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## Hundreds of lawsuits expected over Vioxx

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CBC News

WINDSOR, ONT. - A law firm in Windsor, Ont., says it is being inundated with requests for legal help from people who took the arthritis drug Vioxx, which was pulled off the shelves over heart disease risks.

The drug's manufacturer, Merck & Co., withdrew the drug from the market in September because of evidence it increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

- INDEPTH: [Arthritis drug concerns](#)
- FROM SEPT. 30, 2004: [Arthritis drug Vioxx recalled](#)



Lawyer Greg Monforton.

While other firms in Canada and the U.S. are trying to launch class-action lawsuits against Merck, Greg Monforton's firm expects to file hundreds of individual lawsuits.

So far, Monforton says he has identified about 150 cases to pursue from the 3,000 requests for information that have poured into his office.

"We're looking for people who have clean, pre-medication health histories," said Monforton. "People who don't have a significant history of heart attack or stroke or other risk factors commonly associated with those kinds of conditions."

Bill Graham, 65, is one example of what Monforton is looking for. Graham took Vioxx for about two years after his doctor prescribed the anti-inflammatory for a work-related injury.

Graham had a stroke on July 9, the same day he was given his last prescription for Vioxx. He received no warning about its potential risks from his family doctor, pharmacist or the pill bottle.

"When I had the stroke, had a meeting with the heart specialist," Graham recalled. "He asked me what kind of medication I was taking and when I said I'd been taking Vioxx, he said ..., 'Hmm, I don't want you to

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- [Vioxx Recall Lawyers Canada, gregmonforton.com](#)
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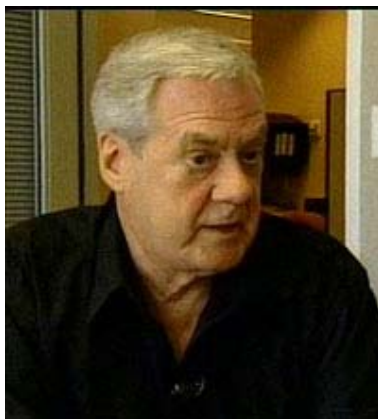
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take that anymore.' And I never did take it again after that."

Monforton expects Merck to defend every case vigorously, arguing that pre-existing cardiovascular disease was the problem, not the drug. The cases hinge on the issue of whether each heart attack or stroke was caused by the drug or the natural progression of someone's health.

While older people with more risk of cardiovascular disease were the target market for Vioxx, Monforton will argue the drug maker didn't focus on that group in its drug studies.



*Bill Graham.*

"They tended to organize studies with a disproportionately large number of young, healthy adults who didn't have those types of risk factors," said Monforton. "So it's been alleged, and we believe, that they deliberately skewed the data."

- FROM NOV. 5, 2004: [Vioxx should have been withdrawn years ago: study](#)

In the U.S., Merck's lawyers have argued it is difficult to prove Vioxx caused individuals' heart attacks or strokes because the health problems are common.

The drug maker said it will deal with each case individually.

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