

## Should I be using a nipple shield?

The short answer is probably not. The majority of mothers can successfully breastfeed without a shield.

Shields take the organic nature out of breastfeeding. They are something that you have to remember to take with you and wash. Additionally, the baby often knocks them off and they have to be reapplied throughout the feed which can be frustrating.

Nipple shields can also interfere with the milk transfer. Sucks, swallows and output should be monitored closely while using a shield, especially in the early days of nursing with one. The long answer is sometimes.

Moms with short, flat, inverted or little elasticity nipples find a real benefit to nipple shields. The baby's goal when grasping your nipple is to extend it to the back of their mouth to release milk. Anatomy differences can make that difficult for some babies.

Other moms find them useful for pain relief. The soft silicone acts as a barrier between the suction and friction of the baby and the mom's sensitive breast.

Finally, shields may be used as a transition for a baby who has become accustomed to using a bottle and balks at the idea of being on the breast in order to get back to breastfeeding.