# Take Five

October 1, 2000 By Staff

In May, UNAIDS urged five companies to say they'd cut the prices of anti-HIV drugs in poor countries. After many press releases (and even more free publicity), few additional details have been released. A brief look at the facts and possible pitfalls:

**Boehringer-Ingelheim, Germany**
**Price Tag:** TBA
**Active Ingredients:** Five years of free nevirapine, but only to prevent mom-to-babe transmission. Countries must ask for the drug and meet the World Bank's definition of a developing nation in order to avoid any coloniastic overtones.
**Warning:** But hey, it only covers mothers and kids using the drug, not other HIVers.

**Bristol-Meyers Squibb, U.S.**
**Price Tag:** $100 mil over five years (started in 99)
**Active Ingredients:** "Secure the Future" program targets women and children in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland; generally credited with setting a good example for other drug companies.
**Warning:** Locals say that they want more community initiatives and lower drug prices, not phsician trainings and clinical trials.

**Glaxo Wellcome, Great Britain**
**Price Tag:** TBA
**Active Ingredients:** Price cuts for Combivir, from $16 to $2 per day in developing nations, and a free start-up supply of AZT for pregnant women.
**Warning:** Activists say even $2 is more than the 40 cents it costs to make the drug generically. And once the initial cache of AZT is used, moms will have to pay, too.

**Merck & Co., INC., US**
**Price Tag:** $50 mil
**Active Ingredients:** The Gates Foundation will match the donation to improve medical infrastructure in Botswana. Crixivan and Sustiva will be offered free in 2001.
**Warning:** We're waiting to find out how many people will get the drugs.

**Roche Labs, Switzerland**
**Price Tag:** TBA
**Active Ingredients:** Countries to provide Fortovase, Ivirase, and Vireacept at a reduced

(undisclosed) cost in some nations, say reps.
**Warning:** No other details had been released at press time.

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