October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and for the second time, COOLZs has designed a special gown to help raise money for breast cancer research. Company founder and CEO Beverly Beck Ellman lost her best friend and sister-in-law, Sherrie Ellman, to the disease. COOLZs co-founder, MariaLyn Sardo, M.D., a plastic surgeon, treats many patients with breast cancer. This led to their decision to donate some of the profits to breast cancer research at the University of California, San Diego in memory of Sherrie.

In 2004, approximately 275,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. About two-thirds of these women, along with millions of women in recovery, and a staggering number of women in general between the ages of 40 and 60, experience hot flashes. The symptoms can be so severe that some women who have taken cancer medications have opted for estrogen therapy to ease hot flashes, despite the possible increase in susceptibility to breast cancer.

MariaLyn Sardo, M.D., a plastic surgeon who deals with breast reconstruction, describes hot flashes as a sudden, intense, hot feeling on the face and upper body, perhaps preceded or accompanied by a rapid heartbeat and sweating, nausea, dizziness, anxiety, headache, and weakness. Dr. Sardo knows the feeling, having heard all about it from her partner and neighbor Beverly Beck Ellman, and her own patients. That’s why she became designer and co-owner with Ellman of COOLZs, a company that makes sleepwear to help women with night sweats sleep through the night.

According to Dr. Sardo, COOLZs gowns are made from synthetic fabric, originally designed for athletic wear, that absorbs moisture better than natural fibers such as cotton, and feels cool and not encumbering. She noted that several reputable on-line medical sites recommended sleeping in layered clothing with cotton sheets. “My patients complained that this only made them more uncomfortable,” said Sardo.

“I have had several patients on tamoxifen, a very effective medication in preventing the recurrence of estrogen-receptor-positive breast cancer, complain about menopausal side effects such as hot flashes, low libido, mood swings and nausea,” Dr. Sardo explained that hot flashes are induced by hormonal changes caused by medications, lifestyle and, most commonly, menopause. A diminished level of estrogen has a direct effect on the hypothalamus, the part of the brain responsible for controlling appetite, sleep cycles, sex hormones, and body temperature.

The best way to beat hot flashes, she emphasized, is to do so naturally. She recommends avoiding hot flash triggers, caffeine, diet pills, smoking, hot rooms, saunas, hot beds and hot foods. She also recommends
COOLZs, because of its moisture wicking capabilities.

Kathleen Krueer, one of Dr. Sardo’s patients, has had hormone-sensitive breast cancer. She used the sleepwear for about one year. “I love the way COOLZs fit like a slip,” said Krueer. “After one night of wearing COOLZs, I tried another nightgown and had to change back in the middle of the night because I was hot and uncomfortable.”

Dr. Sardo announced that COOLZs has signed with QVC and should begin distributing via that channel early in 2005. Many Nordstrom stores throughout the United States carry the product, and consumers can access COOLZs online at coolzs.com. “This sleepwear is certainly not a cure for hot flashes, but it’s a big help for women struggling to get a good night’s sleep.” Beginning October 1, 2004 COOLZs will donate one nightgown each to the first 100 women with breast cancer who access the COOLZs website at coolzs.com.

In addition to their corporate responsibilities at COOLZs, Inc., MariaLyn Sardo, M.D., F.A.C.S., is a San Diego-based plastic surgeon. Beverly Beck Ellman and her husband, Dennis Ellman founded Beck Ellman Heald, a public relations agency in San Diego that specializes in health care.

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