

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
- Painful, 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
- Easy to use 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
- Place shield in warm 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

