

# How to use a Nipple Shield

**You have been given a nipple shield to help your baby learn to breastfeed better. To use:**

1. The nipple shield needs to be washed after every use with hot, soapy water then rinsed with hot water and let air dry. When using at home, it should be placed in boiling water for a few minutes or run thru the dishwasher at least once each day to keep it safe to use.
2. Wet the shield with warm water prior to putting it on the nipple. The water helps with a seal and to stick to your skin.
3. Turn the nipple shield inside out just a little and place it over your nipple to pull nipple and breast tissue into the shield. It should not just be placed over nipple.
4. Get into a comfortable position with your baby. Make sure you are guiding baby to breast, holding baby at the shoulders (ear to ear) with chin leading, not the nose. Football hold is a nice position that helps baby's jaw to drop open wider.
5. Tickle baby's upper lip with the nipple shield, wait for mouth to open wide. Point nipple upward, so nipple is pointing to roof of mouth where their suck reflex is. Pull baby onto nipple shield while shaping breast. The baby's mouth should cover the entire nipple shield tip with lips to breast tissue and cheeks touching breast too. You should not see any part of shield.
6. When baby is sucking, it should feel like good strong tug/pull, no pinching or pain. If it is hurting, you can try to flip the upper lip out to flange it and pull down on the chin to widen the mouth. If this doesn't feel better, break seal with your finger and try latching again. You should hear your baby breathing and swallowing while nursing, not clicking or smacking. Swallow sounds like a sigh.
7. Your nipple should be pulled into the shield when baby is latched the right way. You should also see droplets or milk pooling in the shield when baby comes off.
8. Do breast compressions during the feeding to help baby get more colostrum, especially in the first few days.
9. Do some extra pumping for the first few days to help bring your milk in.



# Weaning from a Nipple Shield



**Weaning can take a couple of tries. If you or baby grow frustrated, take a break and try again later. Here are some ideas to try:**

1. Try earlier feedings in the day for practicing breastfeeding without the shield. Evening and/or night times often are not good times.
2. Try offering the breast shortly after a nipple shield feeding when baby isn't too hungry.
3. Babies are more willing to do something different when they are a little sleepy.
4. Start breastfeeding using the nipple shield. Remove it after 4-5 minutes of good pulling and tugging and hearing your baby swallow. This way your nipple will be longer and your milk will be flowing which makes latching easier for baby. Point your nipple to the roof of baby's mouth for best latch.
5. You can also try pumping a few minutes prior to nursing. This may help lengthen the nipple and/or soften the breast making it easier for baby to latch.
6. **STOP if your baby starts to fight you at the breast.** Breastfeeding should be pleasant for you and your baby. Continue to use the shield as needed and try again when both of you are calm and relaxed.
7. Our lactation consultants want to make sure your baby is thriving and gaining weight, along with you having plenty of milk for your baby. If your baby is not gaining at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 oz. daily after a week of life, call for lactation help.

**If you have any questions or need advice after one week of trying to wean from a nipple shield, call Lactation Services at (208) 625-5091.**

