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committed to the
reproductive needs of
children and adolescents

Birth Control: Vaginal Ring

What is the vaginal ring?

The ring is a flexible 2-inch circle that you place inside your vagina once a month. It contains the same hormones as birth control pills and it works the same way as the pill by releasing hormones-- estrogen and progestin. These hormones stop the body from releasing eggs and change the lining of your uterus preventing pregnancy. These hormones also change the mucus in your cervix to block sperm. It is prescribed by a health care provider.



How do I use the ring?

Using the ring is similar to using a tampon. Place the ring into your vagina, like a tampon. Leave it in for 3 weeks. Then remove it for a week to have your period. Then put in a new ring. The ring can be used to stop periods completely. If you are interested in doing this, you should speak to your health care provider.

What are pros to using the ring?

The ring is good for pregnancy prevention. You can leave the ring during sex and most women and their partners don't feel the ring. You don't have to remember a daily pill. Periods are usually more regular, lighter and shorter. The ring can also help with acne, cramps and premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

How well does the ring work?

About 9 out of 100 women will become pregnant each year if they **don't** always use the ring perfectly. Less than 1 out of 100 women will become pregnant each year if they **always** use the ring perfectly.

What are cons to using the ring?

The ring doesn't protect against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), so you still need to use a condom. Side effects are uncommon, but can include headaches, nausea and breast tenderness. Talk to your doctor if you take other medications, smoke, have a history of blood clots, high blood pressure, migraine headaches or other medical problems.

How do I make the ring work the best?

Keep it in place. Change it on time. Don't leave it out for more than 3 hours at time.