



NEWS RELEASE

Merck's Playing with Heart Program Teams Up With Professional Baseball Clubs and Baseball Legends to Help Raise Awareness About LDL-C, Called "Bad" Cholesterol, and How It May Impact the Risk of Heart Attack or Stroke

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The Yankees, Red Sox, Phillies, Braves, Astros, Cardinals, Giants, Padres, and Angels are joining Merck to help educate fans about high bad cholesterol and how it may increase the risk of heart attack or stroke

RAHWAY, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, today announced a collaboration with nine professional baseball teams and former professional baseball players to launch the Playing with Heart educational program to help educate adults about the importance of knowing their low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C), called "bad" cholesterol, number and the potential increased risk of heart attack or stroke.

Playing with Heart connects Merck's commitment to cardiovascular health with baseball, America's favorite pastime, to raise awareness and encourage adults to talk with their doctor about how lowering bad cholesterol could help lower their risk of heart attack or stroke. Visit [playingwithheart.com](https://www.playingwithheart.com) to learn more.

Every year it is estimated that more than 800,000 people in the U.S. have a heart attack. Plaque buildup in the arteries is a major cause of heart attacks. Over time bad cholesterol can combine with fats and other substances in the blood to create plaque. Plaque buildup can lead to blockages, ruptures, and blood clots, which may increase



your risk of heart attack or stroke.

“Merck is proud to join with some of the biggest franchises in baseball and with WomenHeart for this first-of-its-kind collaboration,” said Cris Regent, associate vice president, U.S. Pharma Cardiovascular and Metabolic, Merck. “Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., and through Playing with Heart, we hope to increase conversations between adults and their doctors about high bad cholesterol and the risk of heart attack or stroke.”

During the 2026 baseball season, the Playing with Heart program will feature a lineup of baseball legends, clubs, and ambassadors who will share their personal stories about high bad cholesterol. Merck, along with WomenHeart patient education network, and nine professional baseball teams, will also host in-stadium events to provide education about bad cholesterol and to help encourage adults to learn more about the increased risk of heart attack or stroke. Baseball legends, clubs, and ambassadors participating in Playing with Heart include:

- Albert Pujols, Playing with Heart National Ambassador
- The New York Yankees, and Aaron Boone, CC Sabathia
- The Boston Red Sox, and Lou Merloni
- The Philadelphia Phillies, and Charlie Manuel
- The Atlanta Braves, and Javy Lopez
- The Houston Astros, and Geoff Blum
- The St. Louis Cardinals, and Sierra Kile (daughter of the late Darryl Kile)
- The San Francisco Giants, and Dusty Baker
- The San Diego Padres, and Mark Loretta, Jake Peavy
- The Los Angeles Angels, and Bobby Valentine, Clyde Wright

“The Playing with Heart program has the potential to increase understanding of bad cholesterol and its importance to heart health,” said Celina Gorre, chief executive officer, WomenHeart. “Education is at the heart of everything we do, and the Playing with Heart program gives us an opportunity to use the visibility of baseball to help raise awareness about bad cholesterol and the risk of heart attack or stroke.”

WomenHeart, which has a network of more than 1,000 patient champions, will help bring the Playing with Heart educational program to local communities.

About atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease and risk of heart attack and stroke

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) is a condition caused by the buildup of plaque (bad cholesterol, fats, and other substances) within the arteries, leading to narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can result in serious

cardiovascular events. ASCVD includes conditions such as coronary artery disease, peripheral artery disease, and cerebrovascular disease. It is a leading cause of death in the United States, accounting for approximately 25% of all deaths in the U.S. ASCVD continues to pose a significant public health burden, underscoring the need for awareness and education.

About WomenHeart

WomenHeart is the nation's only patient-centered organization dedicated to servicing adults living with or at risk for heart disease. WomenHeart is active in more than 30 states, in cities such as Kansas City, New York City, Phoenix, and Washington, D.C. WomenHeart focuses on raising awareness, engaging local leaders, and empowering women. The organization is dedicated to prompting awareness, advocacy, and supporting women with heart disease, empowering them to take charge of their own heart health.

About Merck

At Merck, known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, we are unified around our purpose: We use the power of leading-edge science to save and improve lives around the world. For more than 130 years, we have brought hope to humanity through the development of important medicines and vaccines. We aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world – and today, we are at the forefront of research to deliver innovative health solutions that advance the prevention and treatment of diseases in people and animals. We foster a diverse and inclusive global workforce and operate responsibly every day to enable a safe, sustainable and healthy future for all people and communities. For more information, visit www.merck.com and connect with us on **X (formerly Twitter)**, **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **YouTube** and **LinkedIn**.

Forward-Looking Statement of Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., USA

This news release of Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., USA (the "company") includes "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of the company's management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. If underlying assumptions prove inaccurate or risks or uncertainties materialize, actual results may differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

Risks and uncertainties include but are not limited to, general industry conditions and competition; general economic factors, including interest rate and currency exchange rate fluctuations; the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation in the United States and internationally; global trends toward health care cost containment; technological advances, new products and patents attained by competitors; challenges inherent in new product development, including obtaining regulatory approval; the company's ability to accurately predict future market conditions; manufacturing difficulties or delays; financial instability of international economies and sovereign risk; dependence on the effectiveness of the company's patents and other protections for

innovative products; and the exposure to litigation, including patent litigation, and/or regulatory actions.

The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2025 and the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC's Internet site (www.sec.gov).

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