



## Drug Safety Dilemmas: Steps You Can Take

(NAPSA)—On September 30th, 2004, the pain-relieving drug Vioxx (rofecoxib) was pulled from the market after studies showed an increased risk of heart attacks, strokes and other serious cardiovascular events in people who had taken 25 or more milligrams a day for over a year. Since then, Vioxx's manufacturer, Merck & Co., has faced allegations that despite knowing of the drug's dangers, it continued to market it as safe.

Two other drugs, Celebrex (celecoxib) and Bextra (valdecoxib), made by Pfizer, have also come under scrutiny for adverse side effects. While a direct connection has not yet been proven, the FDA is investigating these claims.

The three belong to a family of drugs called NSAIDs, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. NSAIDs were designed to treat pain and swelling without the gastrointestinal side effects common to other pain relievers. NSAIDs block COX-1 and COX-2 enzymes, to reduce pain and digestive system problems.

Now that the safety of these drugs has been called into question, millions of Americans are concerned. While most people who took them are unharmed, there are increasing reports of heart attacks, strokes, blood clots, even death in people taking the NSAIDs.

People who have been injured by these medications and the sur-



vivors of individuals who died after taking them are now investigating their legal options. Law firms such as Weitz & Luxenberg, PC in New York, help evaluate cases and sue manufacturers.

If you've taken any of these medications, the law firm recommends you call your doctor to determine the best treatment for you. Alternative medicines may help manage pain and swelling. It is also vital that you contact your doctor if you feel you have any sign of cardiovascular distress, such as chest pain or shortness of breath.

If you had a heart attack, stroke, blood clot or other cardiovascular event while taking Vioxx, Bextra, or Celebrex, you may also be able to file and collect financial compensation. You can get a complimentary legal consultation by calling 1 (800) 476-6070, e-mailing [clientrelations@weitzlux.com](mailto:clientrelations@weitzlux.com), or online at [www.weitzlux.com](http://www.weitzlux.com).