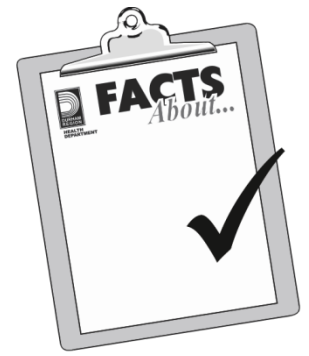




# FACTS

## About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



# Vaginal Ring

## What is it?

The vaginal ring is a method of birth control. It is a non-latex, clear plastic ring that is placed into the woman's vagina. It releases two hormones (estrogen and progestin) which stop the ovaries from releasing an egg. The vaginal ring stays in place for three weeks and then on week four it is removed; this is the week in which a woman will have her period.

## How effective is it?

The ring is 91% to 99.7% effective for birth control, when used correctly.

## What are the side effects?

Headache, nausea and breast soreness are the most common reported side effects. Most side effects go away in the first few months. Local side effects such as vaginal discharge and irritation may occur.

## What are the risks?

The vaginal ring may increase the risk for stroke, heart attack or blood clots. Women over the age of 35 who smoke or have high blood pressure have a higher risk.

## What are the benefits?

Benefits of the ring may include: preventing pregnancy, more regular periods with less bleeding and cramping, decreased risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer and decreased acne and endometriosis. Use of the vaginal ring does not require daily care.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-668-2020 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



## What are the limitations?

A prescription is needed in order to obtain the vaginal ring. Using this method requires the woman to be comfortable inserting and removing the ring on her own. The vaginal ring is not recommended for women with a history of blood clots, stroke or heart disease, those with high blood pressure, severe migraines, breast cancer, endometrial cancer, liver disease or tumours.

## What are the effects on breastfeeding?

Estrogen may reduce breast milk supply. It is recommended that breastfeeding mothers use progestin only types of birth control. If you are currently breastfeeding and would like to discuss birth control options, please talk to your health care provider.

## What you should know....

The vaginal ring should never be out of the vagina for more than seven days. If it is inserted late you must ensure you use condoms to protect from pregnancy. The ring **does not** prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS; therefore, condoms should always be used during sexual activity.

**Contact your health care provider immediately** if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- sudden and severe chest pain/heaviness
- sudden and severe abdominal pain
- leg pain
- trouble breathing/shortness of breath
- severe headaches or visual problems

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