

Information for breastfeeding families

Using a Nipple Shield



Nipple shields have a mixed reputation. Some say they cause more problems than they solve. Others say that used properly they can salvage a difficult breastfeeding situation. Your lactation consultant will recommend when they may be helpful, how long to use them, and how to discontinue using them.

Indications for use

- ✓ Flat or inverted nipples
- ✓ Premature or late pre-term infants
- ✓ Tongue tie
- ✓ Down syndrome or other low-tone babies
- ✓ Sore, cracked bleeding nipples
- ✓ Slow down and regulate flow from over-active let-down
- ✓ Wean a baby from bottle to breast

The pros:

- ✓ Encourages your baby to feed at the breast
- ✓ Allows a weak baby to maintain suction at the breast

The cons:

- ✓ Barrier between you and your baby
- ✓ Your baby may get used to the shield
- ✓ Too easily used incorrectly

Choosing Your Shield

- Ask your lactation consultant to fit you for the correct size
- Experiment with the two types, to see which works best for you:



Cut away shield

Good for the infant to smell the mother's areola



Full shield

Good for infants who collapse the cut-away nipple shield during suckling

How to use the shield

- Roll the shield back about ½ way down the shank of the shield
 - Apply to nipple, may apply lanolin, breastmilk, KY jelly or water to help the shield adhere to the breast
 - Roll the shield back onto the breast so the nipple is pulled into the shank of the shield. May stretch shield to accommodate the nipple
 - May warm in water to make more flexible
 - Latch the infant on by tipping baby's head back, touch the shield above the upper lip and allow baby to take it deeply
 - Ensure the infant's lips are at the base on the shield, not slipping back and forth
 - May pre-fill the shield through the holes in the tip with a periodontal syringe so the baby gets an instant reward
 - Wash the shield and air dry, may be boiled if desired
 - Plan for lactation follow up to either wean from the shield or work on maintaining/establishing supply
 - Have your baby's weight checked often
 - To wean from the shield, start the feeding with the shield in place, then remove.
- If not successful, try again the next feeding. Coax your baby, and be persistent

