

NuvaRing (The Ring)

What is the Ring?

NuvaRing is a monthly hormonal birth control method. It is a slender, flexible ring about as round as a silver dollar. It is inserted into the vaginal canal by the patient, and delivers hormones to the bloodstream. It works very much like “the pill” and contains the same hormones found in pills (estrogen and progesterone). Wearing the ring keeps a woman from ovulating, which means she does not release an egg that could be fertilized by sperm.

How effective is it?

When used correctly, the ring is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. The ring begins to work during the first cycle of use, but you will need to use a back up method of birth control (such as a condom) for one week after starting the ring to prevent pregnancy.

How is it used?

The ring is used for three weeks at a time, then removed after 21 days. You will have a ring free week of 7 days. This is when you will have your period. You will insert a new ring after this ring free week, and keep it in place for 3 weeks.

How do I insert the Ring?

Inserting the NuvaRing is similar to inserting a tampon. Choose the position that feels most comfortable to you (squatting, lying down, or standing with one leg up.). Hold NuvaRing between your thumb and forefinger and press opposite sides together (causing the NuvaRing to be tampon shaped). Insert the folded NuvaRing just like you would a tampon. *The exact position of the NuvaRing in the vagina is not important for it to work.* Anywhere in the vagina will work. If the NuvaRing feels uncomfortable, insert one finger and push the NuvaRing further back in the vagina. Start the NuvaRing as directed by your healthcare provider. After your one week ring free break insert a new ring on the same day of the week as it was inserted in the last cycle, and at the same time of day. For example, if NuvaRing was inserted on a Sunday at 10pm, after the ring free break you should insert a new ring on a Sunday at about 10pm.

Removing the NuvaRing

After 21 days, remove the ring using your finger and throw it away. To dispose of the NuvaRing, wrap it in its foil package and place it in the trash away from pets and children. It is no longer effective if it is left in place for longer than this amount of time. This will now be your ring-free week (7 day break) and you should have your period.

After the 7 days, you will need to insert a new ring or you will be starting late. You will need to use a back up method of birth control for one week if you are starting late. See the package insert for further directions.

It is not possible for the ring to be “lost inside” you. If you think the ring is inside your vaginal canal, but cannot get to it, make an appointment and use a back up method of birth control (in case it has fallen out without you noticing).

Will it fall out?

Rarely, the NuvaRing can slip out of the vagina if it has not been inserted properly, or while removing a tampon, moving the bowels, straining, or with severe constipation. If the ring slips out, and it has been out less than three hours, you should still be protected from pregnancy. NuvaRing can be reinserted after being rinsed in cool to lukewarm (not hot) water and should be reinserted as soon as possible, at the latest, within 3 hours. If you have lost NuvaRing, you must insert a new one, and use it on the same schedule as you would have used the lost ring. If NuvaRing has been out of the vagina for more than 3 hours, you may not be protected from pregnancy. You must use an extra method of birth control, such as condoms, until the NuvaRing has been in place for 7 days in a row. If NuvaRing slips out repeatedly, you should consult with your healthcare provider.

What if I left it in too long?

If NuvaRing has been left in your vagina for up to 4 weeks total, remove it and insert a new ring after a 1 week ring-free break. If it has been left in for more than 4 weeks you are not protected against pregnancy and you must check to be sure you are not pregnant before starting a new Ring. You must use an extra method of birth control, such as condoms, until it has been left in place for 7 days in a row.

What are the side effects ?

The side effects are similar to those for oral contraceptives. During the first cycle of use, some women may experience spotting or breakthrough bleeding between their periods. This should decrease after the first several cycles. Other side effects include headache, nausea, rash where it was applied, and breast discomfort. Side effects and breakthrough bleeding are more likely to occur if you are a smoker. Smoking increases your chances of having a stroke, blood clot or heart attack when using the ring

What are the dangerous side effects of the ring?

If you have any of the following symptoms **remove the NuvaRing** and go to the nearest emergency room.

Abdominal pain (severe)

Chest pain (severe)

Headaches (severe)

Eye pain or vision changes

Severe leg pain

As always, the NuvaRing prevents pregnancy not sexually transmitted diseases. We always recommend condoms. Remember; your chances of contracting a sexually transmitted disease (gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, AIDS, hepatitis, herpes, etc.) increase greatly with each additional partner you have.

Smokers

Women who smoke and use the ring are at an increased risk of side effects mentioned above. It is strongly discouraged to use the NuvaRing and smoke because of your increased risk for a heart attack, blood clot, or stroke. You can talk to your nurse practitioner about ways to help you quit smoking.

When do I need to use Emergency Contraception? Or a back up method of birth control?

If you are late starting the NuvaRing.(use a back up method for 7 days).

If you have worn the NuvaRing for more than 4 weeks.

If your ring has fallen out and it has been at least three hours.

If you are taking antibiotics or another medication that decreases the effectiveness of the NuvaRing.

Please refer to the package insert or call your clinician for clarification.