What is NuvaRing?
NuvaRing is an easy to use hormonal contraceptive device available by prescription. It contains the same types of hormones (estrogen and progesterone) found in birth control pills.

How does NuvaRing work?
NuvaRing is a clear and flexible ring. When inserted into the vagina, it delivers low levels of synthetic hormones (etonogestrel and ethinyl estradiol) into the body. These hormones are absorbed into the bloodstream, keeping the ovaries from releasing eggs and thickening cervical mucus (making it difficult for sperm to enter the uterus). Used correctly, NuvaRing is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy.

Is NuvaRing right for you?
Advantages
Many people choose NuvaRing because it:
• is easy to use
• provides safe, effective, hormonal contraception
• has lower amounts of estrogen than birth control pills
• may be more convenient to use than other methods (e.g., the pill)
• is easy to insert and to remove
• does not require daily or weekly attention
• permits sexual spontaneity
• maintains regular periods and relieves some menstrual problems (e.g., can shorten periods; reduce the incidence of iron deficiency anemia; minimize cramps and PMS; correct menstrual irregularity/amenorrhea)
• can treat symptoms of endometriosis
• decreases the incidence of ovarian cysts, fibrocystic breast syndrome and fibroadenomas of the breast
• lowers the risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer
• can diminish acne
• can decrease the likelihood of some types of vaginal infections
• can increase vaginal lubrication
• can be used to lengthen the time between periods, or skip them entirely

Disadvantages
NuvaRing is not right for everyone because:
• the fitting may be uncomfortable for some
• it does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
• there may be side effects (e.g. nausea, breast tenderness, moodiness)
• is not an option for those who have contraindications to estrogen
• users must keep track of the number of weeks it is inserted

Side effects
The most frequently reported side effects of the NuvaRing are those associated with other hormonal methods including nausea and/or vomiting, breast tenderness and moodiness. Side effects of hormonal birth control methods typically lessen over time, and usually resolve completely in three to four months.

In some users, NuvaRing can also cause vaginal irritation or increased vaginal discharge. This often resolves on its own, but may necessitate discontinuation if bothersome.

Serious side-effects
It is important to be aware of the very rare but potentially serious complications that may arise as the result of using hormonal contraception (e.g., gall stones, blood clots). The following are important symptoms, not to be ignored:
• Severe abdominal pain lasting more than 30 minutes
• Severe chest pain or shortness of breath
• Increase in frequency or severity of headaches, especially if associated with weakness, numbness, or vision disturbances
• Loss of vision, double or blurred vision
• Speech problems
• Severe pain in the calf or thighs

Contraindications

Chronic conditions
If you have a chronic medical problem, you will need to discuss the risks of using NuvaRing as it relates to your particular situation. Most of the time, it is relatively safe. However, if you have any of the following conditions, check with your medical clinician about your ability to use NuvaRing:
• thrombophlebitis, thromboembolic disorders, cerebral vascular disease, coronary artery disease, lipid disorders or past history of these conditions
• markedly impaired liver function or hepatic adenoma; gallbladder disease
• undiagnosed breast masses or known or suspected carcinoma of the breast
• unexplained genital bleeding
• known or suspected pregnancy
• known or suspected estrogen-dependent tumor
• history of migraine headaches
• history of elevated cholesterol
• elevated blood pressure, stroke, or heart disease
• auto-immune disorder (e.g., Lupus)

Cigarette smoking (if over 35)
Smoking increases the risk of cardiovascular problems from hormonal contraceptive use. This risk increases with age and the amount of smoking. Smoking is considered a contraindication for NuvaRing use for those over 35 years of age.

How to get a prescription
• Make an appointment at Cornell Health by phone (607-255-5155) or by going online to myCornellHealth.
• Schedule a “Well Woman Exam” if it is time for a Pap test and/or check-up.
• Schedule an appointment “just for birth control” if you don’t need a check-up, Pap, or STI screening.

Unsure if it is right for you?
Consider scheduling an appointment with a Sexual Health Nurse. At your appointment, you can learn more about NuvaRing and other contraceptive options.

For more information
• plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control/birth-control-vaginal-ring-nuvaring
• nuvaring.com