Our Story: Stitched by Volunteers Worldwide

Pretty Pockets ™

Perhaps you know someone who had surgery and was left to recover with unsightly and uncomfortable dangling drains?

That's what happened to me.

In March 2011, I awoke from an anesthesia-induced sleep to find myself flanked by four drains, two on each side of my upper body, following a bilateral mastectomy. Pinned inside my hospital gown, the drains were heavy and uncomfortable against raw skin. So, my partner ingeniously ripped apart a pair of our youngest daughter's flannel pajama bottoms to wrap around each bulb. And, I wore soft, fuzzy drain-bulb covers for the duration of my recovery.

A few days after surgery, I met another mastectomy patient, who carried her bulbs in a brown paper bag pinned to her waistband. We agreed it was nerve wracking and embarrassing to corral those dangling drains. At that moment, the need and concept for Pretty Pockets ™ fully materialized *as -- a discreet and spirited way to secure post-surgical drains*. Our family began pocket production at home.

Born from a pair of children's flannel pajama legs, satin ribbon, safety pins and handmade gift tags in 2011, Pretty Pockets ™ has received rave reviews from clinic staff, nurses, doctors and –most importantly – from breast cancer patients, who describe pockets as 'practical and meaningful gifts'. In 2014, public television host, Nancy Zieman, featured Pretty Pockets as a worthwhile giving project on her *Sewing with Nancy* show. To date, folks are sewing pockets in 46 states and 9 countries!!!

Perhaps you don't know that the need for pockets is staggering. My doctor treats more than 500 breast cancer patients a year with surgeries that result in temporary drain bulb placement. That's just one medical facility and one type of surgery!

If you have the time and talent, and want to make a BIG difference in the comfort and peace-of-mind of cancer patients, then volunteer to sew post-surgical drain pockets today!

Contact us at 410.256.4490 or classes@creativeblossoms.com.

---Maryanne Arthur
Pretty Pockets ™ Co-Originator

What are Surgical Drains?

Drains are vinyl tubes and bulbs, stitched at one end under the skin by a surgeon, that hang freely down about two feet from under each arm pit. Each drain bulb fills with excess fluid after major trauma, which is the body's natural way of healing its deepest wounds and the doctor's way of preventing lymphedema (swelling of the lymph system).

Nurses affix these drains, with safety pins, high inside hospital gowns to prevent the bulbs from hanging too freely and thereby ripping out side stitches.

Problem: The bulbs fill with fluid and pull down on garments, making clothes heavy, necks strained, and stress levels high.

Special Thanks to:

- **Annemarie Merow** for envisioning a creative solution to a quirky dilemma!
- **Judy Merow** for refining our sewing technique and spreading pocket-love!
- **Nancy Zieman** for featuring Pretty Pockets as a giving project on her public television show.
- **Breast Center staff & physicians at UMD St. Joseph Medical Center** for embracing pockets.
- **YOU** for volunteering time and talent to help with this worthwhile project!

How-To-Make Guide

Pretty Pockets ™

Using a regular sewing machine:

1. Purchase baby flannel in fun prints. Wash in unscented detergent. Fold material right sides together.
2. Cut pockets, using enclosed pattern as a guide.
3. Sew a double seam, ½" and $_{1/8}$" from edge, around the sides and bottom.
4. Turn material right side out. Turn top edge down 1"and top stitch ¼" from fold.
5. Turn under ¼" on the bottom of the top fold and top stitch. Finger press.
6. Pin tags with ribbon embellishment through the seam – one pin per pocket.
7. Deliver/send to your local Cancer Center or Creative Blossoms.
8. Repeat.

Using a serger:

1. Purchase baby flannel in fun prints. Wash in unscented detergent. Fold material right sides together.
2. Cut pockets, using enclosed pattern as a guide.
3. Serge across the top of the pocket. Place two pocket halves right sides together.
4. Leaving the top open, serge around the pocket raw edge. Turn material right side out.
5. Turn under 1" on the top and top stitch ¼" from the fold and ¼" from the serged edge. . Finger press.
6. Pin tags with ribbon embellishment through the seam – one pin per pocket.
7. Deliver/send to your local Cancer Center or Creative Blossoms.
8. Repeat.

Note about final sizes:

A final pocket design TOP opening should be no less than 6" in diameter (or 12" in circumference). Pocket length should be no less than 6.5" long at the center point.

In a Nutshell: Co-designed by Maryanne Arthur and Annemarie Merow in March 2011, Pretty Pockets ™ are FREE gifts for breast cancer patients, stitched by amazingly-talented volunteers. The pockets are a much-needed, discreet and spirited way to conceal surgical drain bulbs. Public Television host, Nancy Zieman, featured Pretty Pockets as a worthwhile giving project on her *Sewing with Nancy* show in 2014.

This pattern and written sewing instructions are guidelines intended for personal use only. Stealing, copying, modifying or selling the pattern or pockets for profit will bring bad karma. Thanks for honoring the terms of this creative giving project.

Thank you!!!

www.creativeblossoms.com : classes@creativeblossoms.com

Sewing Template

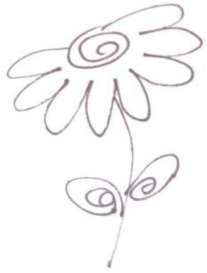
Pretty Pockets ™

7” minimum– **ORIGINAL** CUT FABRIC, UNSTITCHED WIDTH

8 ½” minimum– **ORIGINAL** CUT FABRIC, UNSTITCHED LENGTH

6” minimum opening – **FINAL** STITCHED POCKET WIDTH

6 ¾” minimum – **FINAL** STITCHED POCKET LENGTH



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* a discreet and spirited way to secure post-surgical drains

Handmade by Creative Blossoms volunteers as FREE gifts, exclusively for breast cancer patients

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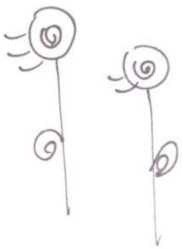
Originated in March 2011
FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY



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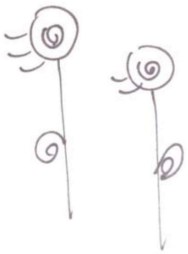

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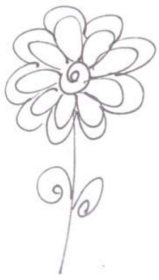

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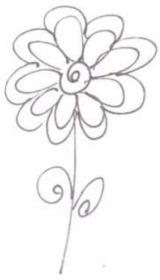

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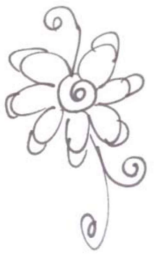

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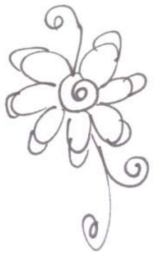

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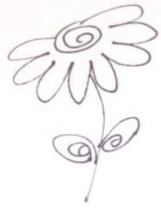

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