IMPORTANT INFORMATION
FOR PATIENTS TAKING VIOXX® (rofecoxib)

September 30, 2004

Merck Voluntarily Withdraws VIOXX

Dear VIOXX Patient:

Merck & Co., Inc. announced today a voluntary withdrawal of VIOXX®.

This decision is based on new data from a three-year clinical study. In this study, there was an increased risk for cardiovascular (CV) events, such as heart attack and stroke, in patients taking VIOXX 25 mg compared to those taking placebo (sugar pill). While the incidence of CV events was low, there was an increased risk beginning after 18 months of treatment. The cause of the clinical study result is uncertain, but our commitment to our patients is clear.

Patients who are currently taking VIOXX should contact their health care providers to discuss discontinuing use of VIOXX and possible alternative treatments. In addition, patients and health care professionals may obtain information from merck.com and vioxx.com or may call 1-888-368-4699.

Merck will reimburse all patients for their unused VIOXX. All dosage strengths and formulations of VIOXX are affected by this voluntary withdrawal. Information can be found at vioxx.com or at 1-888-368-4699.

Merck is notifying physicians and pharmacists and has informed the Food and Drug Administration of this decision.

We are taking this action because we believe it best serves the interests of patients. That is why we undertook this clinical trial to better understand the safety profile of VIOXX. And it's why we instituted this voluntary withdrawal upon learning about these data.

Be assured that Merck will continue to do everything we can to maintain the safety of our medicines.

Raymond V. Gilmartin,
Chairman, President & CEO

Please read the Patient Prescribing Information for VIOXX.

Where patients come first