Breastfeeding Using a Nipple Shield

A nipple shield is a soft silicone artificial nipple that is placed over the mom’s nipple and areola (area around the nipple) while breastfeeding. A health care professional may recommend using a nipple shield to help your baby latch for feeding.

Most latching problems go away over time. The goal is to have your baby breastfeeding without a shield as soon as possible.

Why do I need a nipple shield?

A nipple shield is used:

• To help a baby latch when a mother has flat or inverted nipples.
• When a baby has continuing latching problems and the latch is not getting better.
• For a premature baby who has trouble keeping a deep latch.
• To help a baby with neurological conditions to latch better.
• For sore or damaged nipples, when recommended by a health care professional.
How do I take care of the nipple shield?

• Before using the nipple shield for the first time, boil it in water and follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
• After each feeding, wash in hot, soapy water and rinse with hot water.
• Boil once daily for 2 minutes to sterilize the shield. Boiling may turn the shield a cloudy colour, but it is still safe to use.
• Replace the nipple shield if it becomes thin or worn.
• Store the nipple shield in a clean, dry container.

This pamphlet is just a guide. Please talk to your health care provider about your questions. We are here to help you.
How do I use a nipple shield?

- Wash your hands before each breastfeeding.
- Gently massage your breast and hand express until milk starts to flow.
- Wet the back of the shield with breast milk or warm water to help it stay in place better.
- Turn the shield almost inside out, so the rim of the shield looks like the brim of a hat.
- Centre the tip of the shield over your nipple, then slowly roll the edges down over your areola.
- The nipple should be drawn into the tip of the shield. Hand expressing milk into the shield will help the baby start nursing.
- Stroke the baby’s lips with the shield. Wait for the baby’s mouth to open wide, like a yawn. Then latch the baby onto the rim, not the tip of the shield. It may take a few tries before the baby latches on and starts nursing.
- The baby should be latched deeply onto your breast. You should not be able to see the shaft of the shield while breastfeeding.
- Let the baby breastfeed as long as they wish. Make sure you can see jaw movement and hear swallowing during feeding. When the baby has finished the first side, repeat the steps on your other breast.
- You should see breast milk in the tip of the shield after every feeding.
Things to remember

• There are different sizes of nipple shields. Make sure you are properly fitted and using the right size shield. The nipple shield should fit your nipple, not the baby’s mouth.

• Pump for extra stimulation, at least 4-6 times after feedings, until your milk supply is well established. Then wean from pumping as you are able.

• It is important to watch your baby’s wet and dirty diapers to make sure that they are drinking enough milk. By day 5, they should have 6 or more heavy wet diapers and 2-3 or more yellowish-coloured soft stools per day.

• At first, the baby will need to be closely monitored by your health care professionals to make sure they are gaining enough weight.

• You may have a reduced milk supply when using a nipple shield. Start or increase breast pumping after each breastfeeding if you notice a reduced milk supply. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your health care professional.

• Try to wean the baby from using the nipple shield as soon as possible.
Questions?

Baby Clinic
902-752-7600 ext. 2530

Public Health
902-752-5151

What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.

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