

ASTRA

NEWS RELEASE



Södertälje, Sweden, July 21, 1998

SALES OF PRILOSEC® (LOSEC®) IN THE U.S. UP 61 PERCENT DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1998

Total sales of Prilosec (Losec) in the U.S. through Astra Merck, Inc., during the second quarter of 1998 amounted to USD 900 (1997: 500) m., an increase of 80 percent.

Total sales of Prilosec during the period January - June 1998 amounted to USD 1,630 (1,015) m., an increase of 61 percent, corresponding to approximately SEK 12,900 (7,600) m. Growth in total prescriptions May, year-to-date, was fully 30 percent.

Sales of Plendil® through Astra Merck during the first half of 1998 amounted to USD 75 (55) m., corresponding to approximately SEK 590 (400) m.

The strong sales growth of Prilosec and Plendil was partly due to changes in inventory levels among wholesalers.

As of July 1, 1998, Astra completed the previously announced restructuring of the relationship with Merck & Co., Inc., whereby the businesses of the formerly half-owned Astra Merck and Astra's wholly owned subsidiary Astra USA, Inc., were combined to form Astra Pharmaceuticals, L.P., a new U.S. limited partnership, with Astra as the general partner.

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