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Patient Name (Please Print): _____

Contraceptive Vaginal Ring FACT SHEET

The **Contraceptive Vaginal Ring** is placed in the vagina and left there for three weeks, and then removed for one week to allow a period (menses or withdrawal bleed). The ring provides similar medication (hormones) to the oral contraceptive pill (“the pill”). These two hormones, an estrogen and a progestin, are similar to hormones that are naturally made in a woman’s body. The ring does not need to be fitted; it will work as long as it is in touch with the vaginal walls.

The Ring prevents pregnancy by preventing the egg from being released from the ovary, and also by changing the cervical mucus to prevent sperm from reaching an egg.

If used correctly, the Ring is 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. However, some women do not use the Ring correctly as directed. For the typical woman using the Ring, it is 91% effective at preventing pregnancy (9 pregnancies in 100 women using the Ring for a year).

The Ring does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Condoms are the best way for sexually active people to reduce the risk of infection. Always use a condom if you or your partner has other sex partners.

Advantages of the Ring:

- Decreased pain with periods and/or lighter menstrual periods
- Nothing to do right before sex (to prevent pregnancy)
- May improve PMS (premenstrual syndrome) symptoms
- Can decrease risk of uterine (endometrial) and ovarian cancer
- Ability to become pregnant returns quickly when you stop taking using the Ring.

Disadvantages of the Ring:

- Must used correctly: three weeks in place and one week out
 - Note: it is possible to shorten or eliminate the “week out” and maintain the effectiveness of the Ring.
- Less effective (higher risk of pregnancy) if the Ring is not used properly
- Can be associated with some risks (see below)
- Side effects – the Ring is generally well-tolerated, but some women experience side effects such as breast tenderness, nausea or change in mood or libido. Most of these symptoms improve with time.
- The Ring may interact with certain epilepsy (anti-seizure) or anti-retroviral medications.

Risks of using the Ring:

- **Venous thromboembolism** – very rarely, a blood clot can develop in the veins of the legs (DVT) or in the lungs (PE). These conditions can be life-threatening. Use of the Ring may increase the chance of developing a DVT or PE slightly; The risk of having a DVT or PE while taking the Ring is approximately 1 in 5,000 – 10,000 women.
- **Stroke or heart attack** – very rarely, younger women can have a stroke or heart attack. Use of the Ring can increase the chance of this happening slightly if you also have other risk factors (such as high blood pressure, smoking or a certain type of migraine headaches).

- **High blood pressure** – the Ring can slightly increase your blood pressure. For most women, this increase is small and does not affect your health.

Contraindications - The Ring cannot be used by women who:

- Smoke and are older than 35
- Have uncontrolled high blood pressure (hypertension)
- Have certain types of migraine headaches
- Have a history of blood clot (DVT or PE), or if you or a family member have certain blood disorders which can increase the risk for DVT or PE
- Have a history of breast cancer
- Have a history of stroke or heart disease
- Have severe diabetes (with neurological or kidney problems)

Tell your clinician if you have any of these risk factors or conditions, or of any other past or current medical problems or concerns. Your clinician will evaluate your history to help you decide if the Ring is the correct choice for you.

Warning signs – Call your health care provider right away if you:

- Miss a menstrual period, or are late in starting your menstrual period
- Think you are pregnant
- Have been, or might have been, exposed to an STI
- Have unusual pain or swelling in the legs, unusual pain in your chest, or difficulty breathing (go directly to an emergency room)
- Have sudden change in vision, severe headache, weakness, numbness or difficulty speaking (go directly to an emergency room)
- Have new or worsening headaches
- Have depression or change in mood

Regular physical examinations for routine health care, STI and cancer screening are strongly recommended.

Patient Signature: _____ Date: _____

Clinician Signature: _____ Date: _____