

## GUIDELINES FOR USING A NIPPLE SHIELD

A nipple shield is a device that may help your baby breastfeed. This device fits over your nipple and areola. It is made of thin silicone and comes in different shapes and sizes. Nipple shields can be used for both preterm and term babies.



**Always** talk to your healthcare provider or someone skilled in helping with breastfeeding if you are thinking of using a nipple shield. It is important to make an informed decision.

### How to Use a Nipple Shield:

1. Massage your breasts and try to hand express a little milk into the shield tip. Some breastmilk can be placed on the inside rim of the nipple shield to help it stay on your breast. If breastmilk is not available you can use warm water or nipple cream to help the shield stay in place.
2. Turn the shield almost inside out. Place the shield over your breast with your nipple centered in the shield. Roll the rim of the shield over your breast.
3. Stroke your baby's lips with the shield tip. Wait for your baby to open his mouth like a wide yawn. Bring your baby deeply onto the shield.
4. If your baby is not deeply latched, break the seal, and try to latch your baby again.
5. Watch your baby's sucking pattern. Look and listen for swallows.
6. Use breast massage and compression to increase your milk flow.

### Cleaning and Care of a Nipple Shield:

- Wash your nipple shield after each feeding with warm soapy water.
- Do not soak your shield in water or other solutions.
- Rinse nipple shield well with water.
- Air-dry your shield or dry with a clean paper towel.
- Store your clean, dry nipple shield in a container with a lid or a sealed plastic bag.
- Check your nipple shield before using it. Do not use your shield if it is torn, sticky, or damaged.
- When in hospital, talk with your baby's healthcare provider about special cleaning instructions.
- Always follow the manufacturer instructions for cleaning and storage of your nipple shield.

### When Using a Nipple Shield:

Always work with a healthcare provider who is skilled in helping with breastfeeding!

- Offer your breast to your baby when they show early feeding cues and at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Be sure your baby is latched on to the nipple shield properly.
- Provide your baby with frequent skin-to-skin time next to your breast.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about:
  - how often you may need to express/pump,
  - whether your baby needs a supplement (“milk”) after breastfeeding, and
  - ongoing follow up to check your baby’s wellbeing and growth.

## Weaning Your Baby from Using the Nipple Shield:

Weaning from the shield can be a slow process. Talk to your healthcare provider about when to begin weaning your baby off the nipple shield. It usually takes time and patience to fully wean your baby from the nipple shield.

Try some of these suggestions:

- Continue to give your baby lots of skin-to-skin time at breast,
- Express a drop of colostrum/breastmilk on your nipple and offer your baby the breast without the nipple shield,
- Use your hand to shape your breast to help your baby latch,
- Express/pump for a few minutes to help soften your breast and then try to latch your baby,
- Offer your breast without the shield when your baby is sleepy, and
- Remove the shield part way through the feeding and then offer your breast.

### Video:

Dr Lisa Amir -- Australian Breastfeeding Association <https://vimeo.com/442905546>

**Disclaimer:** there are many manufacturers of nipple shields and we do not endorse any specific company or product.

### References:

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