally provide adequate ventilation for the baby.

[0013] Also provided is a method of manufacturing a nursing garment. The method includes the steps of (i) forming a nursing garment having a front panel, back panel, waist panel, and side portions; (ii) forming at least one elongated side placket integrated within at least one of the side portions; (iii) extending the elongated side plackets substantially along an entire length of each of the side portions; (iv) forming at least one elongated slit integrated within at least one of the elongated side plackets; and (v) the elongated slits extending substantially along an entire length of each of the side plackets.

[0014] The above and other aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which reference numerals designate the same elements.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] The invention will be more fully understood and further advantages will become apparent when reference is had to the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention and the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0016] FIG. 1 illustrates a front top plane view of the subject nursing jacket;
[0017] FIG. 2 illustrates a back plane view;
[0018] FIG. 3 illustrates a cross-sectional side view;
[0019] FIG. 4 illustrates a side view with the subject nursing jacket being worn and a side shown in the open configuration; and
[0020] FIG. 5 illustrates a view of the subject nursing jacket being worn with an infant placed inside the jacket.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] A novel nursing jacket/or top is provided by the subject invention. Few attractive nursing garments are provided for nursing mothers. Particular deficiencies exist where outerwear is concerned.

[0022] While various shirts or blouses are provided, the vast majority simply include a shirt like construct with peel back material in the breast region to expose the breast to the infant. Unfortunately, the exposure is not limited to the infant, but to the public as well. Little coverage is provided at the breast—infant mouth/head interface and as a result, not only is it obvious that the mother is breast feeding, but exposure of the breast may result, especially when the infant is being pulled away from the breast. Further, these types of garments, which generally include a flip back panel of some sort right over the breast, can cause unwanted exposure if the panel accidentally opens on the mother or if the infant inadvertently opens the panel on the mother. Not only is exposure an issue, but these current nursing garment shirt type constructs fail to entirely cover the infant so the infant may become cold and uncomfortable. The infant remains on the outside or exterior of the shirt. As a result, on-lookers can readily recognize that the infant is nursing. The exposure issue thereby presented can be uncomfortable for the mother as well as the on-lookers themselves. Optimal bonding is achieved when the infant is in close contact with the mother.

[0023] While shirt type nursing garments have their drawbacks, poncho and bib type coverings hold their own drawbacks. Many of these types of coverings are large and flowing. At times, for some mothers, wearing such large flowing garments or ponchos can make the mother appear and/or feel larger than she is. Many poncho and bib type covers lack style and fashion appeal all together. Further, although the infant is slumped under the poncho or bib no waist band is provided so the infant remains exposed to drafts from under the garment. Even still, as the poncho and/or bib type coverings do not include any type of side or waist closure, the infant can readily kick the garment away. Moreover, such poncho and/or bib arrangements permit the wind to blow the garment upward, exposing the infant and baby to the public.

[0024] Unlike conventional nursing covers and/or garments, the subject nursing cover and method provides a nursing cover and method of using same whereby the cover can be worn in a stylish manner while providing discrete coverage for a mother during nursing. The present invention provides a nursing cover formed as a nursing jacket or hooded jacket to provide privacy to a nursing mother while imparting fashion, style and comfort. The nursing cover is generally comprises a front panel, back panel, and waist panel wherein the front panel and back panel include side portions forming elongated side plackets with elongated slits. These elongated side plackets are generally similar to ¾ length sleeves (i.e. sleeves that come to a wearer’s elbows), but instead of forming around the arms, they are open via an elongated slit sown or attached to waist panel at the hip of the wearer. Other embodiments comprise inclusion of a hood or other type of head and neck covering, and a front opening with a securing mechanism (i.e. zipper, or the like). The subject nursing cover/jacket can be worn in a stylish manner while providing a discrete cover for a mother during nursing. The nursing cover/jacket provides the ability for a mother to effortlessly breast feed in a discrete manner while providing a hip, stylish, and comfortable jacket.

[0025] In operation, a mother wears whatever shirt she wants to wear under the subject nursing garment, including nursing shirts/blouses or dresses, or even regular non-nursing shirts/blouses or dresses. When it is time to nurse the baby, she just slips the baby in through the elongated slits or pulls the nursing cover over the baby. The baby essentially disappears within the nursing cover without drawing attention of onlookers. Specific advantages of the subject nursing cover include, inter alia, side elongated slits that allow manipulation for placement of an infant there through that allow the baby to be placed inside the cover and allow the mother to readily switch sides for feeding. The elongated side plackets provide a depth of ~½ inches that function to provide coverage of the elongated slit when the cover is being worn and when an infant is nursing, thus preventing visibility of the breast, infant, and or chest of the mother.

[0026] Advantageously, the nursing cover is uniquely constructed to provide an attractive nursing garment that covers a mother while discreetly nursing a baby. It imparts style and comfort, and protects the baby from exposure to inclement weather.

[0027] Illustrations of an embodiment of the nursing garment are shown in FIGS. 1-5. Specifically: FIG. 1 illustrates a front top plane view; FIG. 2 illustrates a back plane view; FIG. 3 illustrates a cross-sectional side view; FIG. 4 illustrates a side view with the nursing garment being worn and a
side shown in the open configuration; FIG. 5 illustrates a view of the nursing garment being worn with an infant placed inside the jacket.

[0028] Referring to FIGS. 1-5, the nursing garment, shown generally at 10, has a front panel 11, a back panel 12, and a waist panel 13. Front panel 11 and back panel 12 converge at shoulder region 14. Front panel 11 and back panel 12 include side portions 11a, 12a and 11b, 12b running parallel forming elongated side plate 15a, 15b preferably on each side of the nursing garment 10 with elongated slits 15a', 15b'. These elongated side plates 15a, 15b are generally similar to ¼ length sleeves, but instead of forming around the arms, they are open via elongated slit 15a', 15b' sewn or attached to waist panel 13 at the hip of the wearer. In visual appearance, the elongated side plates 15a, 15b appear as bat wings. Alternatively, the nursing garment includes a hood 16. Front panel 11 also preferably includes a front opening 17 splitting front panel 11 generally into two parallel minor panels 11' and 11". Securing mechanism 18 is preferably integrated within front opening 17 for mating closure of the two parallel minor panels 11' and 11" of front panel 11 in order to close the nursing garment on a wearer. Preferably securing mechanism 18 is a zipper. Mechanism 18 may be a number of securing mechanisms, including hook and loop fasteners (VELCRO®), snaps, clasps, or other known fastening mechanisms utilized in clothing or jacket/coat articles.

[0029] Preferably, both elongated side plate 15a and 15b are provided with the elongated slits 15a', 15b'. Elongated slit 15a', 15b' preferably each run from the waist panel 13 at point 18 substantially up to and terminating at shoulder region 14. In this manner, the elongated slit 15a', 15b' and elongated side plate 15a, 15b can be opened very wide (as shown in FIG. 4) for easily slipping an infant within the nursing garment 10 for nursing (as shown in FIG. 5). Broad maneuverability of the elongated slit 15a', 15b' allows for significant manipulation for placement of the infant under the front panel 11, while at the same time the elongated side plate 15a, 15b allow for extra material of a depth x (see FIG. 1) to provide coverage and privacy so as to mitigate unwanted openings in the slit. This depth x may range from 0.1-6 inches. Preferably, the depth x ranges from 0.2-1.5 inches. Most preferably, the depth x ranges from 0.5-0.75 inches.

[0030] Note that although in the figure the elongated slits 15a', 15b' extend from the waist panel 13 all the way to the top of or entirely along the elongated side plate 15a, 15b, alternatively, the elongated slits 15a', 15b' have a length ranging between about 2 inches to about 12 inches extending downward from the elongated side plate terminating at the waist panel 13 so the slits are adapted to receive an infant there through (as generally shown in the figure). In this manner, the slits 15a', 15b' provide maximum opening capability and access for insertion of the infant. Alternatively, elongated slits 15a', 15b' may have a length ranging between about 3 inches to about 6 inches extending downward from the elongated side plates 15a, 15b terminating at a point above the waist panel 13 so that the slits are adapted to receive an infant there through.

[0031] The elongated slits 15a', 15b' include rim 30 that may further include a closure mechanism integrated therein for securely opening and closing said elongated slits. The closure mechanism may be mating hook and loop fasteners, such as that sold under the trade name VELCRO, on each rim 30; or may include snaps or the like. Alternatively, rim 30 may include a channel therein housing a drawstring having the two ends exposed at the waist panel 13 of the garment so that after the baby is inserted through the waist panel 13 of the garment, the drawstring may simply be pulled and the slit closed; in turn, the rims are merely pulled open to expose the draw string and open the slits 15a', 15b' (i.e. a drawstring as used in a hood construct is contemplated).

[0032] In operation, a mother wears whatever shirt she wants to wear under her cover. When it is time to nurse the baby, she simply slips the baby in through the elongated slits or pulls the cover over the baby. The baby essentially disappears within the jacket without drawing attention of onlookers. Because the slits 15a', 15b' are located on the side of the garment—as opposed to the front or bottom of the garment—the infant is capable of being pulled inside the garment and completely covered, and the waist panel 13/band (preferably an elastic band) sits securely on the mother’s wrist or hips so that the garment cannot be blown or pulled open in the front and expose the mother and infant. The combination side insertion of the infant through the slits 15a', 15b' and the waist panel 13 provide extra warmth and comfort to the infant as there are no drafts from under the infant as the waist band prevents air flow upward. While at the same time, the slits 15a', 15b' being located on the sides of the garment with extra material via the placackets provides extra warmth to the infant and prevents drafts from entering from the front and sides of the garment.

[0033] Specific advantageous of the subject nursing garment include: (i) allows a mother to wear the nursing garment as a discrete article of clothing that does not connote nursing wear; (ii) elongated slits on the side of the nursing garment allow manipulation for placement of an infant through the slits into the nursing garment; (iii) due to the elongated slits, the mother can readily switch sides for feeding because her hands are free to turn the baby around owing to the open sleeves/elongated slits; (iv) elongated side placackets that provide a depth of ~¼ inches that function to provide coverage of the elongated slit when the nursing garment is being worn and when an infant is nursing, thus preventing visibility of the breast, infant, and or chest of the mother; (v) front opening allows the mother to look down at the baby while the infant is nursing; (vi) the infant cannot pull the jacket away, so advantageously the mother does not have to be concerned with being exposed by the infant.

[0034] The nursing garment can be composed of a plethora of materials and include a plethora of designs and colors. The nursing garment can be constructed of different sizes, small, medium, large, extra large, or as a one-size-fits-all sizing. Note that the hood is optional. However, advantages of the hood include keeping hair dry during inclement weather and keeping the nursing infant warm. Few moms have any free arms to carry an umbrella or hat, so the hood serves the purpose of protection against rain water and cold air. The hood is optional. Instead of a hood, or in conjunction therewith, the nursing garment may include a collar composed of fur, corduroy materials, silk, linen, knitted fabric and the like. Also, the nursing garment may include a lining, which may be fixedly attached or removable. These and other modifications may be contemplated without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0035] Having described the preferred embodiments of the present invention with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to
those precise embodiments, but that various changes, modifications, and adaptations may be effected therein by one skilled in the art without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention as defined by the subjoined claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A nursing garment appointed to be worn by a breastfeeding female comprising:
   a. a front panel, back panel, waist panel, and side portions;
   b. at least one elongated side placket integrated within at least one of said side portions;
   c. each elongated side placket extending along substantially an entire length of each of said side portions;
   d. at least one elongated slit integrated within at least one of said elongated side plackets; and
   e. each elongated slit extending along substantially an entire length of each of said side plackets.

2. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said elongated side plackets are substantially ¾ length sleeves terminating at a sleeve cuff, and wherein said elongated slits extend from a sleeve cuff to said waist panel.

3. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said elongated side plackets terminate at sleeve cuffs, and wherein said elongated slits extend from a sleeve cuff to said waist panel.

4. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said elongated slits extend from said waist panel substantially up to and terminating at a shoulder region/top of said elongated side plackets.

5. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said elongated slits have a length ranging between about 2 inches to about 12 inches, said slits extending downward from said elongated side plackets and terminating substantially at said waist panel so that said slits are adapted to receive an infant there through.

6. A nursing garment as recited by claim 5, wherein said elongated slits have a length ranging between about 3 inches to about 6 inches, said elongated slits extending downward from said elongated side plackets and terminating at a point above said waist panel so that said slits are adapted to receive an infant there through.

7. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said elongated slits include a rim having a closure mechanism integrated therein for opening and closing said elongated slits.

8. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said elongated side plackets have extra material extending from said elongated slits toward said front panel forming a material depth ranging from about 0.1 to 6 inches.

9. A nursing garment as recited by claim 8, wherein said material depth ranges from about 0.2 to about 1.5 inches.

10. A nursing garment as recited by claim 8, wherein said material depth ranges from about 0.5 to about 0.75 inches.

11. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said back panel includes a hood portion.

12. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1 comprising a collar portion.

13. A nursing garment as recited by claim 12, wherein said collar portion is removable.

14. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein said front panel is divided into two sections separated by a front opening, and wherein said front opening comprises a closing or securing mechanism.

15. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1 comprising an inner lining.

16. A nursing garment as recited by claim 15, wherein said inner lining is removable.

17. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein at least one elongated side placket is integrated within each of said side portions.

18. A nursing garment as recited by claim 1, wherein at least one elongated slit is integrated within each of said elongated side plackets.

19. A method of manufacturing a nursing garment appointed to be worn by a breastfeeding female, the method comprising the steps of:
   a. forming said nursing garment having a front panel, back panel, waist panel, and side portions;
   b. forming at least one elongated side placket integrated within at least one of said side portions;
   c. extending said elongated side plackets substantially along an entire length of each of said side portions;
   d. forming at least one elongated slit integrated within at least one of said elongated side plackets; and
   e. said elongated slits extending substantially along an entire length of each of said side plackets.

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