



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

- The goal of contraception (or birth control) is to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. The majority of methods of contraception enable sexually active couples to temporarily avoid pregnancy. Permanent birth control is accomplished through sterilization. Be sure you know and understand the different types of birth control available to you, the risks and benefits of each, and any side effects, so that you can make an informed choice.
- The vaginal ring for contraception, NuvaRing, is a low-dose, combination hormonal device. It is self-administered and releases an average continuous dose of etonogestrel and ethinyl estradiol.
- The skin patch, Ortho Evra, contains contraceptive hormones held in a three-layer patch consisting of polyethylene backing, hormones, release liner and adhesive. This patch delivers constant doses of norelgestromin and ethinyl estradiol. Each square patch is less than 2 inches in size and is thin enough to be unobtrusive under clothing.

### ADVANTAGES

- Effective, if used as directed. Failure rate is about 1 in 100.
- Freedom from fear of pregnancy.
- Spontaneity of sexual experiences.
- Helps regulate periods and lessen painful menstrual periods.
- Decrease in the amount of menstrual bleeding in most women.
- No increase in risk of breast cancer and decrease in risk of initiating benign breast disease.
- Less likelihood of anemia or arthritis.
- Decrease in incidence of pelvic inflammatory disease.
- Decrease in incidence of cancer of the lining of the uterus.

### DISADVANTAGES

- There are many conditions that might prevent your using female hormones. Your health care provider will take a thorough medical history and perform a physical examination prior to prescribing these contraceptives. If any of the conditions are present that preclude using them, another form of birth control will be recommended.
- There may be other side effects from the hormones. Many of these occur rarely and, even when they do, will frequently decrease in severity with passage of time. Most patients experience no side effects at all. Side effect may include—enlargement of fibroid tumors (leiomyomas); breast fullness or tenderness; increase of serum copper and iron levels; alteration of thyroid tests as if you were pregnant; fluid retention; missed periods; acne; mild headache; high blood pressure (hypertension); thrombophlebitis—less likely with pills with minimum estrogen content and in nonsmokers; impairment of glucose tolerance; weight gain; nausea, vomiting, diarrhea; stroke (rare); depression or easy mood shifts; change in sex drive (may be more or less); decrease in levels of some vitamins and minerals (as in pregnancy); elevation of triglycerides and cholesterol; increase in incidence of gallstones; depigmentation of areas of the skin, made worse by sun exposure; increased likelihood of vaginal yeast infection, with itching and discharge.
- Will not protect against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). A form of barrier protection will need to be used.



## GENERAL MEASURES

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Vaginal ring - NuvaRing:
  - Insert the device on or before day five of menstrual period.
  - Fold the ring and insert high in vagina; there is no correct or incorrect position.
  - The ring is to be left in place for three weeks then removed.
  - Onset of menses is a few days after removal.
  - A new ring should be inserted 7 days after removal to assure continued contraception.
- NuvaRing use comes with certain cautions including directions for prompt reinsertion if expulsion occurs, special instructions if expulsion time exceeds 3 hours or if there is a delayed insertion of a new ring. Since this product is not biodegradable, NuvaRing should not be flushed down the toilet.
- Skin patch - Ortho Evra
  - Apply on the upper torso (back or front, but not on the breasts), abdomen, upper arm, or buttocks. There may be an application site reaction.
  - Upon application of the first patch, the active ingredients reach therapeutic level in about 48 hours; a back-up method of contraception should be used for 7 days after the first patch is applied but is not needed if subsequent patches are applied in a timely manner.
  - It is worn continuously, including while exercising, showering, bathing, and swimming.
  - The patch should be removed after 21 days to begin a patch-free week, with light menses starting about 2-3 days after patch removal.
  - A new patch should be applied 7 days after patch removal.
  - If the patch loosens or becomes detached, backup contraception (e.g., diaphragm, condom) may be necessary. Consult your doctor.
  - There are special patient instructions concerning patch fall off, delay in application of a new patch as well as problems with adhesion.
- For more information, check your local library or the internet.

### MEDICATIONS

Do not use any medicines, even those you buy without prescription, before discussing them with your doctor. Carefully follow the instructions on any prescription.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You have questions about the skin patch or vaginal ring product.
- You experience changes in menstruation.
- You experience pain during intercourse or bleeding afterward.
- You have a sensation of pressure on your bladder or rectum.
- You develop pain and swelling in the calf of your leg, or any unusual leg pains, severe chest pain or shortness of breath.
- Your blood pressure goes up, or you have vision problems.
- You develop symptoms of gallbladder disease: upper abdominal pain, fever, jaundice, nausea.
- Severe headache develops.
- You have any signs or symptoms of pregnancy.