



**DRUGS THAT LOST  
PATENT PROTECTION**

**May 2008**

BRAND NAME	GENERIC NAME	INDICATION
REQUIP	ropinirole hydrochloride	Parkinson's, Restless Leg
HABITROL	nicotine	Smoking cessation
SARAFEM	fluoxetine hydrochloride	Anti-depressant

**COMMENTS:** Check your formularies to ensure that patients are paying generic copays for these drugs.

**SUICIDE RISKS FROM  
ALLERGY MEDICINE SINGULAIR**

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the FDA approved changes Merck made to Singulair package inserts listing agitation, depression, irritability and "suicidal thinking and behavior (including suicide)." New York Senator, Elizabeth Little has asked that Singulair TV ads contain a warning that suicide is a possible side effect. A family who lost a 15 year old son to suicide allegedly associated with Merck's Singulair, requested the drug bare a "black box" label cautioning that patients can experience suicidal thoughts and mood changes. That is one possible result of the FDA investigation, which officials say is expected to take nine months.

**COMMENTS:** The high use of Singulair requires all drug utilization programs to include surveillance for Singulair associated depression and behavior changes in patients.

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**PUBLIC CITIZENS REQUEST  
FDA BAN OF ORTHO EVRA PATCH**

Public Citizens Citing studies state the birth control patch Ortho Evra increased the risk of blood clots and argued that it resulted in:

- 60% more estrogen on average exposure
- Greater variability in estrogen levels
- A two-fold increased risk of various thrombosis
- Increased risk of side effects like breast discomfort, severe menstrual pain, nausea, and vomiting

The FDA upgraded the warning labels to include results of an epidemiology study finding Ortho Evra users were at higher risk of developing serious blood clots than women using birth control pills. Lawsuits have charged J&J with allegedly misleading docs and the FDA for years by altering and withholding medical data about the patch.

**COMMENTS:** These issues should be discussed by P & T Committees. Payers should request that the Ortho Evra patch in included in utilization oversight.

**JCODE x NDC BRIDGE**

*Every entry on the JCode Calculator™ has a field that allows for Medical Claims Payment Teams to click once to access all JCodes that pertain to that drug...*

The Pro Pharma quarterly update for the JCode Calculator™ product removes the "hassle factor" from pricing and paying claims. The list now contains ASP, Part B HCPCS codes and updated AWP, WAC and complete search capability on all fields. You can also get NDC's grouped by category to project costs for treating various diseases. Pro Pharma clients report savings of over 40% over claims paid on a billed basis, and have decreased adjuster and/or examiner time and hassle. Pick your format from paper, Excel, text for legacy systems, or web based.

For information call Carol Stern at (818)701-5438 or via E-Mail at [carol.stern@propharmaconsultants.com](mailto:carol.stern@propharmaconsultants.com) to order your copy with monthly/quarterly updates.