

What are nipple shields?

Nipple shields are thin silicone covers that can be placed over the nipple to assist with breastfeeding.

When to use nipple shields

For inverted nipples or flat nipples after all other attempts to attach baby have been unsuccessful.

Nipple shields should not be used

- Until milk is in and flowing well.
- When nipples are damaged from poor attachment to the breast.
- When breasts are engorged and baby cannot grasp the swollen breast tissue.

Important information

- The large size is preferable for most women (regardless of nipple size), to ensure effective milk transfer.
- Seek assistance from a lactation consultant, midwife or breastfeeding counsellor if having difficulty using the shield.
- Milk supply may slowly decline over time **if the baby is not well attached.**
- Milk can take longer to flow from the breast when a nipple shield is used so feeds may take longer to finish.
- To ensure breasts are well drained it may be necessary to express for a few minutes after feeds.
- While you are feeding with a nipple shield, it is recommended to have your baby weighed weekly or at least fortnightly to ensure adequate growth.

How to use nipple shields

- Express a few drops of milk to start the milk flowing.
- Smear breast milk onto the outside of the shield to encourage your baby to attach.
- Place the nipple shield over your nipple and hold it in place with fingers at the outer edge.

- Touch baby's lips with nipple shield, wait for a wide-open mouth then bring your baby quickly onto the shield. It is important that the baby does not slip back off the shield as this will cause pinching and nipple damage.
- Make sure the baby is sucking **and** swallowing.

Cleaning the nipple shield

- Generally there is no need to sterilise the nipple shield after each use.
- Rinse it in cold water after use, then wash in hot soapy water and rinse under hot running water.
- Drain, dry and store in a clean covered container.

Weaning from the nipple shield

It is recommended that baby eventually feed directly from the breast and attempts to do this should be made after a week or two. The transition from nipple shield to breast can sometimes take time. Removing the shield part way through a feed when the nipple is drawn out may make direct attachment easier. Assistance can be obtained from a lactation consultant, midwife or breastfeeding counsellor.

For more information and advice

Your local Maternal & Child Health Nurse

Maternal & Child Health Line (24 hours)

Tel: 13 22 29

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Tel: 1800 686 268 – Breastfeeding Helpline

Web: www.breastfeeding.asn.au