FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wear Ease designs the latest fashions with mastectomy patients in mind

BOISE, Idaho (Sept. 21, 2009) — One in eight U.S. women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and currently slightly more than half, 56 percent, undergo mastectomy. Few fashion options exist for those who don’t seek reconstructive surgery or postpone it until after their treatment and recovery — a condition the clothier Wear Ease (www.WearEase.com) seeks to remedy.

“Fighting breast cancer is a big enough challenge,” says Wear Ease owner Phyllis Keith. “We’re trying to help ensure women don’t also lose their self-esteem, dignity, and femininity.”

Wear Ease designs and markets post-surgery and mastectomy bras, camisoles, loungewear, and lingerie. According to several specialty boutiques, its clothing is in vogue.

“We started ordering their Dawn post-surgery camisole because it’s prettier than other brands, and they’re flying off the shelves,” says Michele Yett, a certified mastectomy fitter at Expressions Appearance Center at St. Jude Medical Center in Fullerton, Calif. “They’re great products — they come with fiber-filled breast forms and a pair of pouches for drain tubes and bulb syringes, plus they’re comfortable, they come in a variety of colors, and they’re very desirable in terms of femininity.”

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Pamela Ludwig, who owns Pretty in Pink Boutiques in Franklin and Nashville, Tenn., concurs. “The post-op camisole is so comfortable and stylish a lot of my patients wear them far beyond the post-op period,” Ludwig says. “Often they wear a black one as a fashion camisole under a black blouse.”

Retailers also say the Wear Ease line helps women feel whole. “They’re very up to date with fashion trends,” says Sheila Robertsdahl, a certified orthotic/mastectomy fitter and manager of the Just for Women boutique at MeritCare HealthCare Accessories in Fargo, N.D. “And with the way the pockets for the prostheses are designed, nobody can even tell it’s a pocketed mastectomy garment.”

Ludwig, a registered nurse who worked for 10 years in clinical oncology before opening Pretty in Pink in 2005, agrees, adding, “With off-the-shelf products like these available, women can achieve the look they want without having to undergo reconstructive surgery.” However, she says many patients undergoing breast reconstruction use Wear Ease products, too. “A lot of times reconstruction doesn’t give a woman the exact symmetrical look she wants,” she says, “so you can sometimes fix that with a bra or partial prosthesis.”

This month Wear Ease is introducing a brand-new line: the Alicia adjustable-strap camisole. “This beautiful camisole enables a woman who has undergone breast surgery to wear an alternative top just like she would have worn beforehand,” Keith says. “It is designed to accommodate her breast forms and does not require her to wear a special bra underneath.” Available in black, coral, kiwi green, and aqua blue, the Alicia camisole comes in S, M, L, XL, 1X, and 2X sizes.
The new product is a hit among retailers. “The new Alicia camisole with the lace is going to be a super seller,” Robertsdahl says, and Yett says, “We all think it looks darling.” “I love the colors available with the Alicia,” Ludwig says. “They’re very fresh — there’s nothing else on the market with colors like those.”

In addition to the Alicia and Dawn mastectomy camisoles, Wear Ease sells post-surgery bras and post-mastectomy nightgowns and T-shirts with reversible necklines. It also sells compression garments, including compression bras, slimmers, and shapers to facilitate healing after surgery or treat swelling in the trunk caused by Lymphedema. Wear Ease garments come standard with shelf bras and pockets for breast forms. All insurance, including Medicare, covers breast forms and pocketed breast-surgery bras and camisoles.

Keith founded Wear Ease in 2001 to offer the Sarah Bra designed for women with limited mobility. In 2005 the company diversified into the post-mastectomy specialty market and has since grown to include 20 products across five lines.

Wear Ease is a member of Essentially Women, a national purchasing group focused on women's health, and sells through boutiques, hospitals, and durable medical equipment dealers nationwide and online via WearEase.com.

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