

Nipple Shields

A nipple shield is a breastfeeding tool used to help babies who have difficulty latching or transferring milk. They are also useful for protecting sore or damaged nipples to promote healing. It is important to use nipple shields **under the guidance of a Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)**.

Generally, we recommend using the Medela Contact size 24mm (M) nipple shield. Occasionally, there will be times that a different brand or size of nipple shield is appropriate.

Applying the Nipple Shield:

1. Partially invert the nipple shield and center it over your nipple. Once your nipple is centered, allow the sides to flip back and stick to your breast.
2. The cut out should be placed where your baby's nose will be once latched on.

Latching to the Nipple Shield:

1. Use the same positioning as you would when latching without the shield but line your baby up mouth-to-nipple shield.
2. When your baby roots and opens wide, guide them to latch them onto the shield.
3. If your baby doesn't start sucking and/or pulls away, reposition them and try again.
4. Both of your baby's lips should be flared out like a fish when latched to the shield. You can use your clean fingers to manipulate your baby's lips to flare them out if needed.
5. Your baby should be latched deeply onto the shield, not just sucking on the end of it. The entire nipple shield should be in your baby's mouth, and you should not see the shield popping in and out of their mouth. If you notice this, pull your baby in closer to you and be sure that their chin is tipped into your breast.
6. When your baby is sucking, it should feel like gentle tugging, NOT pinching. If it feels like pinching, check to make sure your nipple is centered in the shield.

Making sure the nipple shield is working:

1. Once your milk is in, you should see your baby swallowing while breastfeeding.
2. After breastfeeding, you should see a little milk left behind in the nipple shield.
3. Your breasts should feel softer after breastfeeding.
4. Your baby should be meeting the minimum number of wet and dirty diapers appropriate for age.
5. You should not feel pain while breastfeeding with the nipple shield.
6. Your baby should seem satisfied after breastfeeding.

It is important to see a Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) regularly when using a nipple shield to ensure that you are using it properly. Nipple shields are a short-term tool, and your IBCLC will determine the reason for use and develop a plan to improve the circumstances. Your IBCLC can help you wean from the nipple shield when the time is right.