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Interview dates: December 17-19, 2004
Interviews: 1,002 adults, 773 prescription drug users
Margin of error: ± 3.1 for all adults, ± 3.5 for prescription drug users

**THE ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL
CONDUCTED BY IPSOS-PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

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AP/Ipsos Poll: Americans Mostly Confident Prescription Drugs are Safe

The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between December 17-19, 2004, the AP-Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of 1,002 adults nationwide. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 for all adults. Margin of error for subgroups may be higher.

Washington, D.C., December 22, 2004 — The latest AP/Ipsos poll shows that the American public – including those who have taken specific Cox-2 inhibitors – generally has confidence in the safety of prescription drugs. People are slightly more confident in the safety of prescription drugs than they are in the ability of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that safety.

Few Have Reassessed Drug Risks in Wake of Recent Alarms

Only one in seven people (14%) who take any prescription drugs say they have asked a doctor or pharmacist to reassess their prescriptions in the wake of recent news about Vioxx and similar drugs. A third (33%) of those who have taken Vioxx, Celebrex or Bextra in the past year have asked to reexamine their prescriptions, but most (67%) have not.

(ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT THEY TOOK DRUGS PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR.)

Q. As you may know, the painkiller Vioxx was recently withdrawn from the market because it was associated with an increased risk of heart attack and stroke, and questions have been raised about other drugs on the market. Since these steps were taken, have you asked a doctor or pharmacist to reassess the drugs being prescribed to you, or not?

	<u>Prescription drug users</u>	<u>Cox-2 users</u>
Yes	14	33
No.....	86	67
Refused/not sure	-	--

Eight in Ten Confident of Safety of Prescription Drugs in U.S.

A wide majority (83%) of Americans have confidence in the safety of prescription drugs sold in the U.S. However, more say they are “somewhat” (48%) than “very confident” (36%). Relatively few (16%) lack confidence in prescription drugs.

High income earners (45%) and college graduates (46%; 53% of male grads) are more likely than others to be “very confident” in the safety of prescription drugs. Conversely, seniors (23%),

members of minority groups (21%) and people with up to a high school education (21%) are somewhat more prone to be “not too” or “not at all confident” of drug safety.

Q. Overall, how confident are you in the safety of prescription drugs sold in the United States? Would you say you are very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident.....	36
Somewhat confident	48
Not too confident.....	10
Not at all confident.....	5
Not sure.....	1
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Total Confident	83
Total Not Confident	16

Americans At Least “Somewhat Confident” in FDA

Three in four U.S. adults have confidence in the FDA, although those who are “somewhat confident” (50%) outnumber those who are “very confident” (27%) by two to one. Nearly a quarter (23%) are “not too” or “not at all confident.”

Confidence in prescription drugs is closely tied to the FDA’s reputation. Nearly all those who have confidence in the FDA also trust that prescription drugs are safe (94%). People who lack confidence in the FDA, by contrast, are divided on drug safety (51% confident, 47% not).

Q. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is responsible for ensuring the safety of prescription drugs in the United States. How confident are you in the ability of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to ensure the safety of prescription drugs sold in the United States? Would you say you are very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident.....	27
Somewhat confident	50
Not too confident.....	16
Not at all confident.....	7
Not sure.....	-
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Total Confident	76
Total Not Confident	23

People under age 30 (83%), college graduates (85%) and Republicans (85%) have more confidence in the FDA than others. Confidence in the FDA is lowest among unmarried women (30%), rural residents (31%) and seniors (28%).

Three in Four Americans Have Taken Prescription Drugs Recently

Three-quarters of Americans say they have taken prescription drugs at least once in the past year. Nearly all those aged 50-64 (84%) and 65 and up (87%) have taken a prescription, as have two-thirds of those under 50. More women (80%; 84% suburban women) than men (68%) have taken a prescription drug this year.

Men under 45 (42%), members of minority groups (36%) and those with up to a high school education (31%) are relatively more likely to say they have not taken prescription drugs in the past year.

Q. At any time in the past year, did you take any drugs that were prescribed for you by a doctor, or not?

Yes	74
No.....	26
Refused/not sure	-

Of adults who have taken prescription drugs, one in four (19%) have used one or more of the three leading Cox-2 inhibitors -- Celebrex (11%), Vioxx (10%) or Bextra (5%) -- within the past year. Two-thirds (67%) of people taking these drugs are age 50 or older. People who took any one of these Cox-2 inhibitors have nearly as much confidence in the FDA (71%) and overall drug safety (83%) as the public at large.

(ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT THEY TOOK DRUGS PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR.)

Q. Please tell me whether you have used any of the following prescription painkillers at any time in the past year.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Celebrex.....	11	89	-
Bextra	5	95	-
Vioxx	10	90	-

Six in Ten Have Discussed Side Effects with their Doctor

Of those who have taken any prescription drug within the past year, six in ten (62%) discussed the side effects and risks of a new prescription with their doctor. Fewer than half (45%) spoke about risks and side effects with their pharmacist. The most frequent means for gathering information about a prescription is through the information pamphlets that come with the drug (85% have read them).

(ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT THEY TOOK DRUGS PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR.)

Q. Thinking of the most recent time you started taking a prescription drug that you hadn't taken before, did you and your doctor discuss the risks or side effects of the drug, or not?

Yes	62
No.....	36
Refused/not sure	2

(ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT THEY TOOK DRUGS PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR.)

Q. And did you and your pharmacist discuss the risks or side effects of the drug, or not?

Yes	45
No.....	54
Refused/not sure	1

(ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT THEY TOOK DRUGS PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR.)

Q. And did you read any information pamphlets that came with the drug, or not?

Yes	85
No.....	14
Refused/not sure	1

Men (68%) and people under age 30 (71%) most often say they have discussed risks and side effects with their doctor. Suburban women are among those least likely to have spoken with their doctor (47% have not). About half of prescription drug takers who lack confidence in the FDA and drug safety at large also have not discussed side effects with their doctor.

While women are less likely than men to talk with their doctor about risks and side effects of a new prescription, more women (92%) than men (76%) say they read the information provided with the new prescription.

Majority Support Liberalizing Prescription Drug Reimports

Over two-thirds (68%) of Americans favor making it easier for people to buy lower-cost prescription drugs from Canada and other countries.

Q. Some want the federal government to make it easier for people to buy prescription drugs from Canada or other countries at lower cost. Others oppose that, arguing that the safety of prescription drugs from other countries cannot be assured. Do you favor or oppose the federal government making it easier for people to buy prescription drugs from other countries?

Favor	68
Oppose	27
Not sure	5

Three-quarters (75%) of baby boomers support making this easier, and men (71%) are slightly more favorable than women (65%). Both people who have taken prescription drugs (69%) and those who have not (66%) support allowing more prescription medicines to be bought abroad. People in the Western U.S. are also highly in favor (75%). Moreover, support for liberalizing prescription drug imports spans education and income. However, Republicans tend to be more opposed (33%) than Democrats (20%) toward allowing easier purchase of prescription drugs from abroad.

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