



### What are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (“NSAIDs”)?

NSAIDs are medications commonly used to treat pain and inflammation (such as menstrual cramps, headaches, dental pain, arthritis, muscle aches and injuries).

### Which NSAIDs are the most effective?

All NSAID products are effective in treating pain and inflammation, although effectiveness may vary from person to person. There are many generic options available. If one doesn’t work, trying another NSAID may help.

### How do possible side effects compare between NSAIDs?

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said that all NSAIDs, including Celebrex<sup>®</sup>, have similar side effects. Side effects include gastrointestinal (stomach and intestine) ulcers and bleeding, increased risk of heart attacks, strokes and kidney problems. Due to the increased risk of heart attacks and strokes with Celebrex, the American Heart Association recommends that it only be used as a last option for people with heart disease.

### Are there risks with all NSAIDs?

Yes. If 100 people are treated for a year, about 2 of them will have potentially life-threatening bleeding stomach ulcers. Celebrex has not been proven to be safer than other NSAIDs.

### Why were some NSAIDs (Bextra<sup>®</sup> and Vioxx<sup>®</sup>) removed from the market?

- Vioxx was removed because data showed it increased the risk for heart attacks and strokes.
- Bextra was removed because it was associated with severe, sometimes life-threatening skin reactions. Its effects on the heart are unclear.

### What about Celebrex and “COX-2 inhibitors”?

- Celebrex is a “COX-2 selective” NSAID, (like Bextra and Vioxx.) During development, COX-2 selective NSAIDs were called “super-aspirins” because of the hope that they would be safer than other NSAIDs. However, after years of experience and many clinical studies, there is still no reliable proof that COX-2 inhibitors are better than other NSAIDs and their risks appear to be the same.
- Celebrex is heavily advertised and can cost up to 20 times as much as other NSAIDs. Generic NSAID options for COX-2 selective NSAIDs include etodolac, meloxicam, and salsalate.

### What are my options for treating pain and inflammation with NSAIDs?

You have the following choices, which vary in cost but have similar benefits:

#### Generic Medications: ~\$3 – 58\*

<b>diclofenac</b> (Cataflam <sup>®</sup> , Voltaren <sup>®</sup> )	<b>meloxicam</b> (Mobic)
<b>etodolac</b> (Lodine <sup>®</sup> )	<b>nabumetone</b> (Relafen <sup>®</sup> )
<b>flurbiprofen</b> (Ansaid <sup>®</sup> )	<b>naproxen</b> (Anaprox <sup>®</sup> , Naprosyn <sup>®</sup> )
<b>ibuprofen</b> (Motrin <sup>®</sup> )	<b>oxaprozin</b> (Daypro <sup>®</sup> )
<b>indomethacin</b> (Indocin <sup>®</sup> )	<b>piroxicam</b> (Feldene <sup>®</sup> )
<b>ketoprofen</b> (Orudis <sup>®</sup> )	<b>salsalate</b> (Disalcid <sup>®</sup> )
<b>meclufenamate</b> (Ponstel <sup>®</sup> )	<b>sulindac</b> (Clinoril <sup>®</sup> )

#### Non-Preferred Brands: ~\$51 - 205\*

Celebrex <sup>®</sup>
Voltaren <sup>®</sup> 1% gel
Flector <sup>®</sup> 1.3% patch

\*Approximate cost estimates based on a 30-day supply. Actual prices may vary depending on your pharmacy and the amount or strength of medication dispensed. Brand names in ( ) are non-formulary and are listed for your reference only.

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

All NSAIDs provide similar benefits, some just cost more. Celebrex should be used with caution by people at risk for heart disease. Ask your doctor if a generic NSAID can work for you.

Note: Since many medication options are available, our physicians and pharmacists developed this to provide you with information about the available alternatives, as well as potential advantages and lack of advantages of the various products. This medication summary was developed based upon an evaluation of information from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), scientific studies, and input from practicing doctors and specialists.

