

## Should I use nipple shields?

GBSN will never recommend the use of nipple shields although we are happy to give you information below and to talk through options with you.

### Advantages of using nipple shields

- You might feel that nipple shields are all that stand between giving up breastfeeding and continuing

### Disadvantages of using nipple shields

- Nipple shields are a barrier on your breast, between you and your baby. Therefore your breast is not getting as much stimulation and messages to make more milk. Using nipple shields can therefore gradually reduce your breastmilk supply. Some mothers will be going to make lots of breastmilk and so using nipple shields won't make much difference. However some mothers will make enough breastmilk for their baby as long as nothing gets in the way. Using nipple shields can drastically reduce their breastmilk supply and they can find difficulty in boosting their supply.
- Your baby can get to like the shields so much that he won't feed without them
- Nipple shields often don't help sore or cracked nipples as the baby often latches on by slurping up the shield, causing more pain.
- Nipple shields must not be used before your milk "is in"

For these reasons, GBSN urges caution and for you to consult your Health Professional if you are considering the use of nipple shields.

### But I'm already using them! How do I stop?

These are some ideas shared by mothers that you may like to try:

Co-bathing/skin to skin/snuggling up all help your baby to feed instinctively. You might find that offering your breast whilst your baby is still sleepy, helps him with this.

Dab some of the fluid from the sterilising equipment around your breast to give a familiar smell

If he won't latch on without the nipple shield there, some mothers give their baby a bit of time feeding then when their baby takes a breather, slip the shield off and try again.

This is a basic information sheet although GBSN hopes that it answers some of your questions. If you have further questions you may like to phone a Breastfeeding Counsellor. A list of their phone numbers may be found in the pink leaflet that you brought home from hospital "where to find support when breastfeeding". National Breastfeeding Helpline numbers are on the website. For convenience your baby may be referred to as "he". Written by Elizabeth Mayo, 2009.

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What if nothing works and my baby won't breastfeed without the nipple shield?

- We would suggest that you stay mindful of your breastmilk supply: Express some breastmilk into the shield before the feed starts and ensure that breastmilk is there at the end of the feed
- Keep encouraging your baby to latch as deeply onto your breast as possible
- Keep offering both breasts at each feed
- Lots of skin to skin with your baby touching your breasts to give more messages to make more breastmilk
- You might consider more regular weighing of your baby with your Health Visitor