

Vaginal Contraceptive Ring (NuvaRing)

How do I use the vaginal ring?

1. Your unused rings may be kept at room temperature for up to 4 months.
2. When you are ready to use the ring, wash your hands thoroughly and remove the ring from its package.
3. Press the edges of the ring together and slide the ring into your vagina. You can do this sitting, standing, lying down, or with one leg up on a stool. There is no special place or position for the ring: once it is in the vagina it will settle into a comfortable position. Very few people report that they can feel the ring once it is in the vagina.
4. Use a back-up method of contraception like condoms for a week after you put your first ring in. After the first ring, you will not need a back-up method when you start a new ring each month.
5. Leave the ring in the vagina for 3 weeks. Some people put a reminder in their calendars, or in their phones to help them remember to take the ring out. Research shows that the ring is still effective if left in for 4 weeks. Some people choose to leave it in for 4 weeks because it is more economical for them.
6. After 3 to 4 weeks, remove the ring, put it in the foil packet or a baggie and discard it in the trash.
7. Leave the ring out for one week (7 days). During this week you may have a withdrawal bleed or what seems like a light period. This is normal and expected. Some people skip this bleeding. If you have had the ring in consistently then you do not need to worry that you may be pregnant if you do not have a bleed during this week.
8. After seven days without the ring, insert a new ring. Insert the new ring on the same day of the week that the last ring was removed.

How effective is the vaginal ring?

The contraceptive ring is an excellent choice for preventing unwanted pregnancies. Used correctly less than 1 in 100 people will get pregnant over the course of a year. If not used carefully, 8 in 100 people will be pregnant in a year using the contraceptive ring.

When am I protected from pregnancy?

You are protected from pregnancy when you have used the ring every day for seven days. In the first month of the ring, you must use a back-up method for the first seven days (unless you started your ring on the first day of your period). After that you are protected.

What if I leave the ring out more than 7 days?

If the ring has been out more than seven days you are at risk for unintended pregnancy. Insert a new ring as soon as you remember and use a back-up contraceptive for 7 days after you put the new ring in.

What if I don't want to get my period?

Some people wish to skip their period. You can remove a ring and replace it with a new one immediately if you want to skip your period. Some people do this regularly. Some people do this if it would be inconvenient to have a period for some reason like going camping.

What if it slips out?

If your ring falls out (this happens rarely), then wash it and put it back in. If the ring is out for more than 3 hours you should use a backup birth control method for one week.

Side Effects

In general, the ring has few side effects. Mild headache is one reported side effect. Another side effect reported is changes in vaginal fluids. People reported “more wetness”. Some people are aware of the ring in the vagina and find it uncomfortable. All of these side effects were reported by very small numbers of people.

Breakthrough Bleeding: The hormones that prevent pregnancy change conditions in the uterus. Sometimes, especially in the first 2 to 3 months on a hormone contraceptive, a person may have spotting or irregular bleeding. Usually this goes away by the third month. If this concerns you, if you are bleeding heavily or having pain, please come and talk with a provider about this.

WARNINGS

The NuvaRing contains synthetic forms of estrogen and progesterone. All birth control methods that contain these hormones raise a person’s risk of having a blood clot. The type of progesterone in the NuvaRing is one that increases the risk of a blood clot slightly more when compared to the kind of progesterone in some of the older oral contraceptives.

A blood clot can occur in your head, heart, legs or lungs. This is a very serious potential risk of hormone contraception.

If you experience a severe headache, difficulty breathing, pain in your legs, severe pain in your abdomen, chest, back or jaw: seek medical attention and remember to mention that you are using a hormone contraception.

When you think about the risk of a clot remember that the ring is keeping you from getting pregnant which would be much riskier. The risk of getting a blood clot is significantly higher for people who are pregnant or have just given birth.

If you are travelling on a long train, plane, or car ride, reduce your risk of a clot by walking around at least every hour.

Have questions?

For complete information about this contraceptive, read your package insert.

For more information or if you have more questions, talk to one of our nurses.

Nurse Advice Line is 831-459-2951.

The NuvaRing does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections. You must still practice safer sex, use a condom and get regular STI testing to identify problems early.