



Your important health information

Nipple shields

For some mothers who are finding it hard to breastfeed their babies, a nipple shield may be useful.

What is a nipple shield?

A thin silicone cover placed over the nipple to help with breastfeeding.

When can a nipple shield be used?

- If you have flat or inverted nipples and your baby cannot attach to the breast.
- To help a premature baby learn to breastfeed.

Nipple shields should not be used:

- until your breastmilk is in and flowing well.
- if your nipples are sore or damaged.
- if your breasts are swollen or engorged.



Points to be aware of

- Nipple shields come in different sizes. It is important to have the correct sized nipple shield.
- Ask for help from a lactation consultant, midwife or breastfeeding counsellor if you are having trouble using a nipple shield.
- Breastfeeds may take longer.
- At first you may need to express your breasts for a few minutes after feeding to drain the breast. This will help keep your milk flowing and prevent other problems.
- Baby needs to be well attached to the breast when using a nipple shield to keep a good milk supply.

How to use a nipple shield

- Wash your hands before feeding your baby.
- Express some milk into and around the nipple shield. This helps the shield to stay in place and your milk to begin to flow.
- Turn the shield almost inside out. Put it over the middle of the nipple with the 'cut-out' part where your baby's nose will touch the breast.
- Pull the edges until the shield turns out, this will help your nipple be pulled into the shield. Hold the edge in place with your finger.
- Bring baby in close with baby's chest and tummy touching you, head tilted back and baby's lips touching the nipple shield.
- Wait for baby to have a wide open mouth, then bring your baby quickly into your breast. Do not push your baby's head into the breast.
- Baby's chin should be close into the breast and their mouth very wide open around the nipple shield. Your baby should not slip back off the nipple shield – this can cause pain and nipple damage.

- Your baby's sucking will become slower and regular once your milk is flowing and there will be swallowing. At the end of the feed, milk should be seen in the nipple shield and your breast will feel softer.
- Offer both breasts at each feed.

Care of a nipple shield

After each use:

1. Rinse the nipple shield in cold water.
2. Wash in hot, soapy water.
3. Rinse well under hot running water.
4. Air dry and store in a clean, covered container.

How long can I use a nipple shield?

- You may only need to use a nipple shield for a short time. As your baby grows he/she will be able to attach more easily to your breast.
- You can keep using the nipple shield for longer if your baby cannot breastfeed without it. Sometimes you may need to do extra breastfeeds or some expressing to help keep your milk flowing.
- Your Maternal and Child Health Nurse will monitor your baby's weight.

How do I stop using the nipple shield?

- Choose a time when you and your baby are feeling calm.
- Start breastfeeding with the nipple shield and when your baby is sucking well and your nipple is pulled out, gently take off the nipple shield and try to attach baby to your breast.
- If baby becomes upset or cannot attach, put the nipple shield back on to finish the feed.
- You can start by trying this once a day. It can take time for babies to stop feeding with a nipple shield.
- You can seek help from a lactation consultant or breastfeeding service.

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact:

Mercy Hospital for Women
Breastfeeding Support Service
Phone: 03 8458 4677

Werribee Mercy Hospital
Breastfeeding Support Service
Phone: 03 8754 3407

Other services:

Australian Breastfeeding Association
Helpline 1 800 686 268
www.breastfeeding.asn.au
Maternal & Child Health Line Phone: 13 22 29
Private Lactation Consultant
www.lcanz.org

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