

Nipple Shields

For difficult or persistent latch-on problems many breastfeeding experts suggest the short term use of a nipple shield. Nipple shields are made of thin, soft silicone that is worn over the nipple during breastfeeding.

A Nipple Shield may help protect breastfeeding when:

- A baby has trouble latching on to the breast
- A mother has flat or inverted nipples
- A baby is born premature
- A baby is tongue-tied
- Transitioning a baby from bottle to breast

How to use the Nipple Shield:

- Provide frequent skin to skin contact with your baby
- Nipple shields come in different sizes. It is important that the shield fits your baby's mouth as well as your nipple.
- Wash the nipple shield in warm water prior to nursing. This makes the shield more pliable and sticks to the breast better.
- Turn shield partially "inside out" before placing it on the nipple then pull to its normal shape, drawing the nipple and some of the areola/breast into the shield.
- A good latch is especially important when you are using a nipple shield. Use Laid Back Breastfeeding and make sure your baby opens wide to take not only the shaft or tip of the nipple shield, but into the base.
- Some types of shields do not easily stay against your skin, but as long as baby is getting plenty of milk and you are not uncomfortable, it is not necessary to stop the feeding and reposition the shield.
- Pumping with hospital grade electric breast pump is often necessary until your milk supply is well established and your baby is growing well. Please check with your nurse or lactation consultant.



Care of the shield:

- Wash the shield with hot soapy water after each use.
- Store dry shield in a clean dry place such as a small covered plastic container.

Be patient, your baby may need the nipple shield for a few days, weeks or even months. As long as your baby is growing well, the continued use of the shield should not be a problem.

Tips for weaning from Shield:

- As your baby's breastfeeding ability improves, remove the shield at various times during each feeding, but do not force the issue.
- If your baby seems unable to nurse without the shield then continue using the shield as this means the problem is not yet resolved. Just keep practicing.
- Some moms have said "The day you misplace the shield, or your dog eats it, will be the day you will not need it anymore" 😊

Additional information about the use of Nipple Shields can be found at:

- <http://www.normalfed.com/Help/nipshield.html>
- <http://kellymom.com/bf/concerns/child/wean-shield/>
- http://www.lli.org/lang/espanol/ncvol17_2_05.html (Spanish)
- <https://www.lli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvjunjul00p39.html>