

## **Whole Woman's Health of McAllen**

802 South Main \* McAllen TX 78501

(956) 686-2137 \* (866) 682-1200

www.wholewomanshealth.com

### **NUVA RING--“The Vaginal Ring”**

#### ***What is it?***

The Nuva Ring is a flexible ring that is used to prevent pregnancy. It is inserted into the vagina once a month, where it releases hormones into the body at a steady rate.

#### ***How does it work?***

Similar to oral contraceptives, a combination of hormones (estrogen and progesterone) prevents the ovaries from releasing an egg. It also sometimes thickens the cervical mucus, which prevents the sperm from meeting the egg.

#### ***How do I use it? How do I get it?***

A doctor or clinician will do an exam, review your medical history, and prescribe the Nuva Ring. Generally women insert the ring and remove it three weeks later; the fourth week is typically when their period will come. Throw the ring away once it has been used.

Before inserting the ring, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Use your fingers to squeeze the sides of the ring together and insert into the vagina. It does not matter where in the vagina the ring rests, but the farther into the vagina it is, the less likely you are to feel it, because although the nerve endings in your outer vagina are very sensitive the ones in your upper vagina are not.

Although the manufacturer's standard instructions say to remove the ring after three weeks, more recent testing has shown the ring is effective for up to 40 days. Our clinicians recommend choosing a consistent interval to change your ring so it is easy to remember. For example, you might choose to always take out your ring after three weeks so that you have a period during the fourth week. Or you might choose to always leave your ring in four weeks (to reduce how many rings you need to purchase annually) and have a period on the fifth week. Talk with your clinician to find an interval that's right for you.

#### ***What are the advantages?***

Like the pill, the Nuva Ring is very safe and effective and does not tend to interrupt sex for most people. Some women prefer the Nuva Ring to the pill because they do not have to remember to take the pill every day. Additionally, the hormone dose is a little lower than most pill brands and the hormones are released steadily and consistently throughout the month, so hormonal side effects are reduced.

Taking hormonal contraceptives can provide some additional benefits other than contraceptive ones. These include less painful menstruation, acne reduction, fewer pelvic infections, and decreased risks of endometrial and ovarian cancer.

#### ***What are the disadvantages? What are the possible side effects?***

Most side effects of the Nuva Ring are not serious. The most common side effects are nausea, vomiting, bleeding between menstrual periods, weight gain, breast tenderness, and difficulty wearing contact lenses. These side effects, especially nausea, and vomiting, may subside within the first three months of use.

The serious side effects of the Nuva Ring occur very infrequently, especially if you are in good health and do not smoke. However, you should know that certain medical conditions have been associated with or made worse by the Nuva Ring, including high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol. Notify Whole Woman's Health if you notice any unusual physical disturbances while using the Nuva Ring.

#### ***How effective is it?***

The Nuva Ring is more than 99% effective.

\*\*\*Remember, only a latex condom or polyurethane condom can protect you from HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.

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## **Who cannot use this method?**

Women who are pregnant, have unusual vaginal bleeding, who are over 35 and smoke, who have severe migraine headaches, high blood pressure, psychiatric problems, blood clots, liver disease, or who have a personal or family history of breast cancer, stroke, or diabetes will want to talk to a doctor before starting the ring.

## INSERTING THE NUVA RING

### **Step 1: Remove NuvaRing® from the pouch**

Each NuvaRing® comes in a resealable foil pouch. After washing and drying your hands, remove NuvaRing® from the pouch. (Keep the pouch for disposing of the used contraceptive ring.)

### **Step 2: Find a comfortable position**

Choose a position that's most comfortable for you. Try lying down, squatting, or standing with one leg up.

### **Step 3: Hold NuvaRing® between your thumb and index finger**

Press the opposite sides of NuvaRing® together.

### **Step 4: Gently push the folded contraceptive ring into your vagina.**

**The exact position of NuvaRing® in the vagina is not important for it to work**, and the muscles of the vagina should keep NuvaRing® securely in place. Most women don't feel NuvaRing® once it's in place (while the nerve endings in your outer vagina are very sensitive, the ones in your upper vagina are not). If you feel NuvaRing®, use your finger to gently push it further in -- there's no danger of NuvaRing® being pushed too far up in the vagina. Once inserted, keep the contraceptive ring in place for the length of time you've discussed with your clinician. NuvaRing® cannot get lost inside of you. You can't push NuvaRing® any further than the end of the vagina blocks it from going any further.



Step 2: Choose a position that is comfortable for you.



Step 3: Press the opposite sides of NuvaRing® together and gently insert it.



Step 4: NuvaRing® can be positioned anywhere inside the vagina.

\*\*\*Remember, only a latex condom or polyurethane condom can protect you from HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.