

Vaginal Ring

Ring, Birth Control Ring, NuvaRing, Annovera



How does the vaginal ring work?



- The ring uses the **hormones progestin and estrogen** to prevent ovulation (so no egg is released for sperm to fertilize) and to thicken cervical mucus (which prevents sperm from moving into the uterus).
- There are **two rings: NuvaRing** and **Annovera**. The main differences are the amount of hormone in each ring, how long it lasts, and weight restrictions.
 - **NuvaRing** lasts for 1 cycle (1 month). **Annovera** lasts for 13 cycles (1 year).
 - **NuvaRing** works for people of all weights. **Annovera** works for people with BMIs 29 or less.
- The ring works for people of **all ages and those using gender affirming hormone therapy**.

How do you use the vaginal ring?

change **monthly**

You need to **see a provider** (in-person or via telemedicine) to start using the ring.

You have to use the ring all month and change it on schedule to prevent pregnancy.

- **Insertion:** Get a prescription for the ring from your provider to fill at the pharmacy. Wash your hands. If using **Annovera**, rinse and pat it dry, there is no need to rinse **NuvaRing**. Squeeze the ring into an oval and insert it into your vagina. Use your finger to push the ring farther inside. You should not feel it inside of you. Leave it there until it is time to change (directions below). If the ring comes out, rinse it before reinserting.
 - **NuvaRing:** Leave it in for 3 to 5 weeks. Have 7 days without a ring to get your period. Then start a new ring. To skip your period, you can put a new **NuvaRing** in immediately after you remove the old one.
 - **Annovera:** Leave it in for 3 weeks. Remove the ring, wash and dry it, and put it in its container for 7 days. You will get your period during these 7 days. Wash and dry the ring and reinsert it for 3 weeks. **Annovera** lasts 13 cycles. Talk to your provider if you want to skip your period with **Annovera**.
- **Removal:** To remove, wash your hands and use your finger to hook the ring and pull it out.



Privacy and control

- A provider is needed to start and continue using the ring through ongoing prescriptions. There are apps where you can get a prescription. You can decide to stop using the ring on your own.
- Your partner may be able to feel the ring with their fingers or penis during sex. **If you want to remove the ring during sex you can do so for up to 3 hours, but it is not necessary.**
- Someone you live with or who you share insurance with may see a bill from your insurance.
- Someone may be able to find your ring packages or discarded rings. Extra **NuvaRings** must be refrigerated, so it is likely people you live with will see them.
- If anyone else is tracking your period, they may notice a change to your period.

When starting the ring, will it work immediately?



When starting within 5 days of the first day of your period, it will work immediately. If you are not sure bleeding is your period, you can use a backup method for 1 week.



When starting at any other time, the ring will take 1 week to work. Use an additional contraceptive during that week.



The ring may not be right for people who have or had

- Clotting disorders or risk factors for blood clots
- Smoker and age 35+
- Migraine with aura
- High blood pressure
- Lupus with positive or unknown antibodies

This is not a complete list, so talk to your provider about your medical history before starting this method.



Use emergency contraception if

- Your ring is out for **3+ hours at once**.
- Your ring is out for **2+ days in total** during the time it should be inside you.
- You are **late** putting it in **after the ring-free week**.
- **NuvaRing:** Same ring used for **5+ weeks**.
- **Annovera:** Same ring used for **13+ cycles**.

How well does the ring prevent pregnancy?

- On average, **7 out of 100 people using the ring will get pregnant each year**. This means it is **93% effective** with typical use. Typical use considers how easily a person can use the ring. Some people will leave the ring out for more than 3 hours, forget to take their ring out on time, or forget to replace the ring to start a new cycle.
- With perfect use, meaning the ring is used correctly, 1 out of 100 people using the ring will get pregnant each year. It is 99% effective.
- Some medications can make the ring not work as well.
- **You can use a non-hormonal method of contraception with the ring to provide more protection against pregnancy. You cannot use the ring with Phexxi.**



Side effects

Sexually transmitted infections: Does not prevent.

- Use external or internal condoms to lower your risk of all sexually transmitted infections.

Period: Can affect.

- When starting the ring, you may temporarily have spotting between periods.
- The ring may make your periods lighter.
- The ring can make periods more predictable.

Period cramps: Can lessen.

Weight: No effect.

Acne: Can improve.

Fertility return: When you stop using the ring, you can get pregnant right away.

Other possible side effects:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Breast tenderness
- Increased vaginal wetness/discharge
- Vaginal irritation
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Reduces symptoms of PCOS or endometriosis

The ring helps lower risk for: anemia; uterine, endometrial, and ovarian cancer; pelvic inflammatory disease; ovarian and breast cysts; bone thinning; ectopic pregnancy; uterine, ovarian, or fallopian tube infections

Postpartum use

The ring is **not safe to use right after giving birth**. Estrogen can increase the risk of blood clots right after delivery. At 6 weeks postpartum, the ring is safe to use and will not affect lactation, breastfeeding/chestfeeding, or infant development if initiation has been successful.

+ Contact your provider if you have

- Abdominal pain
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin (jaundice)
- Symptoms of toxic shock syndrome
- Severe headache or aura
- Chest pain
- Blood clots
- High blood pressure
- Swelling around mouth or in legs
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Gallbladder problems
- Difficulty breathing
- Dark patches on skin
- Leg pain/swelling

? Questions to ask your provider

- Will it increase my chances of getting vaginal infections?
- How long of a prescription can you give me?
- How frequently can I remove it if not more than 3 hours at a time?

Scan for a contraception guide and information sheets on each method.

