



MEDIA RELEASE

SATURDAY AUGUST 11 2007

**Novartis withdraws Prexige® (lumiracoxib) in Australia in response to decision from Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)**

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Australia has complied with the decision of the TGA to withdraw all doses of Prexige, a Cox-2 inhibitor for the treatment of osteoarthritis and acute pain, with immediate effect.

This action has been taken after a number of cases of serious liver side effects were reported in Australian patients taking Prexige, including two deaths and two liver transplants. Serious liver side effects have been reported rarely for all Cox-2 inhibitors and traditional NSAIDs.

Novartis estimates that approximately 60,000 patients have used Prexige in Australia, and the majority of these have been prescribed Prexige 200 mg for the management of osteoarthritis. Prexige was first made available to patients in Australia in November 2005.

**Patients in Australia who are taking Prexige should stop taking the treatment immediately and contact their doctor to seek advice on alternative medications. Patients should return any remaining Prexige tablets to their pharmacist, who will give the patient a full refund.**

A helpline has been established for patients who have any queries in relation to this withdrawal of Prexige. The number is 1800 671 203 (8.30am – 8.30pm).

Novartis is alerting healthcare professionals, patients and patient groups in Australia about the decision and will be informing relevant health authorities around the world about the withdrawal.

**- End -**

**Background**

- Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis affecting over 1.4 million Australians (approximately half of all arthritis patients).<sup>1</sup>
- By the age of 65, nearly 30% of females and 18% of males in Australia have osteoarthritis.<sup>2</sup>
- The main symptoms of OA include pain and stiffness, limitation of movement in the affected joint and inflammation of the joint.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions in Australia 2005, available at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/amca05/amca05-c03.pdf> (Accessed: 10 August 2007)

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10139> (Accessed: 10 August 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Chronic Diseases, available at:

[http://www.aihw.gov.au/cdarf/diseases\\_pages/index.cfm](http://www.aihw.gov.au/cdarf/diseases_pages/index.cfm) (Accessed: 10 August 2007)