

# Using a Nipple Shield



Nipple shields have a mixed reputation. Some say they cause more problems than they solve. Others say that when used properly they can salvage a difficult breastfeeding situation. Your lactation consultant will recommend when they may be helpful, how long to use them, and how to discontinue using them.

## *Indications for use*

- Flat or inverted nipples
- Soft or flat nipples after delivery
- Premature or late pre-term baby
- Tongue tie
- Baby unable to maintain a latch
- Breast refusal
- Engorgement
- Sore, cracked bleeding nipples
- Slow down and regulate flow from over-active let-down
- Wean a baby from bottle to breast
- Relactation (re-starting breastfeeding after an interruption of breastfeeding) or induced lactation (breastfeeding an adoptive baby)

## *The pros:*

- Encourages your baby to feed at the breast
- Allow a weak baby to maintain suction at the breast
- Instant fix for difficult problems
- Newer silicon shields allow full flow of milk

## *The cons:*

- Barrier between you and your baby
- Less stimulation to the breast
- Your baby may get used to the shield
- Too easily used incorrectly



*Full shield*  
*Good for infants who collapse the cut-away nipple shield during suckling*



*Cut away shield*  
*Good for the infant to smell the mother's areola*



### ***Choosing the correct size of the nipple shield***

First consider the size of your babies' mouth, then consider the size of your nipples. Modify the size to accommodate your nipples, if needed...

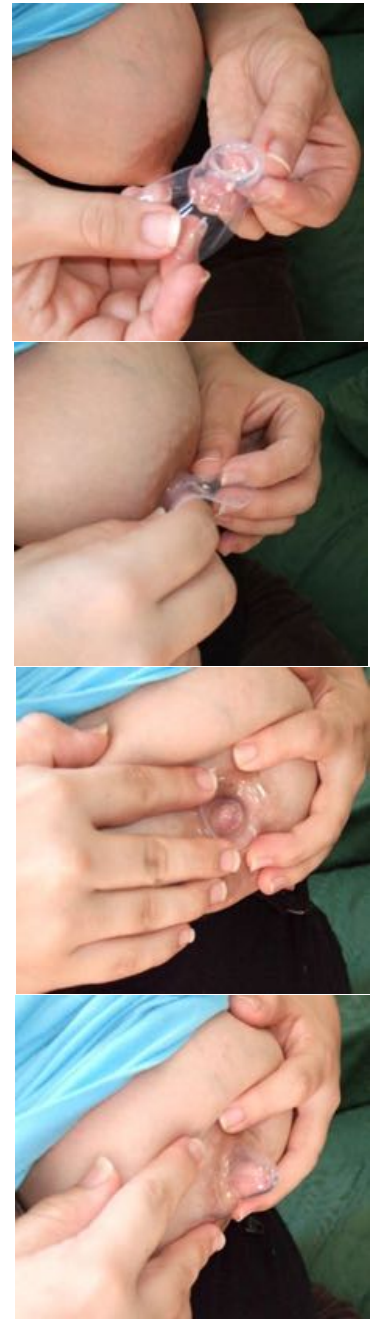
Extra small	16 mm	Pre-term babies and small newborns
Small	20 mm	Small term newborns
Normal	24 mm	Normal and large newborns, older infants

### ***How to use the shield***

- Roll the shield back about half way down the shank of the shield.
- Apply to nipple. You may apply lanolin, breast milk, KY jelly or water to help the shield adhere to the breast.
- Roll the shield back onto the breast so the nipple is pulled into the shank of the shield.
- May stretch shield to accommodate the nipple. May warm in water to make more flexible.
- Latch the infant on by tipping his head back, touch the shield above the baby's upper lip and allow baby to take it deeply.
- Assure the infant's lips are at the base of the shield, not slipping back and forth.
- You may pre-fill the shield through the holes in the tip with a periodontal syringe so the baby gets an instant reward.
- Wash the shield and air dry, may be boiled if desired.

### ***Other considerations***

- Start pumping for extra stimulation if the baby does not empty the breast well.
- Closely monitor feeds, baby's output (number of wet and dirty diapers), and weight.
- Notify your pediatrician that you are using a nipple shield.
- Plan for follow-up to either wean from the shield or work on maintaining/ establishing a good milk supply.
- To wean from the shield, start the feeding with the shield in place, then remove. If not successful, try again the next feeding. Coax your baby, and be persistent.



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