Using a Nipple Shield

A nipple shield can help in getting an infant to latch on at the breast when latching has not been successful.

How to Use a Nipple Shield

Moisten the shield with water or colostrum before applying can help it stick to your skin better. Using breastmilk helps the baby to want to latch. Turn the shield inside out and center it over the nipple and areola. Slowly roll the shield over the nipple and areola into place.

- Plan 1 to 2 feedings where the baby will latch on for a few minutes to the shield. Then remove the shield and try to have the baby latch onto your breast. If this is not successful, put the shield back on.
- You may need to wear it for the full feeding during the first 24 hours. Try removing it from the breast after the baby has been on and nursing well for 5 to 7 minutes.
- If this is working for you, then begin attaching the baby to the bare breast for full feeds by 72 hours or sooner, if you can. Wean your baby from the shield as soon as possible.

During Feeding

- Stroke baby’s lower lip with the shield and wait for the mouth to open. It may take a few tries before the baby latches on and starts to nurse.
- Check that your baby is not sucking on the tip of the nipple shield. Listen for swallowing during feeding.
After Feeding

- Use an electric breast pump after feeding to empty your breasts and to build up enough milk supply while using the shield.
- Wash the nipple shield with hot, soapy water. Rinse and air-dry between uses. Refer to the manufacturer’s instructions for further care of the shield.

When to Call Your Doctor

Using a nipple shield can reduce the amount of milk the baby receives during feeding and can lead to weight loss.

- Have your baby’s weight checked by OSU Lactation or your baby’s doctor while using the shield.
- Record your baby’s wet and dirty diapers on the Breastfeeding Record to ensure that she/he is getting enough milk and gaining weight.
  - If your baby does not have 5 to 6 wet diapers or 3 to 4 stools a day, call your baby’s doctor immediately.
- If you continue to use the nipple shield for more than 2 weeks, call OSU Lactation Services at (614) 293-8910.

Call the OSU Lactation Services’ Breastfeeding Helpline at (614) 293-8910 for questions or support.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.