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(54) **CONVERTIBLE MATERNITY GARMENT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A convertible maternity garment that includes a first garment configured and arranged as a maternity garment to be worn by a woman during her maternity term and a second garment constructed from a portion of the first garment to provide a garment having a configuration for non-maternity use, where a removable portion is provided and where a first waistband and an alternate waistband are provided and configured so that both waistbands are functional waistbands that may be present on the garment simultaneously, but are selectively functional.

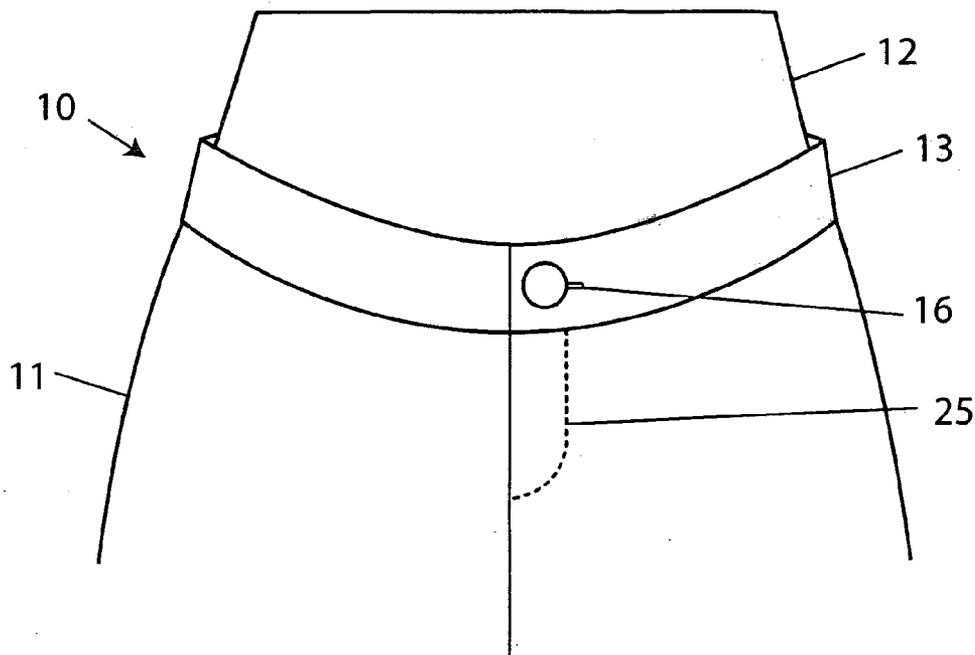


FIG. 1

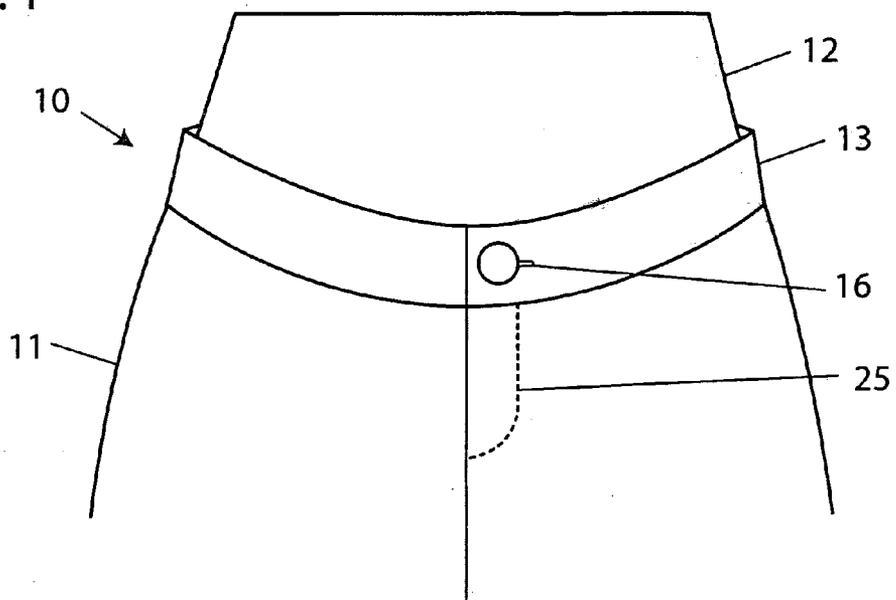


FIG. 2

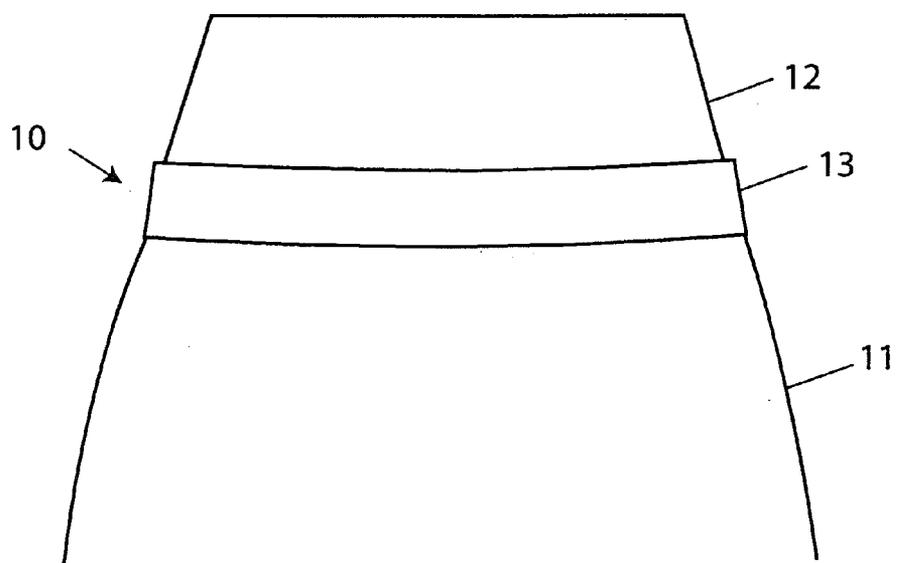


FIG. 3

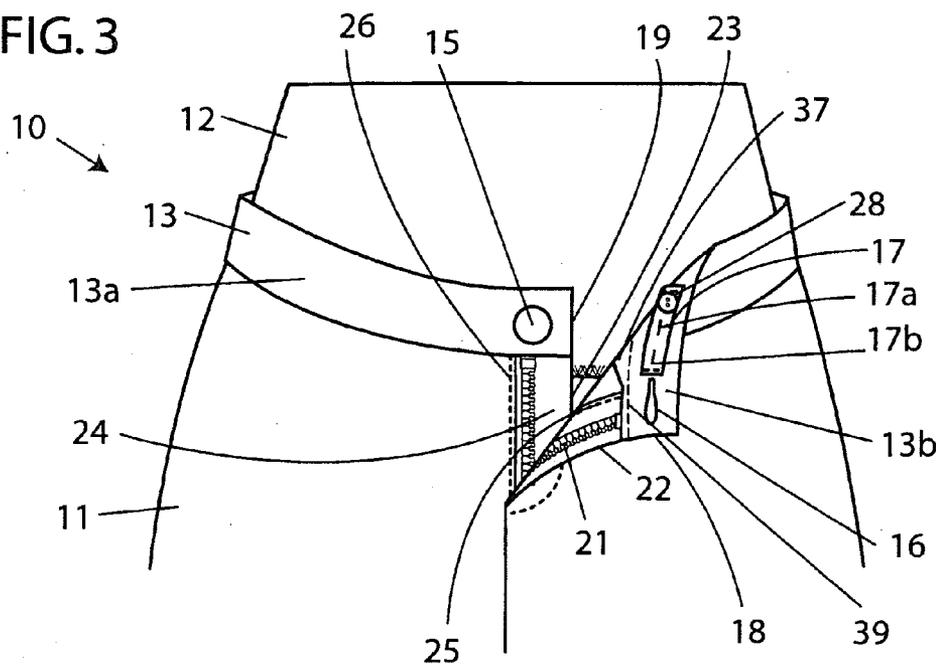


FIG. 4

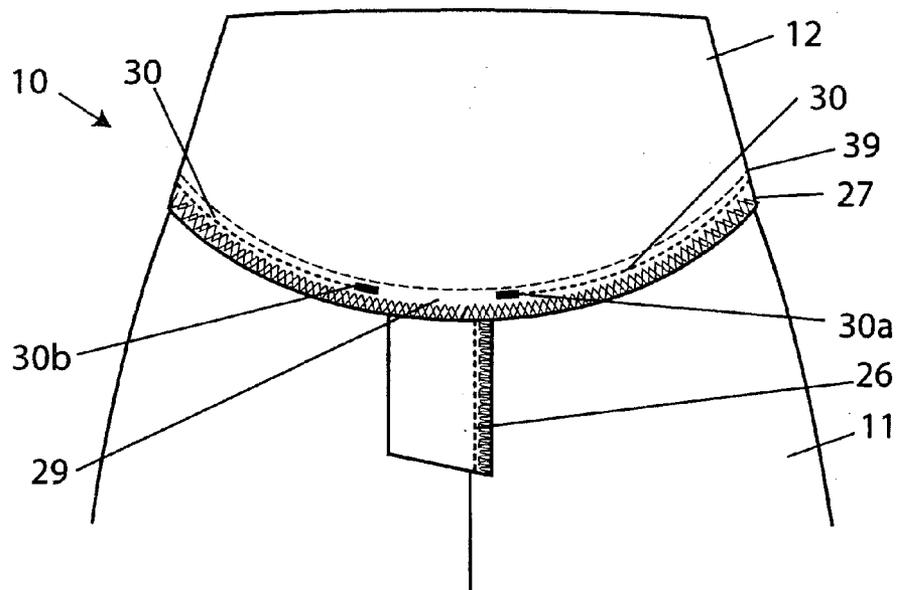


FIG. 5

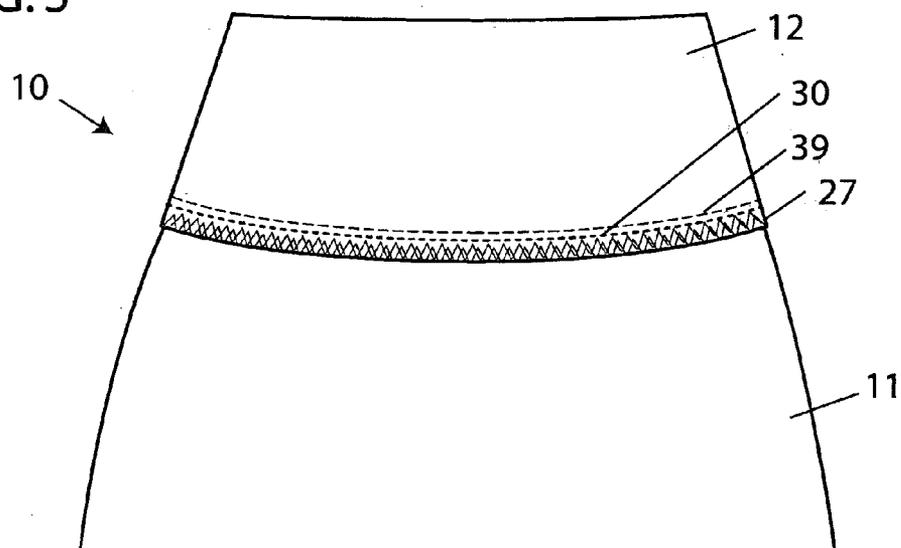


FIG. 6

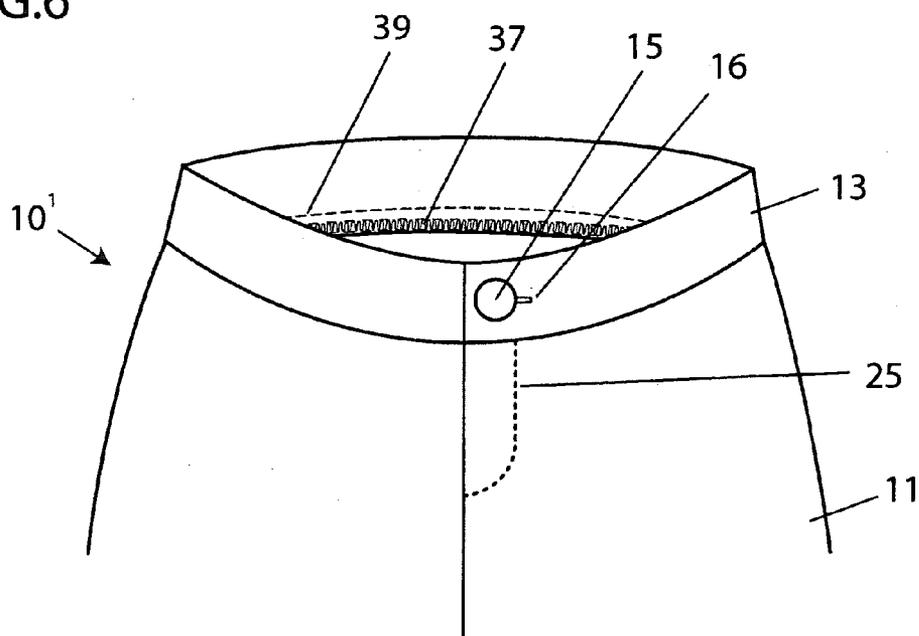


FIG. 7

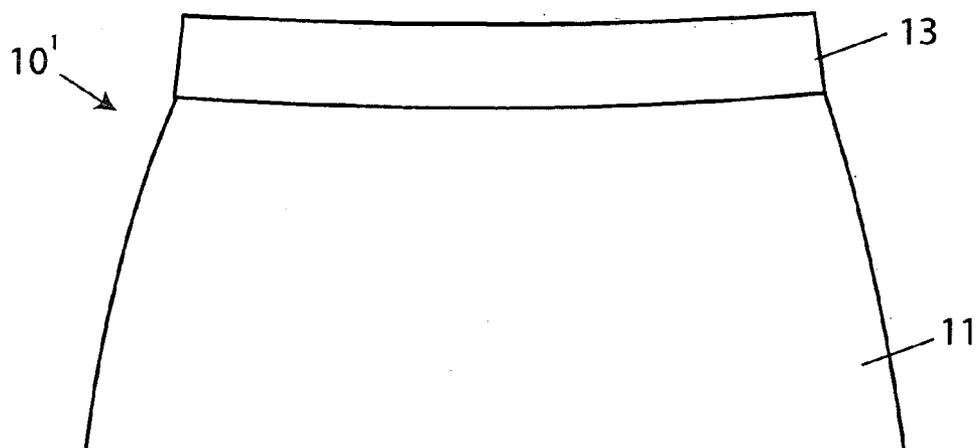


FIG. 8

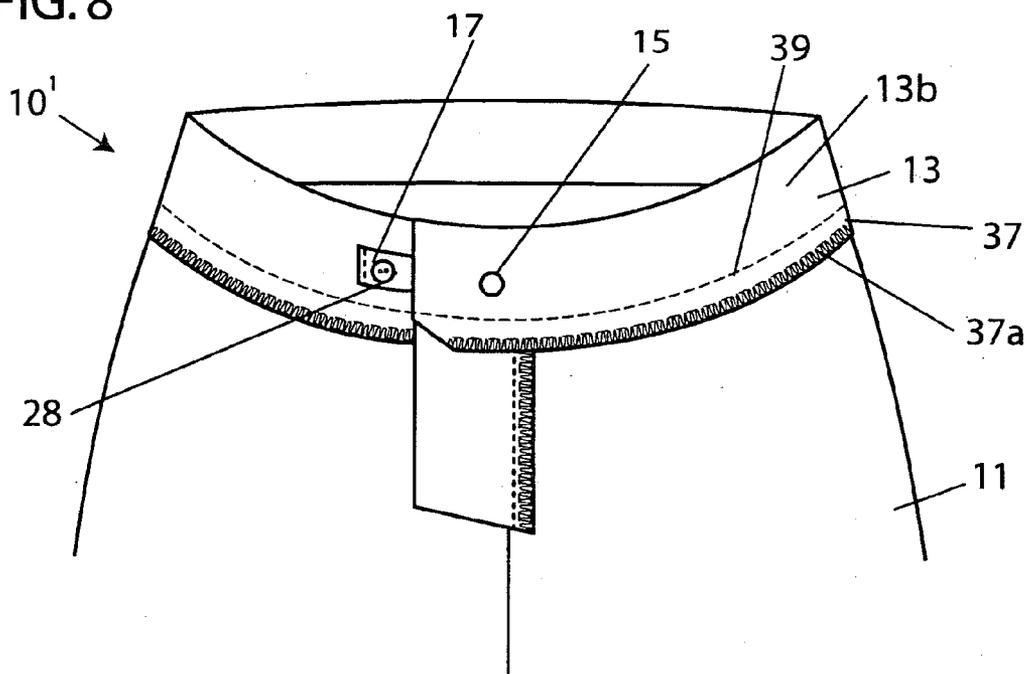


FIG. 9

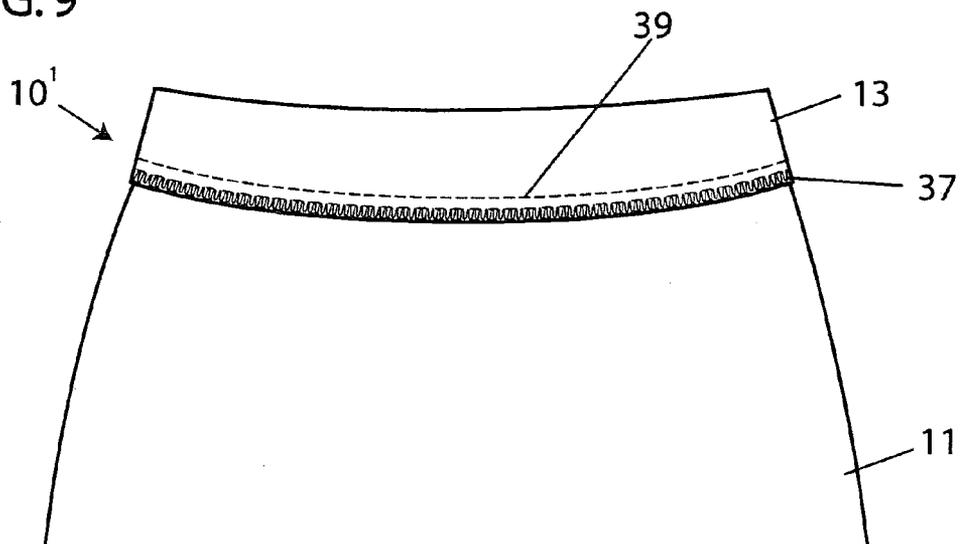


FIG. 10

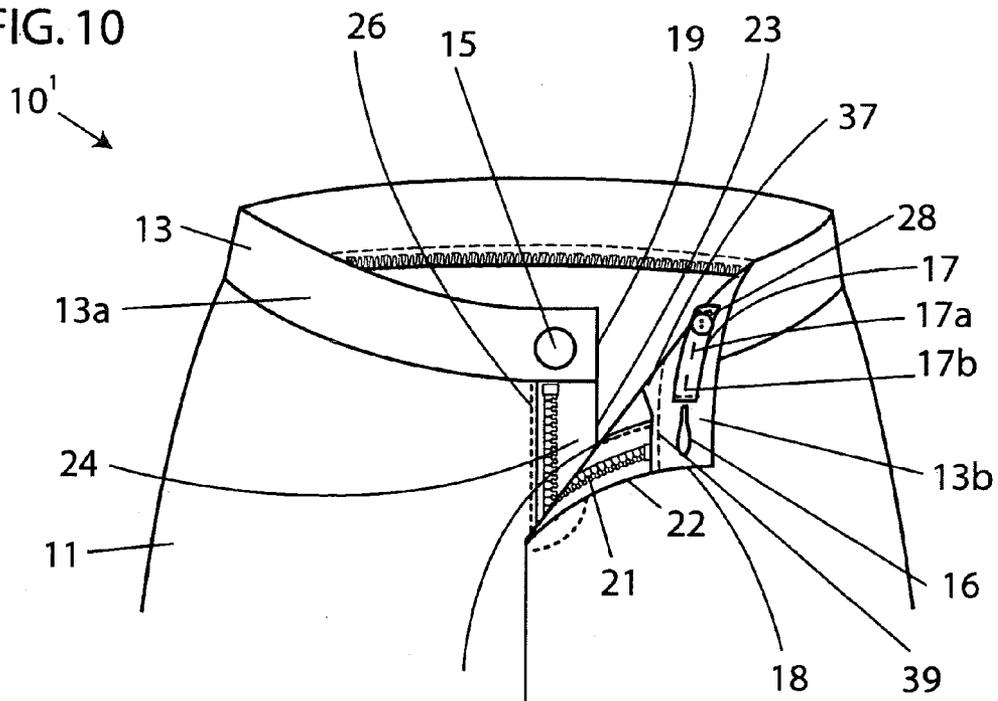
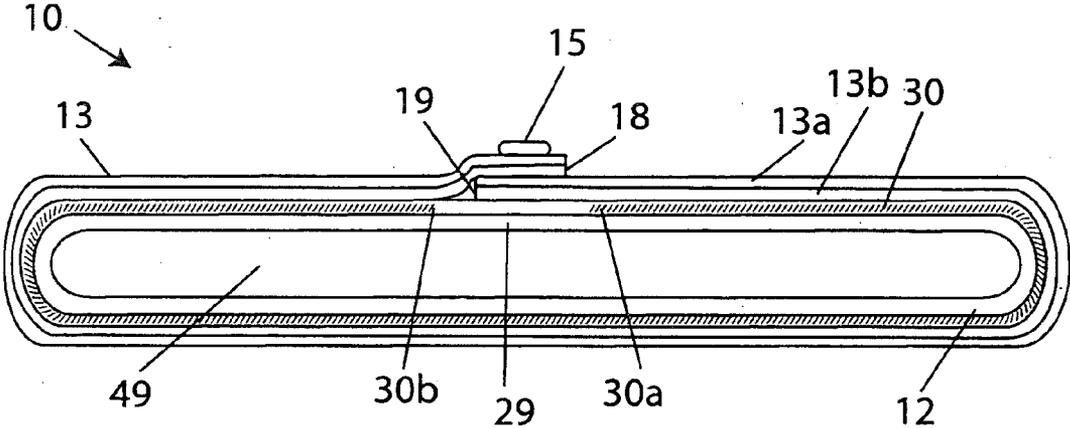


FIG. 11



CONVERTIBLE MATERNITY GARMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to the field of garments, and more particularly convertible maternity garments.

[0003] 2. Brief Description of the Related Art

[0004] Maternity clothing is generally purchased and worn by women during the term of their pregnancies. A number of different garments must be purchased and worn over the maternity term, which generally lasts about nine months. Though a woman may use non-maternity clothing during the initial stages of her pregnancy, as the woman's body changes, namely, as the fetus develops and grows, special clothing to conform to the woman's body is needed. The maternity clothing generally provides comfort for the woman wearing it. As a woman's body changes during the pregnancy term, a woman may need to change sizes of maternity clothing to accommodate her shape. Maternity clothing generally is costly, and, therefore, a woman may be required to purchase a number of wardrobes, in different sizes, over the term of her pregnancy.

[0005] In addition to the cost of the clothing that must be purchased to accommodate sizes as the women's shape changes during her pregnancy, the maternity clothing is designed to be suitable for the period of the pregnancy term. Therefore, after the birth of the child, and, in particular, when a women's body returns to a post-maternity shape, the maternity clothing is no longer used. Many women store the maternity clothing for subsequent maternity periods, such as when having another child. However, the maternity clothing is not used by women after their pregnancy since the maternity clothing is generally much larger and is configured differently than the clothing that women require after their pregnancy term.

[0006] Once the maternity clothing is no longer needed after the pregnancy term and after the potential post-maternity period (when some maternity clothing still may be usable), women are no longer able to use for the maternity clothing. This practice of purchasing a special maternity wardrobe or garments for limited use, results in increased expenses for pregnant women, since, they must buy multiple wardrobes that include clothing that a woman may only wear for a short duration, such as, for example, a few weeks or months.

[0007] A need exists for a maternity garment that provides both comfort and ease of use during both maternity periods and pre or post maternity periods.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] A convertible garment is provided that is configurable to allow a woman to use the garment as a maternity garment during pregnancy and as a non-maternity garment during pre or post pregnancy periods.

[0009] According to preferred embodiments, a garment is provided configured, for example, as pants, skirt, or shorts, and includes a removable maternity panel that functions for maternity use when the garment is worn by a woman during her pregnancy, and is adaptable for fully functional wear after pregnancy.

[0010] According to preferred embodiments, the garment may be constructed to form a first garment which includes a

maternity panel portion connected to a bottom portion. The bottom portion may, for example, include bottoms, namely pants, skirt, shorts.

[0011] According to a preferred embodiment, the garment may include a removable maternity panel that is attached by stitching on the inside lower waistband of a bottom, for example pants, skirt and/or shorts. The garment may be configured so that the removable maternity panel may be reinstalled so that the garment may be subsequently used as a maternity garment, even after it has been converted to a non-maternity garment.

[0012] The bottom has a fully functional waistband closure and zipper. After the baby is born, the woman removes the maternity panel and has a fully functional bottom to wear as regular bottoms. These initially maternity bottoms are worn with maternity panel during pregnancy and removed after baby is born for regular wear of bottoms.

[0013] According to preferred embodiment of the invention, a garment preferably is constructed to provide a comfortable bottom, such as, for example, a skirt, short or pant, to wear during pregnancy, and also to provide a garment that may be worn by a woman long after the baby is born.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

[0014] FIG. 1 is front elevation view of a first embodiment of my invention illustrating a garment bottom with an attached maternity band.

[0015] FIG. 2 is a rear elevation view of the garment of FIG. 1.

[0016] FIG. 3 is a front elevation view of the garment shown in FIG. 1, illustrated showing the opening of the garment.

[0017] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the garment shown in FIG. 1, looking at the inside portion of the front of the garment as viewed from the inside of the garment.

[0018] FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of the garment shown in FIG. 1, looking at the inside portion of the rear of the garment as viewed from the inside of the garment.

[0019] FIG. 6 is a front elevation view of the garment of FIG. 1, shown with the waistband detached.

[0020] FIG. 7 is a rear elevation view of the garment of FIG. 1 shown with the waistband detached.

[0021] FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of the garment shown in FIG. 6, looking at the inside portion of the front of the garment as viewed from the inside of the garment, and being shown with the waistband detached.

[0022] FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view of the garment shown in FIG. 6, looking at the inside portion of the rear of the garment as viewed from the inside of the garment, and being shown with the waistband detached.

[0023] FIG. 10 is an enlarged front view of the garment of the garment shown in FIG. 6, illustrated showing the opening of the garment.

[0024] FIG. 11 is a top plan view of the garment of FIG. 1, shown with the maternity band installed on the garment bottom.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0025] Referring to FIG. 1, there is illustrated a preferred embodiment of a convertible maternity garment 10, including a bottom 11 which is configured having a maternity band 12

which is attached to the garment bottom 11. The maternity band 12 is shown attached to the garment bottom 11 and is connected at the interior of the garment 10 as shown by the rear sectional view of FIG. 4 and the top plan view of FIG. 11. The garment bottom 11 preferably is provided having an alternate waistband 13 which is configured and arranged as part of the garment bottom 11. The alternate waistband 13, according to preferred embodiments, comprises a functioning waistband 13 that may be used with a fastening member, such as, for example, the button 15 shown in connection with the button hole 16 through which the button 15, when fastened may pass. As illustrated, the button hole 16 may be formed on the alternate waistband 13 using suitable button hole making methods, such as, for example, known sewing techniques. The maternity band 12 is shown in FIG. 1 situated behind the zone where the first end 18 and second end 19 of the alternate waistband 13 come together (see FIG. 3).

[0026] According to the embodiment illustrated in the drawing figures, a zipper fly 21 is provided and preferably is attached to the garment bottom 11 at the opening edges 22, 23 surrounding the fly opening 24. The zipper fly 21 preferably is attached by suitable stitching methods, such as with the stitching 25, 26 or other suitable alternate attachment means.

[0027] According to a preferred embodiment, a secondary fastening component 17 is utilized to provide an adjustable fastening feature that may be used to secure the first end 18 of the alternate waistband 13 to the other side or second end 19 of the waistband 13. The adjustable fastening component 17 preferably may be formed from an elastic member that may be stretched to engage the button 15. As illustrated in FIGS. 3, 8 and 10, the adjustable fastening member 17 preferably has a plurality of alternate button hole positioning options provided by the button holes 17a, 17b, and is shown held on the alternate waistband 13 with a fastening member, such as, for example, the button 19.

[0028] According to a preferred embodiment, the waistband 12 may be constructed from known commercially available materials, including, for example, materials which are flexible and can give to accommodate the wearer's shape. Preferably, a flexible material that may be film yet substantially stretchable material, such as, for example, commercially available firmly-knit or elastic may be used to construct the maternity band 12. The maternity band 12 may be constructed from a single layer of fabric, or alternatively, multiple layers of material may be used. When using multiple layers, the layers preferably are situated so that the maternity band 12 is not awkward, but rather, may still be comfortable to wear. Examples of multilayer configurations include bonding of fabric layer, such as, for example, with a fabric adhesive, sewing, or other suitable attachment mechanisms.

[0029] The rear of the garment 10 is shown in FIG. 2 where the alternate waistband 13 is disposed about the garment 10 and the garment bottom 11 is shown below the alternate waistband 13. The maternity band 12 generally forms an opening 49 at the top of the garment 10 (FIG. 11) that accommodates a wearer's torso, or in other words, the pregnant woman's abdomen or belly. According to preferred embodiments, the maternity band 12 is attached on the interior of the garment 10 and is located behind the alternate waistband 13. Preferably, as best illustrated in FIG. 3, the maternity band 12 is attached at a location along the interior of the garment 10 below the alternate waistband 13. The maternity band 12 is shown having an edge portion 27 at its perimeter which preferably comprises stitching or other edge finish so that the edge

remains soft and/or comfortable for the wearer when the garment 10 is worn. The maternity band 12 preferably is removably attached to the garment bottom 11 in the area proximate to the edge portion 27. The maternity band 12 preferably includes an attachment zone where the maternity band 12 attaches to the garment bottom 11. The maternity band 12 is shown being attached on the inside of the garment 10. A releasable securing component is provided to secure the maternity band 12 to the garment bottom 11. According to a preferred embodiment, the releasable securing component is illustrated comprising stitching 30, which secures the maternity band 12 to the waistband of the garment 10. Though illustrated as stitching, the releasable securing component may, for example, comprise alternative fastening elements, such as, for example, zippers, snaps or other suitable members. The stitching 30 (or of the fastening component used) preferably is applied in a manner that permits removal thereof without damage to the garment 10 or maternity band 12 so that the maternity band 12 may be reinstalled if desired.

[0030] The garment 10 preferably is convertible from a maternity garment 10 (see FIGS. 1 through 5) to a non-maternity garment 10' (see FIGS. 6 through 10). According to a preferred embodiment, the conversion may be carried out by removing the maternity band 12 to convert the alternate waistband 13 to the waistband forming a top of the garment 10. The non-maternity garment 10' is configured to utilize the alternate waistband 13, which preferably may be formed from two layers and may be secured with stitching 39, as shown in FIG. 8. The alternate waistband stitching 39 also is shown in FIG. 4 and underlies the maternity band 12 (but in the embodiment illustrated would not be visible to the user in the view of FIG. 4).

[0031] A preferred method for accomplishing the conversion is achieved by releasing or unfastening the stitching 30 shown connecting the maternity band 12 to the garment bottom 11. According to a preferred configuration, as best shown in FIGS. 4 and 11, the stitching 30 may terminate prior to the fly area or fly opening 24, where the stitching 30 has a first terminal end 30a and second terminal end 30b defining an expansion zone 29 between the terminal ends 30a, 30b so that the portion of the maternity band 12 proximate to the fly opening 24 may be stretchable as needed by the wearer. For example, when the adjustable fastening component 17 is utilized, the free zone or expansion zone 29 may stretch as needed. The stitching 30 securing the maternity band 12 to the garment 10 preferably is provided in a configuration that permits the maternity band 12 to be open or unattached over the fly opening area 24 of the waistband 13 and bottom 11.

[0032] The garment 10 is configured so that the removal of the maternity band 12 provides the converted garment 10' with comfort features. According to a preferred embodiment, the resultant garment 10' (FIG. 6) shows the interior of the garment 10' having a comfort zone which is formed by the alternate waistband 13 which is shown layered with the maternity band 12 in FIG. 11). Preferably, the maternity band 12 is detachable from the garment bottom 11. Referring to FIG. 8, where the garment 10' is shown with the maternity band 12 detached, the edge portion 37 of the waistband is also shown, and, according to a preferred embodiment, has a terminal perimeter portion 37a.

[0033] As discussed herein, a preferred connection mechanism that may be used to attach the waistband 12 to the bottom 11 may comprise stitching 30, which may be broken away or cut to release the upper portion of the waistband 12

from the garment **10**. As illustrated in FIGS. **6** and **7**, the garment **10** has been converted to a non-maternity garment **10'**. The garment bottom **11** preferably is configured so that it may retain its appearance in both the maternity configuration of the garment **10** and the non-maternity configuration **10'**. According to a preferred configuration, as shown in FIG. **11**, the alternate waistband **13** of the garment **10** is shown having a multilayer construction, including an interior layer **13b** and an exterior layer **13a**. The maternity band **12** is shown attached to the interior layer **13b** of the alternate waistband **13**. Preferably, the waistband **13** is configured with an extra seam allowance to accommodate the attachment of the maternity band **12**. The maternity band **12** preferably is removably connected to the alternate waistband **13** so that the removal of the maternity band **12** may be accomplished in a manner that maintains the integrity of the alternate waistband **13**. According to preferred embodiments, the releasable fastening component and maternity band **12** preferably are configured to connect to the garment bottom **11** in a manner that allows the maternity band **12** to be removed so that it may be selectively reinstalled, as desired.

[0034] The convertible maternity garment **10** is configured as described and illustrated, having a first condition that provides a first garment configured and arranged to be worn by a woman during her maternity term. The invention also provides a second garment **10'** which is configured as a non-maternity garment and which preferably may be constructed from a portion of the first garment **10** to provide a garment having a configuration for non-maternity use. The non-maternity garment **10'** is configured attached to at least a portion of said first garment and, according to preferred embodiments, comprises the maternity garment. The maternity garment **10** preferably includes at least a portion that is detachable therefrom, so that the user may form a second garment. According to preferred embodiments, the garment **10** of the invention includes a first band comprising the maternity band **12** and an alternate waistband **13**. The garment **10** is constructed and configured so that the maternity band **12** functions as a waistband for a maternity garment, and the waistband **13** functions as waistband for the non-maternity configured garment. According to a preferred embodiment, the maternity band **12** is arranged to be functional when the garment **10** is used in the first maternity configuration, and the alternate waistband **13** is functional when the garment is used in a non-maternity or second configuration. The alternate waistband **13** preferably is configured to resemble a waistband and also to remain as part of the maternity garment without the need for the alternate waistband **13** to cinch the waist. Rather, the maternity band **12** may be used to support the convertible maternity garment **10** on the body of the wearer. The alternate waistband **13** may be adjusted with the use of an adjustable fastening component **17**. The adjustable fastening component **17** may be utilized to adjust the tension of the garment **10** at the location where the button **15** and button hole **16** are located. The maternity band **12** therefore may be used according to the preferred embodiment when the garment **10** is configured as a maternity garment. Accordingly, the alternate waistband **13** may be provided but may be disabled as a functional waistband when the maternity band **12** is in use, and may be used to function as the garment waistband when the maternity band **12** is detached.

[0035] While the invention has been described with reference to specific embodiments, the description is illustrative and is not to be construed as limiting the scope of the inven-

tion. Various modifications and changes may occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention described herein and as defined by the appended claims. For example, though the garment **10** may look as illustrated as a skirt, the garment may be configured as a pair of pants, shorts, or other items of apparel according to the invention.

1. A convertible maternity garment comprising a first garment configured and arranged as a maternity garment to be worn by a woman during her maternity term; said garment being convertible from a maternity garment to a non-maternity garment, wherein said non-maternity garment is constructed from a portion of said maternity garment to provide a garment having a configuration for non-maternity use;

wherein said garment includes at least a portion that is detachable therefrom such that when said portion is detached from said garment a non-maternity garment is formed;

the garment having a stretchable maternity band for holding the convertible maternity garment on the body of a wearer when the convertible maternity garment is configured as a maternity garment, and an alternate waistband for holding the convertible maternity garment on the body of a wearer when the convertible maternity garment is configured as a non-maternity garment;

wherein said alternate waistband has an upper edge, wherein said maternity band extends below said alternate waistband upper edge, said alternate waistband having an attachment zone and a free zone,

wherein an opening is provided in the front of said garment, said opening spanning from the upper edge of said alternate waistband to a location below said alternate waistband,

wherein at least a portion of said maternity band spans across said opening,

wherein said maternity band is attached along said attachment zone of said alternate waistband, and wherein said maternity band is free from attachment at said alternate waistband free zone.

2-7. (canceled)

8. The garment of claim **7**, including a configurable member that provides alternate engaging for the alternate waistband when the maternity band is present and when the garment is configured as a maternity garment.

9. The garment of claim **8**, wherein the configurable member comprises an elastic member.

10. The garment of claim **9**, wherein the configurable member is configured to allow the alternate waistband to remain engageable when the garment is configured in a second configuration for use as a non-maternity garment.

11. The garment of claim **9**, wherein said alternate waistband has a first end and a second end, with a first portion at said first end and a second portion at said second end, wherein the configurable member has a first end that is free and a second end that is attached to the alternate waistband second portion, wherein said configurable member first end is releasably connectable to said alternate waistband first portion.

12-13. (canceled)

14. The garment of claim **13**, wherein said garment has a top and a bottom, wherein said alternate waistband is formed on said garment bottom, said garment bottom having an interior, wherein the maternity band is attached at an attachment location within the interior of said garment bottom.

15. The garment of claim 1, wherein said garment has a top and a bottom, wherein said alternate waistband is formed on said garment bottom, and wherein said garment bottom is configured as pants, a skirt or shorts.

16. The garment of claim 15, wherein said maternity band is attached to said garment bottom with stitching.

17. The garment of claim 1, wherein said maternity band is removably attached to the bottom with a releasable fastening component.

18. (canceled)

19. The convertible maternity garment of claim 1, wherein a detachable securing means is provided for securing said maternity band to said garment and for facilitating the selective detachment of the maternity band from said garment.

20. A method for converting a garment designed for use as a maternity garment and a non-maternity garment from a maternity garment to a non-maternity garment, including:

providing a garment comprised of a first garment configured and arranged as a maternity garment to be worn by a woman during her maternity term, said garment being convertible from a maternity garment to a non-maternity garment, wherein said non-maternity garment is constructed from a portion of the maternity garment, and

wherein the garment comprises a maternity band and an alternate waistband configured and arranged so that both said maternity band and said alternate waistband are functional bands that are present on the garment simultaneously, wherein said first waistband and said alternate waistband are selectively functional based on the configuration of said garment; converting said garment from

a maternity garment to a non-maternity garment by removing a removable portion of said garment,

wherein converting comprises detaching from said garment said maternity band to provide non-maternity garment having a configuration for use as a non-maternity garment; and wherein said alternate waistband has an upper edge, wherein said maternity band extends below said alternate waistband upper edge, said alternate waistband having an attachment zone and a free zone, wherein an opening is provided in the front of said garment, said opening spanning from the upper edge of said alternate waistband to a location below said alternate waistband,

wherein at least a portion of said maternity band spans across said opening;

wherein said alternate waistband has an inside layer that faces a wearer, a first end portion and a second end portion;

and wherein a configurable member is provided, and wherein the method further includes connecting first end portion with the second end portion of the alternate waistband with the configurable member, so that said first end and said second end of the alternate waistband remain connected with said configurable member while at least a portion of said maternity band spans across said opening; and

detaching from said first garment said maternity band to provide a non-maternity garment having a configuration for use as a non-maternity garment.

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