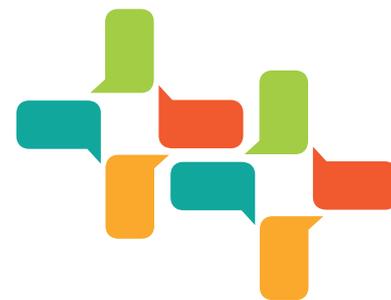


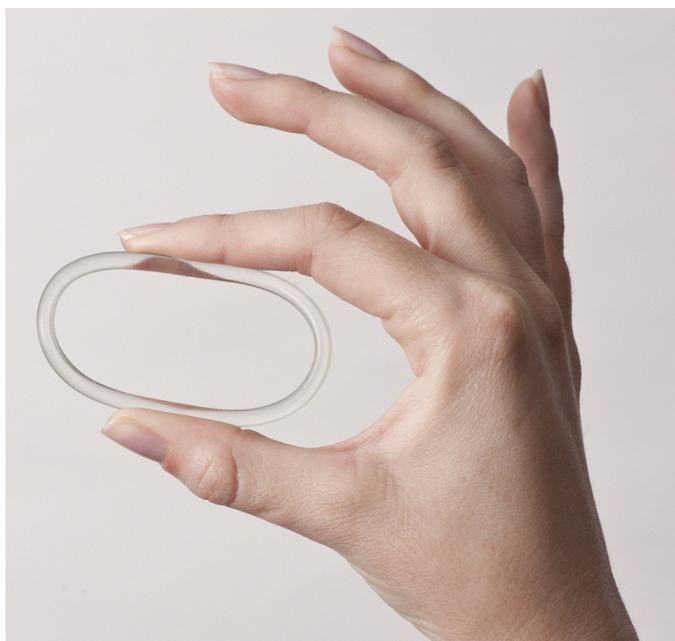
Fact Sheet - English

THE VAGINAL RING (NUVARING®)



What Is The Vaginal Ring?

The vaginal ring is called a NuvaRing®. It is a soft plastic ring about five and a half centimetres across. It contains the hormones oestrogen and a progestogen, similar to the combined contraceptive Pill. It is placed in your vagina and the hormones are absorbed into the body to stop you getting pregnant. Most women cannot feel the vaginal ring once it is in place.



How Does It Work?

The vaginal ring stays in the vagina for three weeks. Then you take it out, for a week. You will have a light period-like bleed, and after seven days you put a new ring in your vagina. The hormones stop a woman's ovaries from releasing an egg each month, so a pregnancy cannot begin.

How Well Does It Work?

With perfect use the vaginal ring is more than 99% effective. This means that if 100 women use it correctly for one year, less than one will become pregnant. With typical or 'real life' use it is less effective with up to nine women in every hundred becoming pregnant in a year. You need to remember to take it out and put a new one in again at the right time.

Who Can Use The Vaginal Ring?

Most women can use the vaginal ring. It is good if you find it hard to remember to take a pill every day, and is an alternative to the implant or an IUD.

Who Should Not Use The Vaginal Ring?

Women should not use the vaginal ring if they have had a blood clot in their leg, a stroke or heart attack, liver problems, high blood pressure, certain types of migraine, or breast cancer. You may not be able to use the vaginal ring if you are breastfeeding and your baby is less than 6 months old. It is very important to talk with your doctor to make sure it is safe for you to use the vaginal ring. Some other medications can stop the vaginal ring from working properly and the doctor will tell you about these and other things you need to know before you decide to use it.

Are There Any Side Effects?

Most women feel well while using the vaginal ring, but it is common to have some side effects at first. You may have sore breasts, headaches or nausea (feeling sick). This usually settles down after one to two months. Serious health problems caused by the vaginal ring are rare, but ask your doctor to tell you about them.

How Is The Vaginal Ring Inserted?

Squeeze the ring between your thumb and index finger (figure 1). Gently insert it into your vagina (figure 2). There is no correct position – if it feels uncomfortable, slide it further into your vagina. Your vaginal muscles will keep it in place, even during exercise and sex.

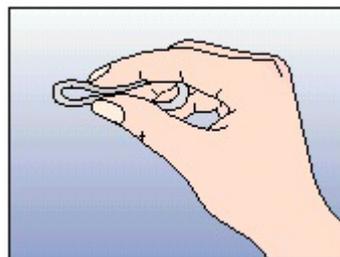


Figure 1

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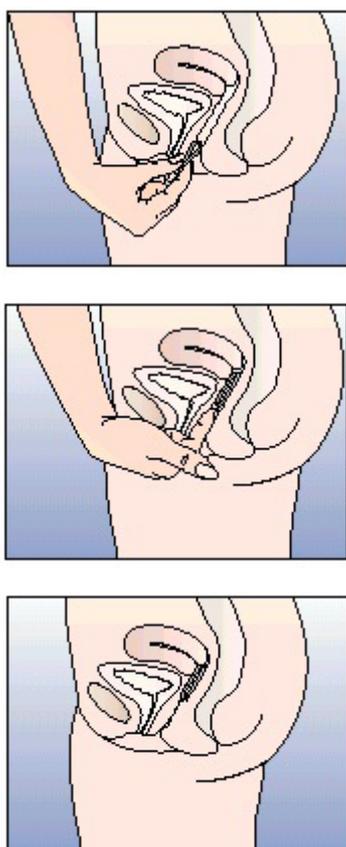


Figure 2

How Is It Taken Out?

To remove the ring simply put your finger into your vagina, hook it around the ring and pull it out (figure 3).

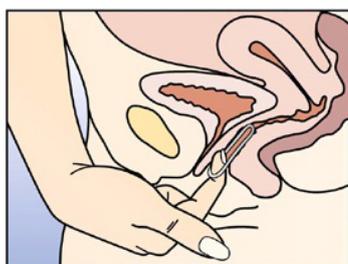


Figure 3

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What If I Forget To Use It?

If you are more than 24 hours late inserting the vaginal ring after the week without it, insert it as soon as you remember and use another form of contraception (such as condoms) for seven days. In this case, if you have had unprotected sex during the ring free week you may be at risk of pregnancy and should consider the Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP), available from a pharmacy without needing a prescription.

You should leave the vaginal ring in the vagina for 3 weeks. If it is taken out during this time and has been out of the vagina for less than 24 hours you should rinse it with water and put it back in as soon as possible. You will still be covered for contraception.

If the vaginal ring has been out of the vagina more than 24 hours you should rinse it with water and put the ring back in as soon as you remember. You should use another form of contraception (such as condoms) for seven days.

If the ring has been out of the vagina for more than 24 hours during the third week, you should put in a new ring immediately – this will start the next three weeks of use. You may not get your usual period-like bleed, but you may get some spotting.

Where Can I Get The Vaginal Ring?

You need to see a doctor to get a script for the vaginal ring. You can then take the script and buy your vaginal rings from a pharmacy.

For Further Information

- Contact the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline
- NRS (for deaf) 133 677
- Or visit your nearest Family Planning clinic

Reviewed: June 2014 | FPNSW 06/14

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