

# Using a Nipple Shield to Breastfeed

## Nipple Shield

A nipple shield is a clear plastic shield that fits over your nipple and areola. If your baby is having trouble latching on to your breast, a nipple shield may help your baby latch.

However, some babies do not latch deeply when a nipple shield is used. It is important to work with a lactation consultant to make sure your baby latches deeply and breastfeeds effectively. The lactation consultant will also make sure the nipple shield fits you correctly.

## Reasons for Using Nipple Shields

A nipple shield may be used if:

- your baby can't latch on because your nipples are flat or inverted
- your baby can't get a deep latch
- your baby's suck is weak or not steady
- your baby is premature (born too early)
- you need to protect a painful, sore or cracked nipple.

You may need to use a breast pump after each feeding with a nipple shield to make sure you establish a good milk supply.

Once you have a good milk supply and your baby is breastfeeding effectively, you can slowly decrease how often you pump.

## How to Tell if Your Baby is Getting Enough Breastmilk

Have your baby weighed at your health care provider's clinic or by a lactation consultant 1 or 2 days after returning home from the hospital. Keep getting your baby weighed until your milk supply is fully established and your baby has gained the right amount of weight.



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**A nipple shield fits over your nipple and areola to help make latching easier for your baby.**

In general, you can tell if your baby is getting enough milk if he or she:

- feeds 8 to 12 times in 24 hours
- has bursts of sucking and swallowing
- appears satisfied after feeding
- has enough wet and soiled diapers based on his or her age
- regains his or her birth weight in 10 to 14 days.

## When to Stop Using a Nipple Shield

There is no set time when you should stop using a nipple shield. Together, you and your lactation consultant can decide when the shield is no longer needed.

## Whom to Call with Questions

If you have questions or concerns about your baby's health (including feeding and weight gain), talk with your baby's health care provider.

If you have questions or concerns about the nipple shield or your baby's weight gain, talk with your lactation consultant or your nurse.