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## **Nuva Ring**

### **Background.**

A Nuva Ring is a contraceptive option that contains estrogen and progestin. The active hormonal pills are similar to those naturally produced in the body. The hormonal doses prevent the release of eggs from the ovaries, reduces the build-up uterine lining, and thickens the cervical mucous. Together these mechanisms prevent pregnancy. When used exactly as directed the Pill is 97-98% effective.

Like “The Pill”, the Nuva Ring gives a user 3 consecutive week of hormone, followed by a hormone free week. Unlike the Pill, a user places the Ring inside the vagina where it remains in place for 3 weeks. This generally offers more continuous contraception than the Pill, since it does not require daily administration. However, it does require keeping a calendar regarding its weeks of use.

### **Starting “The Ring”.**

The Ring is placed inside the vagina and left in place for 3 consecutive weeks. At the end of the third week the Ring is removed. A woman can expect a light menstrual period during the 5-7 day hormone free week. A NEW Ring is placed in the vagina to start another cycle: 3 weeks in and 1 week out.

**You should expect to have your period or spotting during the hormone-free week.** (If you do not have even a smudge of brown discharge during this week schedule an appointment for a pregnancy test.)

Start The Ring during the week of your period, unless otherwise instructed. Back-up contraception (abstinence or condoms) is required for the first 7 days in using the Ring.

### **Missing a Pill.**

Forgetting how many weeks have passed with the Ring’s cycle is a common problem even with the best intentions. If this happens too often, the Ring is probably NOT a good form of contraception for you. Here is what to do if for common Ring occurrences.

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| RING FALLS OUT FOR LESS THAN 3 HOURS  | Rinse it off and put it back in. <b>You are still covered for contraception.</b>  |
| RING FALLS OUT FOR MORE THAN 3 HOURS  | <b>You are <i>not</i> covered for contraception.</b> Rinse it off, put it back in, <b>use back-up contraception for one week.</b>             |
| RING HAS BEEN IN LONGER THAN 3 WEEKS. | <b>Technically, you are not covered for contraception.</b><br>Take it out put a new ring immediately. <b>DO NOT TAKE A HORMONE FREE WEEK.</b> |

### **Frequently Asked Questions.**

*Q: What should I do if I have continuous spotting when I don't expect it?*

A: It is common to have irregular bleeding during the first 3 months of using the Ring. If you have irregular bleeding for more than 3 months or if symptoms are associated with PAIN OR FOUL ODOR, schedule an appointment.

*Q: What if I don't have a period during the hormone-week?*

A: A pregnancy test should be done. Call the doctor's office for advice.

*Q: Is there a risk of infertility from using the Ring?*

A: No. It may take a few months for your natural cycle with ovulation to resume. Most women are able to conceive within a year of stopping birth control pills. This is the same for women who do not take birth control pills.

Q: Does the cause breast cancer?

A: No. But women who have had breast cancer are encouraged to consider other forms of contraception.

### **Common Temporary Discomforts.**

Some women experience minor discomforts during the first 1-3 months of using the RIng, which *usually resolve*. These include nausea, breakthrough bleeding, breast enlargement or tenderness, slight weight change, mood changes, changes in sex drive.

If you don't like your current contraception after 3 cycles, then schedule an appointment for a consultation to change your contraception.

### **ADVERSE RISK and DANGER SIGNS.**

**Like birth control pills, the RIng slightly increases the risk of developing blood clots. However, this risk is much less than the risk of developing a blood clot during pregnancy. If you have a blood clotting disorder, migraine headache with aura, high blood pressure, heart disease, hepatitis, lupus or smoke cigarettes, it is NOT advisable to take conjugated contraception (estrogen/progestin) like the RIng.**

### **GET IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF YOU EXPERIENCE THESE SYMPTOMS WHILE USING THE RING.**

Abdominal pain (severe)

Chest pain (severe)/shortness of breath/coughing up blood

Headaches (new, severe)/dizziness/numbness or weakness

Eye problems/sudden change in vision

Severe leg pain/warmth/redness