

Nipple Shields for Healthy Babies

Lactation Services at Wesley Medical Center
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How to use the nipple shield

1. Dampen the shield with a small amount of water or breast milk
2. Invert the "nipple" portion of the shield way back to the alveolar area of shield to create a good suction/seal onto the breast
3. Press the shield on the breast with your nipple in the center of the shield and gently pull the tip of the shield out; shield should stick to your breast.
4. Lightly touch the shield to the infant's mouth to encourage the infant to latch-on; the infant's lips should flange over the portion that covers the mother's nipple
5. Encourage the infant to suck and watch and listen for swallows
6. Hand express some of your milk into the shield to further encourage the baby

Cleaning

The nipple shield should be cleaned after each use by washing it with hot soapy water and rinsing it thoroughly.

Pumping, milk supply and weight gain

A decreased milk supply can sometimes be a problem with nipple shields. Have your baby's weight checked frequently. Extra pumping will help maintain a good supply while your baby still needs the shield. Pump according to the following guidelines:

- If using the nipple shield 1 – 4 times a day (mostly bottle feeding at other times) pump 7 – 8 times per 24 hours
- If using the nipple shield at every feeding, we recommend that you pump both breasts 2 or 3 times per 24 hours. You do not need to feed the extra milk to the baby, just store it for later use.

Weaning from the shield

When your baby is READY to feed without the shield, he/she will do it! After your baby has been feeding well with the shield for at least several days, try some of these tips:

- Start without the shield when the baby is least hungry, and at his/her "best" time of day
- Roll your nipple or use your pump to bring the nipple out
- Start the feeding with the shield for a few minutes, then quickly remove it and try to latch the baby again
- If your baby still needs the shield, try again in a few days; keep trying from time to time until the baby is feeding comfortably without the shield