

The Ring

NuvaRing® is a reversible prescription method of birth control. It is a small, flexible ring that is inserted into the vagina once a month. It is left in place for three weeks and taken out for the remaining week. The Ring releases synthetic estrogen and progestin to protect against pregnancy for one month.

For your first cycle on the Ring, start on the Sunday after your period begins, even if it occurs on the same day. Use an additional form of (barrier) birth control for the first seven days after insertion. Every fourth Sunday will be your "ring change day". You will insert one new ring into the vagina and keep it in place for three weeks in a row. Then remove it for one week, and insert a new one at the end of that week to start the new cycle.

Check the expiration date of each ring package before insertion.

Follow directions included with the Ring for correct insertion.

The exact position of the Ring doesn't matter – if it's in your vagina, it's in the right place.

The ring *can remain in place during intercourse*. However, if you prefer, the ring **may** be removed for sexual intercourse for up to three hours but must be reinserted as soon as possible - wash it with water before reinsertion.

Remove it after three weeks on the same day of the week (Sunday) that it was originally inserted.

Wrap it up, and throw it out in the trash.

After one week without the Ring, insert a new one — on the same day of the week (Sunday) that the previous one was inserted in your last cycle.

During the one-week break, you will usually menstruate. You may still be bleeding when it is time to insert a new ring. This is normal, but the Ring must be inserted on the same day of the week (Sunday) as it was inserted in the last cycle, or pregnancy may occur.

Effectiveness is reduced and pregnancy can occur if:

- the unopened package is exposed to very high temperatures or direct sunlight
- it slips out of the vagina and is not replaced within three hours
- it does not stay in the vagina for three weeks in a row
- it is left in the vagina for more than three weeks

Possible side effects specific to the Ring may include:

- increased vaginal discharge
- vaginal irritation

Common side effects of all hormonal birth control methods (Pill, Patch, Ring) (that will usually clear up after two or three months of use) are:

- bleeding between periods or spotting (*may continue even with long-term use*)
- weight gain or loss**
- breast tenderness
- nausea — rarely, vomiting
- changes in mood
- problems with contact lens use — a change in vision or the inability to wear the lenses

Other possible side effects include

- headache
- change in sexual desire
- depression

If you have any of the following rare symptoms, seek medical attention immediately:

- sudden or constant pain or redness and swelling in the leg
- pain in the abdomen, chest, or arm
- sudden shortness of breath or spitting up blood
- severe headaches
- eye problems such as blurred or double vision
- worsening depression
- yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice)

Certain medicines may make hormonal contraception less effective. If you are taking **antibiotics**, use another form of (barrier) birth control till you finish the full course. Ask your clinician for advice to determine if you need other forms of contraception while taking specific medications, and advise all clinicians who treat you that you are using hormonal birth control before you accept any prescriptions.

Alternate/back-up/additional barrier forms of birth control/contraception:

For use when the hormonal method is not effective, i.e. in the first seven days of use, if the patch has fallen off, the ring has fallen out, you are on antibiotics, more than one pill has been missed or if you are on the pill and have been vomiting and unable to digest the pill:

- Condom
- Diaphragm
- Sponge
- Spermicide
- Cervical cap
- Abstinence (no sexual intercourse/penetration)