
Our Future. Our Strength.

BY RAYMOND V. GILMARTIN
CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO

In the weeks since the voluntary withdrawal of VIOXX® (rofecoxib) there has been much speculation, based largely on incomplete and sometimes inaccurate information, about the potential impact of the withdrawal on Merck's business and its financial health.

Merck's response is clear:

Our business prospects are strong and we are well prepared to address the challenges posed by the withdrawal of VIOXX.

We have a strong balance sheet, with cash and reserves that well exceed debt.

We have high performing products in major franchises that we expect to generate the cash flows we need to fund research, build new manufacturing capacity and continue to deliver returns to shareholders. And we have depth and breadth in

our pipeline, such as the six late-stage products that include three vaccines that are expected to be filed in the second half of 2005.

We are well prepared to deal with the challenges ahead and extremely confident in our financial strength and the excellence of our science. It is this foundation that has served us so well in the past and that will continue to drive our ability to deliver life-saving and life-enhancing medicines and vaccines to patients and returns to shareholders.

More facts about Merck and VIOXX are available at merck.com.

Merck is continuing to offer to refund patients for their unused VIOXX. For information about the refund program, please call 1-800-805-9542 or visit vioxx.com.

