



TEN STEP TUESDAY

Nipple Shields...Part Two

It's Ten Step Tuesday!



Cleaning the shield

It is important to keep the nipple shield clean. Wash in hot soapy water and rinse well after each use. (For moms with babies in the NICU, nipple shields can be thrown in steam sterilizer bag with her pump parts.)

Protecting mom's milk supply

Milk supply is controlled by how much milk a baby takes. A small, weak or poorly suckling baby may under-stimulate the milk supply. When using a nipple shield, it is important to hand express or pump after nursing to make sure the breasts are adequately stimulated. Expressed milk can be used to supplement the baby. Expressing milk after feedings may be necessary until it is clear that the milk supply is stable and the baby is growing well.

Weaning off the nipple shield

The goal is to return to full breastfeeding with no need for special equipment. As breastfeeding improves, mom can try removing the shield at various times during each feeding. If the baby seems unable to nurse without the shield, this means the problem is not yet resolved. Mom can just keep practicing here and there without the shield, and keeping breastfeeding attempts LOW STRESS. As long as the baby is growing well, the continued use of the shield is not a major problem. If it appears that the baby could manage without the shield, some mothers try spending a day doing lots of skin to skin time around the house. Quiet time with increased skin-to-skin contact and frequent practicing will reassure the baby that he or she doesn't really need the shield any more.

Talk to a lactation consultant if you have questions or have a couplet who you feel would benefit from a nipple shield. If you decide to use a nipple shield when a lactation consultant is not available, please remember to document use of a nipple shield and the education provided so mom can be followed closely and her breastfeeding goals can be supported!

For more information contact

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