

### A Quick Test can help diabetes patients

The Canadian Diabetes Association released revised Clinical Practice Guidelines for diabetes with new, lower blood sugar targets. The lower targets mean sufferers must become more informed about reducing their risk of complications. Toward this end, The Canadian Diabetes Association has also launched a Diabetes Quick Test, allowing diabetes patients to easily determine if they are at the right target levels. Taking the test will help sufferers understand new target levels and ensure they are doing all they can to manage their diabetes.

**How does it apply to your practice?** One in 14 Canadians has diabetes and many still do not pay attention to their condition. Controlling sugar levels can mean avoidance of serious complications such as heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, and amputation. Many diabetes sufferers do not realize diabetes is the leading cause of death by disease.

A Test No One Can Afford to Fail—Canadian Diabetes Association Advises People with Type 2 Diabetes to do Their Homework. Press Release. Toronto, Ontario, June 2004

### Lipitor<sup>®</sup>: Reducing the risk of heart attack

The Collaborative Atorvastatin Diabetes Study (CARDS) showed that diabetes patients taking Lipitor<sup>®</sup> (atorvastatin calcium) had a significant reduction in strokes and heart attacks compared to those taking placebo. The study involved over 2,800 patients with Type 2 diabetes, no history of heart disease, and relatively low levels of cholesterol. Those who used the cholesterol-lowering medicine had a 37% reduction in major cardiac events. Also, 48% fewer Lipitor-treated patients had strokes and the overall mortality rate was 27% lower compared to placebo. The study was ended early because of its significant results.

**How does it apply to your practice?** Approximately two million Canadians and 170 million people around the world suffer from diabetes, a leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Diabetes sufferers are four times as likely to suffer heart attacks or strokes than those who don't have diabetes. "This important study has demonstrated that lowering cholesterol with atorvastatin in patients with diabetes—even those whose LDL [low-density lipoprotein], or bad cholesterol, were relatively low—will result in a dramatic cardiovascular benefit," said professor Helen Colhoun, CARDS co-principal investigator.

Patients with Diabetes Taking Lipitor<sup>®</sup> Experienced Major Reductions in Heart Attacks and Strokes, New Data Show. Press Release. Kirkland, Quebec, June 11, 2004.

### JRA sufferers can stay active with VIOXX®

Amy Cotton was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA) at 17, but with the help of Merck Frosst Canada Ltd., a leader in the field of inflammatory disease, she has been able to get closer to her dream and become one of the most promising judo champions on Canada's 2004 Olympic Judo team. However, Merck's Vioxx® (rofecoxib)—a treatment that has shown positive study results in JRA—is not approved for this indication in Canada.

In a recent 12-week study of a cyclooxygenase (COX)-2 selective inhibitor for the treatment of JRA, Vioxx, once-daily, relieved symptoms of JRA in sufferers aged two to 17 in a similar way to the traditional non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, naproxen.

The double-blinded study included 310 pediatric patients with active JRA. The patients receive low-dose Vioxx, high-dose Vioxx, or naproxen at recommended doses. Results presented at the European League Against Rheumatism congress in Berlin, Germany, showed that Vioxx relieved symptoms of JRA. Those treated with a higher dose of Vioxx had a 54.5% improvement in symptoms after 12 weeks, while those treated a lower dose showed 46.2% improvement, and those treated with naproxen showed 55.1% improvement. Also, after 12 weeks, patients using Vioxx reported an improvement in overall well-being and fewer gastrointestinal adverse effect compared to naproxen.

**How does it apply to your practice?** JRA is estimated to affect 6,000 Canadian children under the average age of 16.2. It most commonly begins in the toddler or early teenage years, when girls are more affected. "JRA is the most common form of arthritis with onset in children under the age of 16. JRA is a painful condition that may cause tenderness and swelling, leading eventually to joint damage and, ultimately, disability in a large number of affected children," said Dr. Ciaran Duffy, pediatric rheumatologist at the Montreal Children's Hospital. There is no cure for JRA, but a proper regimen can reduce symptoms. Ongoing research offers promising results for the future. **D**

Results of a Study of Vioxx® in the Treatment of Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis Symptoms. Press Release. Berlin, Germany, June 11, 2004.  
Canadian Judo Athlete with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis Realizes Olympic Dream and Encourages Young JRA Sufferers to Stay Active. Press Release. Berlin, Germany, June 9, 2004.