What to Do if You Have a Problem
The Ring is one of the safest birth control methods you can choose. Serious problems happen rarely. The most serious problem is the possibility of blood clots. This usually starts with warning signs. Know these signs, and contact your health care provider, clinic, or emergency room if you have any of the following:
- Severe pain in your belly
- Severe chest pain or shortness of breath
- Severe pain or redness and swelling in your leg
- Severe headaches
- Eye problems, such as blurry vision, flashing lights or blindness

Effectiveness
The Ring is just as effective as the Pill. If 100 women used the Ring correctly for a year, only 1 of them would get pregnant.

Pregnancy and the Ring
Your ability to get pregnant will return soon after you stop using the Ring. If you do want to get pregnant, start taking vitamins with folic acid — it’s one of the best things you can do for your future child.

Common Questions
How do I know that I put the Ring in correctly?
If the Ring is in your vagina and it feels comfortable to you, then you put it in correctly. The Ring will work in any position in your vagina, so what’s important is that it feels comfortable to you.

Can a Ring get lost inside me?
No. You can’t push the Ring farther than the back of your vagina. Your body will block it from going any further.

Will my partner or I feel the Ring?
Because the Ring is so small and soft, most women don’t feel it at all. If you do feel it, try pushing it a little further into your vagina. Some men can feel the Ring during sex, but it usually doesn’t bother them.

Am I still protected from pregnancy during the Ring Free Week?
Yes! Your Ring Free Week allows your body to have a period, but you are still protected from pregnancy during this time.

What if I forget to put a new Ring in?
If you forget to put a new Ring in, you could get pregnant. Put a new Ring in as soon as you remember, and use a back-up method like condoms for the next 7 days.

What if I leave a Ring in for too long?
If you leave a Ring in for more than 5 weeks, you could get pregnant. Remove the current Ring, insert a new Ring, use condoms for 7 days or use EC if you had unprotected sex.

FACT: Using the Ring will not affect your future ability to have children.

To learn more about other birth control methods:
Check out our brochures on:
The Pill
Depo Provera (“The Shot”)  Emergency Contraception (“EC”)
Condoms
The IUD
The Patch
Sterilization

Visit our website at:
www.kingcounty.gov/health/famplan

To find a Family Planning Provider near you:
Call the Family Planning Hotline
1-800-770-4334 OR TTY 1-800-848-5429
For confidential information and referrals

To prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex, or after your birth control method fails:
Call the Emergency Contraception Hotline:
1-888-NOT-2-LATE (1-888-668-2528)
or visit the Emergency Contraception website:
www.not-2-late.com to find a clinic or pharmacy near you.

Public Health
Seattle & King County

This brochure was funded in part by US Department of Health and Human Services Grant #2 FPHPA 100039-14-00

10/2008
450-0525
**What is it?**
The Ring is a small, flexible plastic ring — about 2 inches across — that you place in your vagina each month to prevent pregnancy.

**How to Insert the Ring**
There is no wrong way to insert the Ring! Most women find it as easy to put in as a tampon. Follow these simple steps:
- Take the Ring out of its foil packet. Keep the packet for when you dispose of it later.
- Stand, sit or squat like you would to put in a tampon.
- Use your fingers to squeeze the sides of the Ring together. The Ring is flexible, so this is easy to do.
- Slide the folded Ring into your vagina, until it feels comfortable to you.
- You can also insert it by using an empty tampon applicator. Just put the Ring where the tampon would normally go.
- Leave the Ring in for 3 weeks.

**How the Ring Works**
The Ring contains hormones just like the ones in most birth control pills. It releases these hormones into your body through your vagina. Instead of taking a pill every day, you put in a new Ring each month.

**Getting Started with the Ring**
To get the most positive, worry-free start with the Ring, take some time to learn about it now:
- Most women start the Ring during their period, but your health care provider will tell you the best time to start based on your cycle.
- Pick a day of the week that you think will be easy for you to remember, and write it down. Put in your first Ring on that day.
- After using the Ring for 3 weeks, take it out on the same day of the week that you put it in. For example, if you insert your Ring on a Sunday, you need to take it out 3 weeks later on a Sunday. The exact time of day isn’t important.
- You now have a Ring Free Week without a Ring. You will get your period during this time.
- Put a new Ring in exactly 1 week after you took the old one out, even if you are still bleeding. For example, if you took the old Ring out on a Sunday, 1 week later you put the new Ring in on a Sunday.
- During your first month with the Ring, use a back-up method like condoms for the first 7 days.

**What to Expect:**
**Common Side Effects**
Some women have minor side effects with the Ring. Usually, these side effects will go away after 2-6 months, as your body gets used to the Ring. Some common side effects are:
- bleeding between periods
- nausea (very rarely, throwing up)
- headache
- weight gain or loss
- changes in mood
- more wetness in your vagina

If you feel that these side effects are becoming a problem for you, don’t stop using the Ring! Call your health care provider or clinic first.

**If a Ring Slips Out**
Very rarely, a Ring can slip out of your vagina. The instructions below will help you when this happens. If you’re ever unsure about what to do, call your health provider or clinic.

If the Ring has been out for less than 3 hours:
- Rinse it in cool-to-lukewarm (not hot) water
- Re-insert it as soon as possible
- You are still protected from pregnancy

If the Ring has been out for more than 3 hours:
- Rinse it in cool-to-lukewarm water
- Re-insert it as soon as possible
- Use a back-up method like condoms for the next 7 days

**Benefits of Using the Ring**
More and more women are choosing the Ring because it is safe, easy to use, and effective. Here are some of the reasons why women today choose the Ring:
- Effective (just as effective as the Pill)
- No daily pills to take — just put in a new Ring each month
- Regular, lighter, and shorter periods
- Very low dose of hormones
- Private — no one else needs to know it’s there
- You can also use the Ring to skip periods (by keeping it in for 4 weeks instead of 3) — talk to your health provider about this option

**What to Expect:**
**Common Side Effects**
Some women have minor side effects with the Ring. Usually, these side effects will go away after 2-6 months, as your body gets used to the Ring. Some common side effects are:
- bleeding between periods
- nausea (very rarely, throwing up)
- headache
- weight gain or loss
- changes in mood
- more wetness in your vagina

If you feel that these side effects are becoming a problem for you, don’t stop using the Ring! Call your health care provider or clinic first.

**If a Ring Slips Out**
Very rarely, a Ring can slip out of your vagina. The instructions below will help you when this happens. If you’re ever unsure about what to do, call your health provider or clinic.

If the Ring has been out for less than 3 hours:
- Rinse it in cool-to-lukewarm (not hot) water
- Re-insert it as soon as possible
- You are still protected from pregnancy

If the Ring has been out for more than 3 hours:
- Rinse it in cool-to-lukewarm water
- Re-insert it as soon as possible
- Use a back-up method like condoms for the next 7 days

**Benefits of Using the Ring**
More and more women are choosing the Ring because it is safe, easy to use, and effective. Here are some of the reasons why women today choose the Ring:
- Effective (just as effective as the Pill)
- No daily pills to take — just put in a new Ring each month
- Regular, lighter, and shorter periods
- Very low dose of hormones
- Private — no one else needs to know it’s there
- You can also use the Ring to skip periods (by keeping it in for 4 weeks instead of 3) — talk to your health provider about this option

**Some Disadvantages:**
**What You Should Know**
While the Ring is a popular choice for some women, it isn’t the best choice for everyone. Here are some reasons why the Ring may not be the best choice for some women:
- The Ring does not protect you from HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STDs). You need to use a condom if you think you need protection.
- You have to remember to put in a Ring each month, and take it out for the Ring Free Week.
- You need to feel comfortable touching your vagina to put in and take out the Ring each month.

“*I like the Ring because I only have to think about it once a month. It’s basically a once-a-month birth control.*”

— Rashida, age 21

*no children*