

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NATIONAL VACCINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ISSUES
RECOMMENDED USE FOR ROTATEQ®**

Vaccine against rotavirus could save important hospital and ER resources

MONTREAL, Quebec – January 21, 2008 – The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) published its recommendation today on RotaTeq® (rotavirus vaccine, live, oral, pentavalent), the first vaccine available in Canada to prevent rotavirus gastroenteritis in infants – the most common cause of severe gastroenteritis in children under three. In its recommendation, NACI acknowledges that "...individual infants and their families are likely to benefit from immunization with RotaTeq®. The vaccine has been approved for use in infants 6 to 32 weeks of age and should be offered to infants whose parents/guardians wish to reduce the risk of rotavirus. The first dose must be given within 12 weeks of age."¹

NACI also noted that the implementation of a universal RotaTeq® immunization program of all Canadian infants could be expected to prevent as many as 56,000 cases of rotavirus gastroenteritis, 33,000 physician visits, 15,000 emergency department visits and from 1,000 to 5,000 hospitalizations annually.²

"We are very pleased with the statement from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization," said Dawn Graham, President of Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. "Merck Frosst is proud of its vaccine research and development and even prouder knowing that RotaTeq® can play an important role in reducing the burden on our over stretched healthcare system."

RotaTeq® prevents 98 per cent of severe cases of rotavirus

An oral vaccine, RotaTeq® was approved by Health Canada in August 2006 for the prevention of rotavirus gastroenteritis caused by the serotypes G1, G2, G3, G4 and G-serotypes that contain P1[8] when administered to infants.³ These rotavirus strains are responsible for approximately 94 per cent of rotavirus disease in Canada. In clinical trials, the vaccine prevented 74 per cent of all rotavirus gastroenteritis cases and 98 per cent of the severe cases.⁴

About NACI

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is a committee of recognized experts in the fields of paediatrics, infectious diseases, immunology, medical microbiology, internal medicine and public health. The Committee reports to the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, and works with departmental staff of the Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control of the Public Health Agency of Canada to provide ongoing and timely medical, scientific and public health advice. NACI makes recommendations for the use of vaccines approved in Canada and also advises on the need for national vaccination strategies.

About Merck Frosst

At Merck Frosst, patients come first. Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. is a research-driven pharmaceutical company discovering, developing and marketing a broad range of innovative medicines and vaccines to improve human health. Merck Frosst is one of the top 20 R&D investors in Canada, with an investment of \$114 million in 2006. More information about Merck Frosst is available at <http://www.merckfrosst.com>.

Forward-Looking Statement

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based on management's current expectations and involve risks and uncertainties, which may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. The forward-looking statements may include statements regarding product development, product potential or financial performance. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. Merck undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise. Forward-looking statements in this press release should be evaluated together with the many uncertainties that affect Merck's business, particularly those mentioned in the cautionary statements in Item 1 of Merck's Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2006, and in its periodic reports on Form 10-Q and Form 8-K, which the Company incorporates by reference.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Sheila Murphy
Manager, Public Affairs
Merck Frosst Canada Ltd.
514-428-2748

Dan Brennan
NATIONAL PharmaCom
514-843-2325

¹ Canadian Communicable Disease Report. January 2008, volume 34, page 26.

² Canadian Communicable Disease Report. January 2008, volume 34, page 25.

³ RotaTeq® Product Monograph approved on August 1, 2006.

⁴ Vesikari T et al. Safety and Efficacy of a Pentavalent Human-Bovine (WC3) Reassortant Rotavirus Vaccine. N Engl J Med 2006;354;1:23-33