

Vaginal Ring

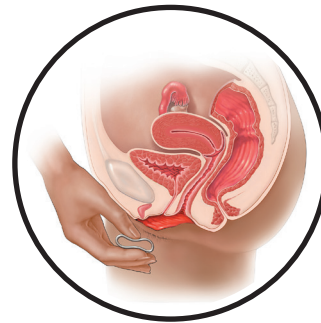
The vaginal ring is a soft, flexible, clear plastic ring that measures 54 mm in diameter and is inserted into a woman's vagina where it slowly releases the hormones, estrogen and progestin, for three weeks.

How does it work?

- The vaginal ring prevents pregnancy primarily by stopping the ovaries from releasing an egg, but it may also thicken the cervical mucus (making it harder for sperm to get into the uterus) and make the uterine lining thin. Its method of action is very similar to the Pill.
- The ring comes in only one size, and does not need to be in a particular position in the vagina to be effective. It is held in place by the walls of the vagina and a woman usually cannot feel the ring once it is in. The woman inserts and removes the ring herself and most women find this easy to do.
- The ring is worn inside the vagina for three weeks, followed by a one-week ring-free interval allowing a period to occur. At the end of the ring-free week, the woman inserts another ring to begin a new cycle.

How effective is it?

- **Typical use failure rate:** 90 of 1000 women during first year of use
- **Perfect use failure rate:** 3 of 1000 women during first year of use



Advantages

- + Highly effective, reversible and safe
- + May reduce menstrual flow and cramps
- + Regulates menstrual cycle
- + Decreases premenstrual symptoms
- + Reduces the risks of endometrial, ovarian and colon cancers
- + Reduces the risk of fibroids and ovarian cysts
- + Does not have to be remembered each day

Disadvantages

- May cause irregular bleeding or spotting
- May cause breast tenderness, nausea, or headaches
- May cause vaginal irritation, discomfort or discharge
- Requires remembering to change the ring once per month
- Does not protect against STIs