

## The Nuva Ring for Birth Control

## UR Medicine Ob/Gyn

### What is it?

The NuvaRing is a small flexible ring you place in your vagina once a month, for three weeks at a time to prevent pregnancy. It is safe, effective and convenient.



### How does it work?

Like the pill or patch, the ring contains two hormones: estrogen and progestin. These hormones stop your ovaries from releasing eggs, and make your cervical mucus thicker. This prevents the sperm from getting to the egg. It does not protect against STDs.

### How effective is the ring?

If you use the ring perfectly, your chance of pregnancy is less than 1 in 100. However, no one is perfect, and normal use means your chance of pregnancy is about 9 in 100.

### What may be done before I start using the birth control ring?

Your doctor will ask you about diseases you have had in the past and check your blood pressure. A pelvic exam is not needed unless you are having problems.

Your doctor will ask about medicines you use and if you smoke. Smoking increases your chance of having a stroke, heart attack or blood clot. If you smoke and are 35 years or older, you should not use the ring.

Do not use this medicine if you have breast or uterine cancer, liver disease, or certain types of headache (migraines with aura). You should not use the estrogen-containing pills if you have ever had a blood clot, heart attack, or stroke.

### How do I use the ring?

You insert one ring into the vagina, and leave it there for three weeks in a row. Then you remove it for one week, when you will have your period. After one week, you place a new ring in your vagina. You can use the ring for four weeks in a row and not have a period at all. If you do this, you can change the ring on the same day of every month.

### How do I start my birth control ring?

Place your first ring on the first day of your period, or on the first Sunday after your period begins. If you start your ring after your period, you may need a backup method for one week. You can also ask your provider about a "Quick Start" method to start the ring right away.

The ring can be started 4-6 weeks after having a baby and while breastfeeding.

### Tips for using the ring:

- Wash your hands before inserting the ring.

- Gently push the ring into your vagina. The exact position doesn't matter. Keep the ring in place during intercourse.
- If the ring slips out, simply wash it in warm water and replace it in your vagina. If the ring is out more than three hours, use a backup method for one week.
- When you remove the ring after three weeks, gently hook your finger around the front rim of the ring, and remove from your vagina.
- Make sure you insert the ring on the same day every month.

### **What are the advantages of using the birth control ring?**

Birth control rings may help decrease bleeding and pain during your monthly period. The ring may also prevent cancer of the uterus, ovaries and colon. They can also prevent ovarian cysts.

### **What are the disadvantages or side effects of using the birth control ring?**

You must remember to change the ring every month, which can be inconvenient and difficult for some people.

Most women do not have any side effects. You may have bleeding in between periods, less frequent periods, vaginal dryness or breast pain. Birth control rings put you at a small increased risk for blood clots and stroke, especially if you smoke and are older than 34. However, you are much more likely to have a blood clot or stroke during pregnancy than when you are using a birth control ring.

### **What medications interact with birth control rings?**

Some antibiotics (rifampin and rifabutin). Common antibiotics do NOT interfere.

Some anti-seizure medications, but not all of them

Certain HIV medications, but not all of them

If you are found to be pregnant when you are using the ring, it will not cause abortion, miscarriage or birth defects.

### **How much does the ring cost?**

Depending on your insurance, the ring may cost \$15 - \$80 per month.

You can find more information on birth control rings here:

[www.bedsider.org](http://www.bedsider.org)

[www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/birth-control](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/birth-control)