

Using a nipple shield

The tips for positioning & attachment that you have already learned are also applicable when using a nipple shield.

Positioning your baby

- Keep your baby close, with their chin touching the breast.
- Support their neck, but let their head tilt back slightly.
- Make sure their ear, shoulder, and hip are in a straight line.
- Start with your baby's nose at the nipple (shield), so they can tilt back and latch deeply.
- Get yourself comfortable so you can relax during the feed.

Good attachment looks like

- Baby takes a big, deep mouthful of the breast.
- More of the darker area (areola) shows above their top lip than below.
- Lips are turned out, not tucked in.
- Mouth stays at the base of the shield (not slipping around).

Extra tip

Gentle breast compressions can help milk flow and keep your baby feeding well.



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Cleaning & Storing the shield

Before use, nipple shields must be:

- thoroughly washed in warm, soapy water and rinsed
- dried and stored
- sterilised just before use

Weaning off the shield

- Some babies stop quickly, others need more time – both are normal.
- Stay calm and try when your baby is relaxed.

Good times to try without the shield:

- During skin-to-skin
- When switching breasts
- When baby is sleepy (e.g. night feeds)
- Ask for support from your feeding team or local breastfeeding groups if needed.

Please reach out to your local infant feeding team, if you need extra support.



ReachDeck

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document on Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please contact your healthcare professional.

The links on this leaflet lead to external websites, so we have no control over their content.

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Nipple Shield Use



Parent Information Leaflet

A practical guide to using a nipple shield, with clear advice to help you and your baby feed comfortably and build confidence together.

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What is a nipple shield?

A nipple shield is a tool to assist breastfeeding for some babies. They are often made of thin, flexible silicone and cover the nipple and areola during breastfeeds. Your care team may suggest these if your baby is unable to maintain a latch directly on the breast. The reason for the recommendation should be discussed with you and a plan made to try this tool with support going forward.

Which one to choose?

Your neonatal unit may stock nipple shields, or you may purchase your own.

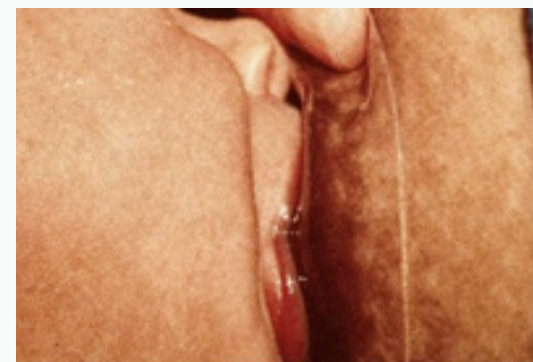
Size and shape vary by brand, but many supply three sizes.

Choose the size best suited to your baby's mouth size, your nipple diameter, and your comfort.

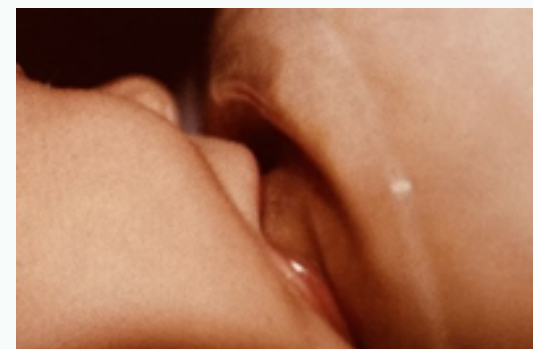
Most babies in neonatal care will do best with the conical shaped shield, as opposed to a rounded tip.

Applying the shield

- Warming the shield can make it more pliable (it may already be warm if just sterilised with heat/steam)
- Starting with skin to skin with your baby or breast massage and some hand expressing can trigger the letdown reflex and will also provide you with some milk to assist in application.
- Some expressed milk on the inner aspect of the "wings" can help the shield to stay in place, and hand expressing a few drops of milk into the tip of the shield will provide your baby with some milk immediately upon latching, encouraging them to continue to feed.
- Turn the nipple shield nearly inside out, stopping halfway. Place the shield centrally over your nipple, with one finger over the holes.
- Roll the edges / wings back down against your breast, with some downward / outward pressure as you release your finger from the holes. This should cause a slight vacuum, pulling your nipple and some areola into the shield.



Optimal attachment onto a nipple shield / breast



Ineffective attachment onto a nipple shield



Using breast compressions