

Vaginal Ring - How to Guide

What is a vaginal ring?

The vaginal ring is a soft plastic ring that contains two hormones, oestrogen and progestogen. These are similar to the hormones produced by the ovaries and are like those used in the combined oral contraceptive, known as the pill.

In Australia the only type of vaginal ring you can buy is called the NuvaRing.

How do I use a vaginal ring?

The vaginal ring is inserted into the vagina and stays in for three weeks. After three weeks you take the ring out for one week. After one week, you replace the previous vaginal ring with a new ring. You will experience a monthly bleed (a withdrawal bleed) in the week when there is no ring in place.

You'll need to remember to take out the previous ring and put in a new ring at the same time, a week apart. We suggest setting an alarm to remind yourself to insert a new ring.

You can choose to skip a period and place a new ring in straight away. This means you will not have a week's break and you will not get a period.

How do I insert a vaginal ring?

To insert the ring, simply squeeze the ring between thumb and index fingers, and push it inside you until it's sitting up against the side of your vaginal wall.

Putting it in is just the same as using a tampon, but you might find it a little trickier because of its shape. Once it's in, make sure you're comfortable with its position. Most users can't feel the vaginal ring once it is in place.

Your vaginal muscles will keep it in place, even during sex and exercise.

Do I need emergency contraception if I'm late putting in my ring?

If you have unprotected sex within five days of being more than 24 hours late to insert a vaginal ring, you may be at risk of pregnancy.

Emergency contraception can be used if you had unprotected sex within the last five days.

Contact a health professional or your local Family Planning Tasmania clinic if you are unsure if you need emergency contraception.

What could stop the vaginal ring from working?

The vaginal ring may not be effective if:

- you forget to insert your new ring after the seven day break.
- you remove it at any other time for longer than 24 hours.
- you are taking certain medications as they may interfere with how well the vaginal ring works.

Forgot to insert your ring?

If you forget to insert your new vaginal ring, then you need to put another one in as soon as you remember.

If the ring falls out or has been left out for a period of time:

- After rinsing the ring with water, put it back into your vaginal immediately.
- If it has been out for less than 24 hours, you will still be protected against pregnancy.
- If it has been out for more than 24 hours, put it back in and avoid sex or use a backup method of contraception, such as condoms, for the next seven days.
- If the ring has been left out for more than 24 hours during week three, skip the 7 day break and insert a new one immediately.

If you are more than 24 hours late inserting a new ring after the ring free week:

- Insert a new ring immediately.
- Avoid sex or use a backup method of contraception, such as condoms, for the next seven days.
- Consider using emergency contraception if you have had unprotected sex in the previous five days.

If you forget to take the ring out after three weeks:

- Remove your current ring as soon as you remember.
- Put a new one in on the day you were meant to (even if you don't have a full week's break).

If the ring was left in for more than four weeks:

- Remove the current ring and put in a new one immediately
- Avoid sex or use another form of contraception (such as condoms) for seven days as you are not protected against pregnancy at this time
- Consider using emergency contraception if you have had unprotected sex in the last five days.

If you are ever concerned, please contact your local Family Planning Tasmania clinic.

**Having problems with your vaginal ring?
Make an appointment with your local
Family Planning Tasmania clinic:**

Glenorchy: 6273 917

Launceston: 6343 4566

Burnie: 6431 7692

The NuvaRing



fpt.org.au

For more information, support and advice visit www.fpt.org.au

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