

Patient & Family Guide  
2025

# What is a Nipple Shield?

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[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# What is a Nipple Shield?

- A nipple shield is a soft, artificial (human made) nipple made of silicone. It is put over the nipple and areola (area around the nipple) while breastfeeding or chestfeeding.
- A health care provider may recommend using a nipple shield to help your baby latch for feeding.
- Nipple shields come in different sizes. The size depends on the size of your nipples and your baby's mouth. A nipple shield should be fitted by a health care provider (like a lactation consultant) who knows how to fit nipple shields.
- Most latching problems go away over time. The goal is to have your baby breastfeeding or chestfeeding without a shield as soon as possible. Using a nipple shield for too long can lead to other issues. If you have any questions, talk with your health care provider.

## Why do I need a nipple shield?

- Your health care provider may recommend using a nipple shield:
  - › to help your baby latch if you have flat or inverted (tucked in) nipples.
  - › if your baby has trouble keeping a deep latch.
  - › in some cases, for sore or damaged nipples (**only when recommended by a health care provider**).

## How do I take care of the nipple shield?

- Before using the nipple shield for the first time, follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- After each feeding, wash the shield in hot, soapy water and rinse with hot water.
- Boil the shield once each day for 2 minutes to sterilize (disinfect) it. Boiling may turn the shield a cloudy colour, but it is still safe to use.
- Replace the nipple shield if it gets thin or worn. Check it each day for any tears.
- Store the nipple shield in a clean, dry container.

## How do I use a nipple shield?

- Wash your hands before each feeding.
- Gently massage your breast/chest 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 may help your baby start nursing.
- Gently touch the tip of the shield along your baby's upper lip from one corner to the other until your baby's mouth opens wide, like a yawn. Then latch your baby deeply onto the shield so that the baby's bottom lip is partially covering the areola. It may take a few tries before your baby latches on and starts nursing.
- Your baby should be latched deeply onto your breast/chest. You should **not** be able to see your nipple under the shield. **It should not hurt or pinch when your baby sucks.**

- Let your baby breastfeed or chestfeed for as long as they want to. Make sure you can see jaw movement and hear swallowing during feeding. When your baby has finished the first side, repeat the steps on your other side.
- You should see breast milk in the tip of the shield after every feeding.

## Things to remember

- **It is important to check 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 to 3 or more yellowish-coloured soft stools (poops) each day.
- Your baby will need to be closely monitored by your health care provider to make sure they are gaining enough weight.
- You may have a lower milk supply when using a nipple shield. Start or pump more after each feeding if you notice a lower milk supply. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your health care provider.
- **Remember, it is important to only use a nipple shield for a short time.** Try to wean (stop) your baby from using a nipple shield as soon as possible.

## Notes:

# Questions?

## Baby Clinic

› Phone: 902-752-7600 extension 2530

## Public Health

› Phone: 902-752-5151

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.**

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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