



INVERTED NIPPLES

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Testing for inverted or flat nipples

A pregnant woman may discover that she has flat or inverted nipples. Inverted nipples are caused by adhesions which hold the nipple back toward the chest wall. When baby tries to grasp the nipple during a feeding, the nipple may pull away instead of protruding into his mouth. A baby can learn to effectively milk the breast without protruding nipples, however many babies become frustrated by this situation.

It is ideal to check for inverted nipples during the second trimester of pregnancy because they may be able to be corrected before the baby arrives. A simple “pinch” test will indicate if the mother has inverted or flat nipples. Grasp the nipple about one inch behind the base (where the nipple joins the areola) with the forefinger and the thumb. Press fingers together several times around the nipple base.

- If the nipple protrudes easily while pinching, the nipple should not require any preparation for breastfeeding.
- If the nipple appears to be inverted but protrudes during the test, no prenatal preparation is necessary
- If the nipple appears to protrude but goes back in when pinched, it is inverted and will benefit from prenatal treatment.
- If the nipple appears inverted and remains inverted during compression, prenatal treatment is indicated.
- Occasionally the nipple will appear to be flat or only slightly inverted and responds to stimulation as an Inverted nipple. Prenatal treatment is recommended.

Treatment of inverted nipples

The use of breast shells is often suggested for inverted nipples.

(Go to www.ameda.co.nz , Products – Breastfeeding Accessories)

The shells are worn in the bra and apply gentle pressure around the base of the nipple to stretch the adhesions. Initially the shells are worn for one hour a day, gradually increasing their use until they are worn throughout the waking hours. They are not worn during sleep.

For many women, use of the shell is only needed for the first breastfed baby; however, some women have found it necessary to wear breast shells before the birth of each baby.



*This is general information and does not replace the advice of your physician or healthcare provider.
If you have a problem you cannot solve quickly, seek help right away.
Every baby is different, and your baby may not be average.
If in doubt, contact your physician or other healthcare provider.*