

## 8 NEWBORN FEEDING

### 8.3 BREAST FEEDING AIDS

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8.3.2 Use of Nipple Shields  
Section B  
Clinical Guidelines  
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### 8.3.2 USE OF NIPPLE SHIELDS

#### AIM:

- To enable attachment of the infant to the breast.

#### KEY POINTS

- Nipple shields should not be used until lactogenesis has occurred.
- Until recent times it was believed that nipple shields contributed to a reduction in milk transfer and possibly a reduction in supply - especially if introduced before lactation was fully established. Recent research however has shown that the use of nipple shields for preterm or babies who are unable to maintain attachment, can greatly increase milk transfer and duration of breastfeeding.<sup>1-3</sup>
- Not all women will benefit from the use of nipple shields. These guidelines are intended to assist midwifery staff in identifying those mothers who will benefit from their use.
- A nipple shield should only be introduced by a Lactation Consultant (LC) or experienced midwife, following an assessment of the breastfeeding difficulty.

#### INDICATIONS FOR USE

- Infants who constantly slip on and off the nipple.
- Flat or inverted nipples when attachment without a shield cannot be achieved.
- Failure to achieve attachment in a reasonable time leading to increased frustration for mother and baby.

#### PROCEDURE

1. Ensure mother has an adequate milk supply<sup>2</sup>.
2. Ensure mother is aware of the risks involved in using the nipple shield.
3. Choose appropriate size shield of thin silicone.
4. Check the baby's latch with the shield. The mouth must not close on the shaft of the teat.
5. Check that the baby is not just sucking on the tip of the teat.
6. To fit shield, turn the shield almost inside out and apply centrally over nipple.
7. Experienced midwife to observe the breastfeed to assess effective milk transfer.
8. Teach mother how to assess her breasts before and after feeds to ensure adequate drainage i.e., no heavy or lumpy areas.

9. After each use shield should be:
  - rinsed in cold water
  - washed in hot soapy water and
  - rinsed and kept in the mother's possession.
10. Document reason for and effectiveness of use in baby's notes (MR 420). Initially review feeding and milk transfer daily.
11. Weigh the baby after using shield for 24 hours to ensure effective feeding.

## DISCHARGE PLANNING

1. If shield is used at discharge ensure follow-up is arranged at Breastfeeding Centre.
2. Follow up by VMS until Breastfeeding Centre appointment.
3. Hire electric breast pump to drain breast thoroughly after feeds if a nipple shield introduced within 24 hours of discharge.

## REFERENCES:

1. Meier P BL, Hurst NM, Spatz DL, Engstrom JL, Borucki LC, Krouse AM. Nipple Shields for preterm infants: Effect on milk transfer and duration of breastfeeding. **Journal of Human Lactation**. 2000; 16(2):106-14.
2. Walker M. **Breastfeeding Management for the Clinician - using the evidence**. Jones and Bartlett; 2006.
3. Wilson - Clay B. **The Breastfeeding Atlas**. 3rd ed; Lact. Press. Texas 2005.