

ABCD Family Planning

How to Use Vaginal Contraceptive Ring

Decide with your health care provider when to start the ring.

Most women start the ring anytime in the first 5 days after the menstrual period begins. You do not need to wait until you stop bleeding. You will need special instructions from your health care provider to begin using the ring any other time. If you start the ring at any time other than the first 5 days of your menstrual bleeding, you will need to use a condom or not have sex for the first seven days you use the ring.

Important

- Be sure to ask your health care provider for any special instructions if you are switching to the ring from any other type of birth control, if you are starting the ring after having a baby, or after an abortion or miscarriage.
- **The ring must be kept in a refrigerator** if you don't use it within 4 months of getting it from the pharmacy or your health center.

How do I put the ring into my vagina?

- Wash and dry your hands. Remove the ring from the foil pouch. Save the pouch so that you can throw the ring away correctly later.
- Choose the most comfortable position for you: 1) standing with one leg up or 2) lying down or 3) squatting.
- Squeeze the sides of the ring until they come together. Gently push the folded ring into your vagina as far back as it will go. The ring can not go too far into the vagina or get lost. It does not need to be in a special place in the vagina to work. If the ring does not feel comfortable inside your vagina, try pushing it in a bit further.

When do I change the ring?

- Once you put the ring into your vagina, leave it in place for 3 weeks in a row.
- After 3 weeks, take the ring out of your vagina. Wait one week before you put in a new ring.
- Your menstrual period should begin two to three days after you remove the ring.
- One week after you take the ring out, put a new ring in your vagina, even if your menstrual period hasn't stopped.
- The day of the week you first put the ring in your vagina will be the same day you take the ring out three weeks later. For example, if you put in your very first ring on a Sunday, you take the ring out on a Sunday 3 weeks later. Try to put it in and take it out at around the same time of day.

How do I take the ring out of my vagina?

- Put one finger into your vagina, hook it under the front edge of the ring and pull gently down and out of the vagina. (You may also be able to grasp the front edge between two fingers.)
- Put the ring in the pouch, close the pouch, and throw it away where children or pets can't get it. Do not throw the ring away in the toilet.
- You must put a new ring in one week after you take out the old one even if your period has not stopped yet.

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What if the ring slips out of my vagina?

Sometimes the ring can slip out of the vagina while removing a tampon or straining with a bowel movement. It can also slip out if it hasn't been put in correctly.

- **If the ring has been out of your vagina for less than 48 hours**, you should still be protected from pregnancy. Rinse the ring with cool water (never hot) and put back in as soon as possible.
- **If the ring has been out of your vagina for two or more days** (or you don't know how long), you may NOT still be protected from pregnancy.
 - Rinse the ring with cool water (never hot), put it back in the vagina.
 - If you have lost the ring, insert a new one. Stay on the same schedule as the old ring.
 - Use condoms or don't have sex for 7 days.
 - If you have unprotected sex during the time the ring has been out of your vagina or during the first 7 days after you put it back in, call your health care provider about emergency contraception (EC).
 - If the ring was out of your vagina for more than 48 hours during the third week, put it back in, finish the third week, and immediately start a new ring the next day. Do not skip a week. Use condoms or don't have sex for 7 days.

What if I forget to take out the ring on time?

- **If you leave the ring in your vagina for an extra week or less** (if it has been in the vagina for a total of 4 weeks or less), remove the ring, wait one week, and insert a new ring. You are still protected from pregnancy.
- **If you leave the ring in your vagina for more than 4 weeks**, you may NOT be protected from pregnancy. Remove the ring, and start using condoms or don't have sex. In one week, put a new ring in your vagina. Use condoms or don't have sex for 7 more days after you put in the new ring. If you have unprotected sex during this time, call your health care provider about emergency contraception (EC).

What if I forget to put in a new ring on time?

- If you are less than 48 hours late, put in the ring as soon as you remember.
 - If you forget to put in a new ring and had sex within the past 5 days, use emergency contraception (EC)
- If you are 2 or more days late, put in the new ring as soon as you remember and use condoms or don't have sex for 7 days after you put in the ring.
- If you have unprotected sex during this time, call your health care provider about emergency contraception (EC).

What is emergency contraception (EC)?

EC is a type of birth control used by a woman within 5 days after unprotected sex. . It works best to prevent pregnancy if used very soon after unprotected sex. If you need EC or want more information about whether you should use it, call your health care provider, family planning counselor, or pharmacist.