Where do I put the ring? How do I put it in and take it out? Put the ring into your vagina. It’s easy to do. Use your fingers to bring the sides of the ring together and gently push it into your vagina. If you can’t feel it when you walk, you’ve got it in right.

To take the ring out, hook your finger through the ring and pull gently. Put the used ring in the foil pouch and throw it away. Used rings still contain hormones. The foil pouch protects the hormones from getting into the soil and water. Do not flush the ring down the toilet.

When can I start the ring? You can start your ring on any day of your cycle.

If you are starting the ring after taking emergency contraception (EC)

* If you took ulipristal acetate (UPA) EC, wait at least 5 days after the unprotected sex to start.
* If you took levonorgestrel (LNG) EC, start right away.

Will my ring work right away? Not always. If you start your ring

* Within 5 days of the start of your period, you do not need backup birth control.
* After the first 5 days of your period, use backup birth control – like condoms – or don’t have sex for 7 days.
* After taking UPA EC, use backup birth control or don’t have sex for 14 days.
* After taking LNG EC, use backup birth control or don’t have sex for 7 days.

When should I change the ring? There are different ways to use the ring:

* Change your ring once a month. Whatever day you start the ring becomes your change day. On your change day, you take out the old ring and put in the new one. You may have some bleeding or spotting. You will probably not get regular periods.
* Keep your ring in place for 3 weeks, take a ring-free break for 7 days, and then put in a new ring. You should get your period during the ring-free break. It is normal to be still bleeding – usually spotting – when it is time to put in your new ring.

**How do I avoid getting off schedule with the ring?** Common reasons for getting off schedule with the ring:

* Forgetting to take it out or put a new one in
* Being away from home without the ring
* Pressures (final exams, job stress)
* Not getting a refill on time.
* Disruptions from routines
* Being sick

**Reminders work best to avoid gaps!**  What reminders can you use? If your reminder fails, what back up reminder plan could you use?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What if the ring falls out or I take it out or I forget to change it? | | |
| What happened? | What should I do? | Do I need to use back-up birth control or not have sex? |
| The ring fell out or I took it out of my vagina and it has been less than 2 days? | Wash it in cool water and put it back in as soon as possible but within 2 days. | No. |
| The ring is out of my vagina for more than 2 days, and it’s not my ring-free week? | Wash it in cool water and put it back in. | **Yes, for 7 days.** |
| I forgot to put in a new ring at the end of my ring-free week? | Put in a new ring as soon as you remember. | **Yes, for 7 days.** |
| I forgot to change my ring on my change-day? | Take out the old ring and put in a new one as soon as you remember. | **Yes, for 7 days.** |

Emergency Contraception (EC)- Accidents happen. That’s why it’s important to remember that EC can reduce the risk of pregnancy. If you missed using your ring and have had unprotected sex in the last 5 days, consider taking EC. EC includes the insertion of a copper IUD and “morning after” pill. All work best when started as soon as possible, within 5 days of unprotected sex.

Can I get pregnant if I forget to change my ring or leave it out of my vagina by mistake? Yes, depending on the timing you may want to take EC. It can be started up to 5 days after unprotected sex. Call us to get more information. We can help you decide.

What else do I need to know?

* You can use vaginal medicine or lubricants when using the ring.
* It’s best to keep your ring in your vagina during sex. If for some reason you decide to take the ring out during sex, make sure you rinse it in cool water and put it back in as soon as possible after sex.
* Unused rings can be stored at room temperature out of direct sunlight for up to 4 months (16 weeks). Refrigerate any rings that will not be used within 4 months. Read the storage advice on the package.

**How do I get refills?** Come to the clinic any time, no appointment needed.

**How will you remember to get your refill?** Set a reminder for this, too! Form a back up plan for what to do if something stops you from getting your refill.

**What if I want some other type of birth control? DO NOT STOP**  your current method to avoid gaps. Call or stop by the clinic and talk with staff. Remember, if you stop your method you can get pregnant.