

# NIPPLE SHIELDS



the women's  
the royal women's hospital  
victoria australia

A nipple shield is a flexible silicone cover that can be placed over the nipple to assist with breastfeeding.

## Using a nipple shield

A nipple shield may be suggested to help with particular breastfeeding problems such as, when a baby is having trouble attaching to the breast, when a baby is premature or small, or mother's nipples are flat or inverted. It isn't always helpful to use a shield in the first few days after birth (before the milk has 'come in') and is most often only used temporarily.

## Important information

- A large size shield is preferable for most women (regardless of nipple size), to ensure effective milk transfer.
- Seeing a lactation consultant, midwife or breastfeeding counsellor face-to-face is very helpful. They will be able to make sure that the shield is the correct size, the baby is well attached and is getting enough breast milk.
- Milk can take longer to flow from the breast when a nipple shield is used so feeding may take longer.
- 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.
- To use the shield;
  - first express a few drops of milk onto the outside so that your baby can smell it
  - invert the tip of the shield and place it over your nipple, holding it in place while stretching the edges across sideways with your fingers
  - touch baby's lips with the shield, wait for a wide-open mouth and bring your baby quickly onto the shield so that he does not slip back off the shield to cause pinching and nipple damage.

## Cleaning the nipple shield

- After use rinse in the shield in cold water, 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 that attempts to do this be made after a week or two of shield use. Offering lots of skin-to-skin contact, offering the breast at different times - particularly when the baby seems interested in feeding, and removing the shield part way through a feed are some suggestions that may be helpful.

## For more information and advice

**Your midwife, lactation consultant or local maternal & child health nurse**

**Maternal & Child Health Line (24 hours)**

Tel: 13 22 29

**Australian Breastfeeding Association**

T: 1800 686 268 – Breastfeeding Helpline

W: [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

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