

Nuva Ring (Birth Control Ring)

What is the Nuva Ring?

Nuva Ring, also known as the birth control ring, is a type of prescription hormonal birth control that is inserted into the vagina. It is a slender, flexible, odorless, transparent vaginal ring, about as big and round as a silver dollar. You put it in and take it out yourself. The ring stays in place for three weeks in a row, and is removed for the next seven days at the end of the third week. During the one-week break, you will usually have your menstrual period. Nuva Ring contains a combination of an estrogen and progestin, which are similar to the hormones in most birth control pills and mimic women's natural hormones.

How does the Nuva Ring work?

Nuva Ring prevents pregnancy by delivering a steady, low dose of contraceptive hormones around the clock. This prevents ovulation (the ovaries do not release an egg) and also changes the cervical mucus making it harder for sperm to enter the uterus to fertilize an egg that might be released.

How effective is Nuva Ring?

If Nuva Ring is used according to directions, it is 98.8% effective over the next year. Each ring delivers continuous levels of hormones into your body. Nuva Ring is one size fits all. Although some women and their partner may feel the Nuva Ring, most do not. Once the ring is in place in the back of the vagina, it will provide 4 weeks of pregnancy protection. Certain drugs may interfere with the effectiveness of the ring. Please discuss any drugs you are using with your health care provider and pharmacist. A non-hormonal method of birth control (e.g. latex condoms) will be needed as a back-up method for the first week of use.

Does Nuva Ring protect against STDs?

NO. Just like all hormonal birth control methods, Nuva Ring does not provide any protection against STDs, including HIV/AIDS. The most effective way of preventing infection, other than abstinence, is to use latex condoms correctly each time you have sex.

What About Side Effects?

Some women who use Nuva Ring have experienced vaginal irritation or discharge, headaches, nausea, irregular bleeding, weight changes, and moodiness. The use of any hormonal birth control method containing estrogen can slightly increase the risk of rare, serious side effects that can be life threatening, including blood clots, stroke, heart attack, and liver tumors. Smoking increases these risks. Please discuss all these with your medical provider.

Warning Signs

Serious side effects of the birth control ring are rare. However, if you develop any of the following symptoms while using Nuva Ring, you should call your health care provider right away.

Remember the word "ACHES". It stands for:

- **A** Abdominal pain (severe)
- C Chest pains, coughing blood, breathlessness
- H Headaches (severe)
- E Eye problems (blurred, double or loss of vision)
- S Severe leg pain, swelling, numbness or tingling

Who should NOT use Nuva Ring?

Pregnant women, women who think they may be pregnant, or women with blood clots, chest pains, certain cancers, unexplained vaginal bleeding, a history of liver disease, stroke, or heart attacks should not use Nuva Ring. Women over age 35 who smoke 15 or more cigarettes per day should not use Nuva Ring. Women who have high blood pressure, migraine headaches, diabetes or severe depression should talk with their healthcare provider to decide if they can safely use Nuva Ring.

Are there any health advantages?

Although there is no long-term data available, ring users can probably expect many of the same non-contraceptive advantages as women taking birth control pills, including a decreased risk of developing endometrial cancer, ovarian cancer, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), anemia, and ectopic pregnancy. Ring users may also experience less painful and lighter periods.

When do I get my first ring?

Nuva Ring use is based on a four-week cycle. You insert your first ring within the first 5 days of your menstrual period. Use a back-up method (e.g. latex condoms) for the first week. The ring stays in place in the back of your vagina, below your cervix. Remove the ring 3 weeks later on the same day it was inserted and at around the same time. For example, if you insert Nuva Ring on a Sunday at 9:00am, remove the ring on the Sunday 3 weeks later at 9:00am. Your period will usually start within a few days after removing the ring and may not have finished before the next ring is inserted. To be protected from pregnancy, a new ring must be inserted one week after the last ring was removed, beginning the next four-week cycle. If you are late inserting a new ring and are concerned that you may become pregnant, contact your health care provider as soon as possible and ask about emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs). You may want to keep ECPs at home ... just in case. Ask your provider about getting an advanced prescription of ECP.

How do I know that it is inserted properly?

There is no danger of the ring being pushed too far up into the vagina or getting lost. Nuva Ring can be inserted only as far as the end of the vagina, where the cervix (lower end of the uterus) will block the ring from going any further. The exact position of the ring within the vagina is not important.

What do I do if the Nuva Ring slips out?

It is rare that a ring would slip out of the vagina. This might happen if it was not inserted correctly or while removing a tampon. If the ring is out less than 3 hours, rinse it with lukewarm water and reinsert it. If you lost the ring, a new ring must be inserted and you continue to follow your original schedule. If you have been without a ring for more than 3 hours, you might be at risk of becoming pregnant. Contact your health care provider as soon as possible and ask about emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs).

What do I do if I forget to remove Nuva Ring?

If Nuva Ring has been left in place for less than 4 total weeks, you should still be protected from pregnancy and only need to replace the Nuva Ring after a one-week break. If Nuva Ring has been left in place for more than 4 weeks, you may be at risk of pregnancy and should insert a new Nuva Ring as soon as possible and use a back-up method of birth control for one week.

What about when I want to get pregnant?

Every woman is different, so you need to be prepared for the possibility of pregnancy immediately after you discontinue Nuva Ring. Some women may expect a slight delay in becoming pregnant. You may want to use a non-hormonal form of birth control until your menstrual cycles have become regular and you are certain you are ready to become pregnant.

For More Information:

Student Health Services	
Health Promotion	
Visit Our Website at	shs.sdsu.edu
Facebook/TwitterFac	ebook.com/aztechealth &
	@AZTEChealth
Emergency Contraception Hotline	1-888-NOT-2-LATE

