

What it is

It is a once a month birth control method. This soft, flexible, plastic ring is inserted into the vagina, where it slowly releases two hormones; an estrogen and progestin. The NuvaRing comes in one size and is held against the cervix by the vaginal walls. The NuvaRing is similar to the Birth Control Pill, except that you only have to use it once a month.

How it works

Estrogen and progestin are released by the ring and absorbed by the body. Similar to the Pill and the Patch, the hormones in the NuvaRing work to prevent pregnancy by:

- Stopping the ovaries from releasing an egg every month.
- Thickening the cervical mucus so the sperm have a harder time traveling.
- Making the lining of the uterus thinner so that an egg has a harder time implanting.

Advantages

- Makes periods more regular, lighter, and may reduce cramping.
- Is completely reversible — when a woman stops using the ring, her body resumes its normal cycle and fertility returns quickly.
- You only need to use it once a month, you don't need to remember to take something every day.

Disadvantages

- The NuvaRing does not protect against sexually transmitted infections

Where to get the NuvaRing

You need a prescription for the NuvaRing, so you will need to visit your doctor. If you are aged 24 or younger you can go to Public Health's Sexual Health clinic. Cost of the Ring will vary and some health plans will cover the cost.

How to use the NuvaRing

The ring is worn inside the vagina for three weeks, followed by a one week (seven day) ring free period.

When starting the NuvaRing, you must insert the ring on or before the fifth day of your period, even if you have not finished bleeding. You should not feel the ring when it is in place. During the first month, the ring will not protect you against pregnancy, so use a back-up method of birth control, such as a condom.

Putting it in

Step 1: Find a comfortable position; this may be lying down, squatting, or stand with one knee bent and your leg raised.

Step 2: Hold the ring between your thumb and index finger and press the sides of the ring together.

Step 3: Gently push the folded ring into your vagina. The muscles of your vagina should keep the NuvaRing in place.



Taking it out

After having the ring in place for 21 days, hook your index finger under the rim and simply pull it out.

When you will get your period

You will get your period during the seven day ring-free week.

Starting a new cycle

After seven days without the ring, insert a new ring on the same day of the week as you inserted the last one. The actual day of the week you insert the ring will stay the same.

What to do if the NuvaRing slips out If the ring is out for fewer than three hours:

- Rinse it off with lukewarm water and put it back in.
- If you have lost it, insert a new ring as soon as possible.
- You will still remove it on the same day.

If the ring is out for more than three hours in the first or second week of the cycle.

- Put the ring in as soon as you can, and use a back-up method for the next seven days.

If the ring is out for more than three hours in the third week of the cycle

- Use a back-up method of birth control
- Call the Sexual health clinic, or talk to your health care provider or pharmacist.

What to do if you forget to take the ring out after the 21 days

If you have left it in for an extra week or less

- Remove the ring. Wait for seven days, and put in a new ring.
- Your insertion day will now change. Track this on a calendar.

If you have left it in for more than an extra week

- Use a back-up method of birth control.
- Call the Sexual Health Clinic, or talk to your health care provider or pharmacist.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services

Sexual Health/Harm Reduction Program

Side effects of the NuvaRing

Uncommonly reported side-effects include:

- headache
- vaginal irritation, discomfort or discharge
- nausea
- breast tenderness
- breakthrough bleeding (bleeding between periods)

The Ring does NOT cause weight gain, nor does it increase vaginal infections.

The NuvaRing is NOT recommended for women who cannot take the birth control pill for medical reasons. This includes women who have had a blood clot, heart attack, stroke or breast cancer, as well as women with active liver disease or women over 35 years old who smoke.

Sexual Health/Harm Reduction Program

For clinic times call 519-883-2267

All clinical and counselling services are free and confidential. No health card is required to receive services.

Questions?

Call the Region of Waterloo Public Health Sexual Health Program or your doctor.



Scan this code with your smartphone for more information about sexual health clinics and services.