**Remarks of Raymond V. Gilmartin,**
**Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer,**
**at the**
**Merck and Co., Inc. Press Conference**

**September 30, 2004**

Good morning. Thank you for joining us today.

This morning, Merck is announcing a voluntary worldwide withdrawal of VIOXX, our COX-II inhibitor for arthritis and pain.

This decision is the result of new data from a three-year, placebo controlled study which was designed to evaluate the possible use of VIOXX in preventing the recurrence of colon polyps. The study also collected data on the long-term cardiovascular safety of VIOXX.

Importantly, in the first 18 months of the study, there was no difference in the risk for heart attack or stroke in patients taking either VIOXX or a placebo. Beginning after 18 months, however, the risk of a cardiovascular event did increase among those on VIOXX.

Accordingly, we are voluntarily withdrawing VIOXX, effective today. We are taking this action because we believe it best serves the interests of patients. We believe it would have been possible to continue to market VIOXX with labeling that would incorporate these new data. However, given the availability of alternative therapies, and the questions raised by the data, we concluded that a voluntary withdrawal is the responsible course to take.

We encourage patients who are currently taking VIOXX to contact their health care providers to discuss discontinuing use of VIOXX and possible alternative treatments. Additional information for both patients and physicians can be found at merck.com, at vioxx.com, or by calling our toll free number at 1-888-36-VIOXX.

We have informed the FDA, as well as other regulatory authorities around the world, of our voluntary withdrawal. We have also begun to notify health care practitioners in the United States, and in the other countries where VIOXX is prescribed, of our decision.

Our voluntary withdrawal of VIOXX also has financial ramifications for Merck. With regard to financial guidance, prior to today's announcement, Merck remained comfortable with its 2004 earnings per share guidance of $3.11 to $3.17. As a result of this decision, the Company currently expects earnings per share to be negatively affected by $0.50 to $0.60. At this time, we are retracting our third-quarter guidance.

We believe this decision reaffirms Merck’s commitment to patient safety.

Now, I would like to ask Dr. Peter Kim, the president of Merck Research Labs, to provide additional details about the science behind today’s announcement.

**Forward-Looking Statement**

This document contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements involve risks and uncertainties, which may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. The forward-looking statements may include statements regarding product development, product potential or financial performance. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. Merck undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise. Forward-looking statements in this document should be evaluated together with the many uncertainties that affect Merck's business, particularly those mentioned in the cautionary statements in Item 1 of Merck's Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2003, and in its periodic reports on Form 10-Q and Form 8-K (if any) which the company incorporates by reference.

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