

## Vaginal rings for dual protection

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Despite the variety of modern contraceptives, over 215 million women world-wide have an unmet need for contraception. Women also face the risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To date simultaneous prevention of unintended pregnancy and STIs can only be ensured by condoms that have limited acceptance. Contraceptive vaginal rings (CVRs) offer a novel, user-controlled effective contraceptive option, expanding available choices. The main advantages of CVRs are their effectiveness, ease of use, without need for daily attention, user-controlled initiation and discontinuation, enhanced bioavailability allowing for lower doses of steroids, and acceptable cycle control with sequential regimens. Women favor contraceptive products that also prevent STIs, and vaginal rings appear to be acceptable devices for a dual prevention method, i.e contraceptive multipurpose prevention technologies (cMPTs).

While a monthly ring is already approved for contraceptive use, and a 28-day ring delivering Dapivirine, has been shown to provide a significant 56% reduction in HIV-1 infection, novel 90-day cMPT rings are under early development. This ongoing research offers hope to address the unmet needs for prevention of unintended pregnancy and viral STIs.

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