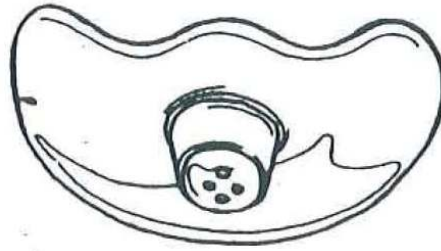


# Nipple Shield Information



## Indications for using a Nipple Shield

- ◆ If the nipples are flat or inverted; baby has difficulties with attachment
- ◆ If the baby is unable to open his/her mouth wide enough in order to achieve a correct attachment
- ◆ If the baby is unable to draw the nipple and areola into his/her mouth.
- ◆ Prematurity
- ◆ Painful/infected nipples
- ◆ Re-lactation

## When using the Nipple Shield

**The use of the nipple shield should be regarded as a temporary measure; however the mother may wish to continue using the shield indefinitely.**

Adequate milk supply is necessary. (Milk has “come in”)

Correct attachment is important. The baby’s jaw is close on the breast, not out on the shaft of the nipple shield. Sucking only on the nipple pinches off the milk flow which fails to stimulate the milk supply and baby’s growth will be affected.

## How to use the Nipple Shield

- ◆ Express a little milk into the shield prior to placing it centrally over the nipple with the flange folded down against the breast.
- ◆ Correctly position the baby and ensure good attachment by waiting until mouth is opened wide, tongue forward and down before bringing baby to breast. The lips should be flanged.
- ◆ Once the baby begins to suckle, the let-down reflex will be stimulated. Sometimes this can take a little longer to occur.

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- ◆ You should be able to notice good active nutritive suckling and hear your baby swallowing during the feed.
- ◆ If unsure that the milk transfer is occurring, remove the baby from the breast and check the following:
  1. Has the nipple been drawn out into the shield?
  2. Is there milk in the shield?

## Protection of the milk supply is important

Milk supply is controlled by how much milk the baby takes. A small, weak or poorly sucking baby may under stimulate the breast and lead to a drop in milk supply. If this occurs, expressing after the feed will be necessary. Expressed milk can be used to compliment your baby.

## Cleaning and care of the Nipple Shield

- ◆ Rinse in cold water to remove milk residue
- ◆ Then wash in warm soapy water and rinse well
- ◆ Store in a clean, dry container

## How to wean your baby off the Nipple Shield

The goal is to return to full breastfeeding without the nipple shield.

1. As the baby's breastfeeding ability improves or the damaged/sore nipple has healed, remove the nipple shield and attach the baby to the breast.
2. You may want to commence feeding with the shield first then remove the shield and attach the baby to the breast.
3. If the baby is unable to feed without the shield this means the problem is not resolved yet. So try again later.
4. As long your baby is gaining weight and growing well, continued use of the nipple shield is not a major problem.
5. Sometimes the long term use of the nipple shield can be habit forming. This may make it more difficult for baby to wean off the nipple shield. You will need to be patient.

## References:

*B. Wilson- Clay Clinical use of silicone nipple shield J.Hum. Lact. 1996 12(279-284)*  
*Vergie I Hughes RN.MS.IBCLC Core Curriculum for Lactation Consultant Practice. Breastfeeding devices and equipment 2002*

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