

### Why have a vaginal ring for HIV prevention?

Offering options for HIV prevention is important because each woman may have different needs. Vaginal rings may offer several benefits:

- **Longer Acting:** Vaginal rings are inserted and left inside the vagina for a month. This may help women who find it difficult to remember to use a product daily or at the time of sex.
- **Ease of Use:** Most women find the ring easy to insert and remove.
- **Safety:** Studies have shown the ring is safe to use.
- **Privacy:** Vaginal rings can be inserted and removed in private. Some women may appreciate privacy if they do not want others to know they are using an HIV prevention product.



### How does the dapivirine vaginal ring work?

When the ring is in the vagina, the medication dapivirine is slowly released. Dapivirine works by preventing HIV from making copies of itself, so if a woman is exposed to HIV when the dapivirine ring is in place, the virus is more likely to die before spreading in her body. Studies have shown the dapivirine vaginal ring can reduce a woman's chance of HIV infection. When used all the time, including during sex and menses, risk of infection is even lower.

### Is the ring difficult to insert and remove?

Most women find the ring easy to insert and remove. No lubrication is typically needed to insert the ring, but water can be used as needed. When the ring is inserted properly, most women do not feel it.

### Can the ring dissolve or get lost inside the body?

No. The ring will not dissolve. Over the course of a month, the medication dapivirine is slowly released but the ring itself does not change. The ring cannot be pushed too far up or get lost inside the body.

### Will the ring fall out?

This is not common, but may happen. If women are worried that the ring has slipped out, they can always use their finger to check that it is still inserted or to reposition the ring. If the ring falls out, it can be rinsed in clean water and may be reinserted.

### Are there side effects from ring use?

Studies have shown the dapivirine vaginal ring to be safe to leave inserted for a month at a time. It does not change the size or shape of the woman's vagina, cause cervical cancer, or lead to other significant health problems. The ring does not impact a woman's menstrual cycle.

### Will women or their partners feel the ring during sex?

Some women and their partners may feel the ring in the vagina during sex, but this will not harm either of them. Women are encouraged to discuss ring use with their partners. Leaving the ring inserted all the time, including during sex, offers the greatest protection against HIV.



### What if women get pregnant with the ring inserted? Will it hurt their baby?

Researchers don't yet know how dapivirine might affect a woman's baby if she uses the ring while pregnant. Because of this, women are asked to use contraception while using the ring, and to stop using the ring if they are pregnant. Studies are being planned to see if it is safe to use the ring during pregnancy.



### Is there anything women should avoid while using the ring?

Regardless of ring use, healthy vaginal practices are encouraged by clinic staff. Women should not use douches, soaps, or other detergents to clean inside the vagina. Women should also not use herbs or other materials to dry or tighten the vagina. These practices are harmful and can increase the chance of vaginal infections.

While using the ring, use of diaphragms, menstrual cups, and cervical caps is also discouraged and use of contraceptive vaginal rings is prohibited. Women may use tampons, male and female condoms, spermicides, lubricants, IUCDs (loop), and other vaginal medications or devices prescribed by a doctor.

If you have questions or need more information, please visit the study clinic:

MU-JHU Research Collaboration/ MUJHU CARE LTD  
P.O.BOX, 23491  
Upper Mulago Hill Road  
Kampala, Uganda  
TEL: 0414 541 044

HOPE

*Out of ASPIRE, there is HOPE*

---

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Dapivirine Vaginal Ring

---



Andrew Loxely