

# Nipple Shields

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A nipple shield is an artificial nipple worn over the mother's nipple during a feeding. It's a tool that can be helpful in specific situations, but it is not a substitute for experienced breastfeeding assistance.

If used incorrectly, nipple shields can lead to infant weight loss, reduced milk supply, plugged ducts and mastitis. It's important to work closely with your lactation consultant and your baby's healthcare provider if you are using a nipple shield.

## **What are some common reasons for using a nipple shield?**

- Flat or inverted nipples
- Sore or damaged nipples
- Engorgement
- Nipple preference, when baby prefers an artificial nipple over mother's breast
- Premature infant with a small mouth, weak suck, or other physical challenge
- Breast refusal

## **How do I choose the correct size nipple shield?**

The nipple shield should be the right size for the size of your baby's mouth.

16mm (extra small): for smaller babies and premature babies

20mm (small): for most newborn babies

24mm (medium): for large nipples and older babies

## **How do I place a nipple shield?**

- Warm the nipple shield in your hands or under warm water
- Turn the nipple shield partially inside out
- Place the nipple shield directly over your nipple
- Peel the nipple shield back over the breast to create a tight fit
- Moistening the inside of the shield with water or breast milk will help maintain a seal once the nipple shield is placed
- When the baby sucks, your nipple should be drawn deeply into the shank of the nipple shield. This will allow your baby's jaw to compress the milk sinuses and effectively remove milk during the feeding.

## **How can I tell if my baby is latched well with a nipple shield?**

A shallow latch can increase your pain, decrease your baby's milk intake and reduce your overall milk production. Your nurse or lactation consultant can evaluate your baby's latch to be sure they demonstrate the following signs:

- Baby's nose and chin are in contact with the breast
- Baby's top and bottom lips are flanged outward
- Baby's cheeks are full and round, not dimpled
- You have no feel pain during the feeding
- You are able to see and hear your baby swallowing
- After the feeding, your nipple is round and elongated

## **How do I clean the nipple shield?**

After each use, wash the nipple shield in warm soapy water and rinse well.

## **Do I need to use a breast pump?**

When using a nipple shield, it is important to pump after breastfeeding to make sure the breasts are well emptied. You will need to continue pumping after

every feeding until your milk supply is well established and your baby is gaining weight.

### **How do I wean my baby from a nipple shield?**

The weaning process from a nipple shield can be lengthy. Begin by attempting to breastfeed without the shield in place at every feeding. Then, follow your baby's cues to learn when they seem most receptive to the change.

- Many babies are more willing to make the change when they are sleepy.
- Others are more willing after the initial let down of milk has occurred.
- Some babies need a partial feeding on one breast with a shield before they are willing to attempt to latch to the other breast without a shield.

### **Where can I get help for breastfeeding problems?**

- For general breastfeeding questions, please call the Lactation Help Line at (844) 200-8894. You will be asked to leave a message and a lactation consultant will return your call within 24 hours.
- If you would like to schedule an appointment to meet with one of our lactation consultants, please call the Briarwood Breastfeeding Clinic at (734) 232-2600.

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