



London Health Sciences Centre

Patient Information

GUIDELINES FOR USING A NIPPLE SHIELD

A nipple shield is a device that may help your baby breastfeed. This device fits over your nipple and areola. It is made of thin silicone and comes in different sizes. Nipple shields can be used for both preterm and term babies.



Always talk to your health care provider or someone skilled in helping breastfeeding mothers if you are thinking of using a nipple shield. It is important to make an informed decision.

How to Use a Nipple Shield:

1. Massage your breasts and hand express a little milk into the shield tip. Add some breastmilk to the inside rim of the nipple shield to help it stay on your breast.
2. Turn the shield almost inside out. Place the shield over your breast with your nipple centered in the shield. Roll the rim of the shield over your breast.
3. Stroke your baby's lips with the shield tip. Wait for your baby to open his mouth like a wide yawn. Bring your baby deeply onto the shield.
4. If your baby is not deeply latched, break the seal, and latch your baby again.
5. Watch your baby's sucking pattern. Listen for swallows.
6. Use breast massage and compression to increase your milk flow.

Cleaning and Care of a Nipple Shield:

- Wash your nipple shield after each feeding with warm soapy water.
- Do not soak your shield in water or other solutions.
- Rinse nipple shield well with water.
- Air-dry your shield on a clean paper towel.
- Store your clean, dry nipple shield in a container with a lid or a sealed plastic bag.
- Check your nipple shield before using it. Do not use your shield if it is torn, sticky or damaged.
- When in hospital, check with your health care provider about any special cleaning instructions.

When Using a Nipple Shield:

Always work with a health care provider who is skilled with helping breastfeeding mothers!

Follow-up When Using a Nipple Shield:

Birth to 1 Week:

- Offer your breast to your baby when showing feeding cues and at least 8 times in 24 hours
- Be sure your baby is latched on to the nipple shield properly
- Provide your baby frequent skin-to-skin time next to your breast
- Hand express/pump after each feed to help build your milk supply
- Offer fresh expressed colostrum/breastmilk to your baby after breastfeeding
- Talk to your nurse about various ways you can give the colostrum/breastmilk

1 Week Old and Beyond:

- Offer your breast to your baby when showing feeding cues and at least 8 times in 24 hours
- Be sure your baby is latched on to the nipple shield properly
- Provide your baby frequent skin-to-skin time next to your breast
- Talk to your health care provider about how often you need to express/pump to help you build a plentiful milk supply
- Follow up with your health care provider about your baby's well-being and growth

Weaning Your Baby from Using the Nipple Shield:

Weaning from the shield can be a gradual process. It may take practice and time to fully wean your baby from using the shield. Try some of these suggestions:

- Continue to give your baby lots of skin-to-skin time at breast
- Express a drop of colostrum/breastmilk on your nipple and try to latch your baby at the breast without the nipple shield
- Use your hand to shape your breast to help your baby latch
- Express/pump for a few minutes to help soften your breast and then try to latch your baby
- Offer your breast without the shield when your baby is sleepy
- Remove the shield part way through the feeding and then offer your breast

References

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