

HEALTH AND DRUG ALERTS

## Pfizer to withdraw valdecoxib (Bextra) at Health Canada's request

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Health Canada announced today that Pfizer Canada has voluntarily withdrawn valdecoxib (Bextra) from the market pending the resolution of safety issues.

Health Canada's request was based on an ongoing review of national and international information about serious, potentially life-threatening skin reactions related to valdecoxib. People taking the anti-inflammatory and pain medication are

urged to contact their physician to discuss discontinuing its use and finding an alternative.

Valdecoxib is the second selective COX-2 inhibitor to be withdrawn. Rofecoxib (Vioxx) was withdrawn Sept. 30 after being linked to an increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

Health Canada has also placed new restrictions on the use of celecoxib (Celebrex) due to concerns about possible

risks of heart attack and stroke among certain patients.

The US Food and Drug Administration has also asked Pfizer US to withdraw valdecoxib.

In addition, the FDA issued a number of changes pertaining to the marketing of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, including COX-2 selective and prescription and nonprescription nonselective NSAID medications. — *Barbara Sibbald, eCMAJ*