

Using Nipple Shields



Nipple shields are NOT recommended before your breast milk supply increases, usually 36 – 48 hours after the birth of your baby

What is a nipple shield?

A nipple shield is a silicon dome that fits over your nipple.

Why are they used?

- To help your baby latch on if you have a flat or inverted nipple or if your baby has a tongue restriction
- To help your baby if they are struggling when changing from an artificial teat to feeding at the breast
- To provide a barrier if you have damaged nipples or skin conditions such as eczema; care is needed as it could make your nipple damage worse.

What type should I use?

- Your nipple needs to fit into the dome of the nipple shield without touching the sides, otherwise nipple damage may occur
- A wide based (24mm) silicon nipple shield is generally recommended
- A 20mm shield may be easier to use, depending on the size of your nipple, if your baby is premature
- Shields that are cut away on one side are usually more stable and less likely to curl up when your baby feeds

How do I use a nipple shield?

- Do not express first as the nipple shield will slide off your breast
- Place the nipple shield on a flat surface
- Push the centre of the dome in with your finger (picture 2 - 3)
- Place the inverted dome tip on your nipple (picture 4)
- Roll the edge of the shield onto your breast (picture 5)
- At this time, the centre of the dome usually pops out. If not, pull on the edges of the shield to help it pop out.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6

Things you should be aware of

A nipple shield may hide that your baby has problems sucking the breast, especially when your breast milk supply has increased (about day 3-4). If you notice that your breast milk supply is dropping, eg your baby does not gain their expected weight or is not passing much urine or poo, please talk to a health professional.

If your nipple damage is getting worse talk to a health professional.

How can I avoid problems?

- Feed your baby on demand - at least 8 feeds in 24 hours in the first weeks after birth
- Express after the daytime feeds if you are concerned about how well your baby is sucking.

How do I know if my baby is latched on correctly?

- You can see your baby's mouth on the breast (edges of the nipple shield) not on the dome of the nipple shield
- You can see your baby suck in a rhythm with their jaw and ears moving
- You can hear your baby swallowing
- You feel deep breast suction with little or no pain in your nipple.



Correct attachment



Poor attachment

How long can I use a nipple shield for?

- The time that you wean your baby from the nipple shield has to be good for both you and your baby
- Early weaning from the nipple shield, that is within 2 - 3 days is preferred
- If your baby is gaining weight and is well, you may use the nipple shield long term.

Tips to encourage breastfeeding without a nipple shield

- Try to breastfeed your baby when they are calm and showing early signs of hunger, eg sucking their hand
- Try to breastfeed without the nipple shield after your baby's initial hunger has settled
- Breastfeeding should be enjoyable for you and your baby. If your baby is getting stressed at the breast, offer the breast with the nipple shield again and try again later
- Use your breast to comfort your baby.

Looking after your nipple shield

It is important to keep your nipple shield clean. Wash it in warm soapy water and rinse clean after every use. Air dry the nipple shield and keep it in a clean container or plastic bag.

Community Health Centre

Tel No: _____

Community Health Feeding Clinic

Tel No: _____

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Tel No: 1800 686 268

Family Doctor

Tel No: _____