

## Patient Information Sheet

### VSL#3 (Probiotic Mixture) for Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Trade Name: VSL #3

#### What is VSL#3?

VSL3 is a combination of eight different probiotics (“good bacteria”) being used and tested for its effectiveness in treating Ulcerative Colitis and Inflammation of the small bowel-anal pouch after the large bowel has been removed for Ulcerative Colitis (this last condition is called “Pouchitis”) One packet of VSL#3 contains  $9 \times 10^{11}$  (900 billion) bacteria consisting of:

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <i>Streptococcus salivarius subspecies thermophilus</i>    | $\sim 595 \times 10^9$ |
| <i>Bifidobacterium (B. longum, B. infantis, B. brevis)</i> | $\sim 270 \times 10^9$ |
| <i>Lactobacillus acidophilus</i>                           | $\sim 30 \times 10^9$  |
| <i>Lactobacillus casei</i>                                 | $\sim 75 \times 10^9$  |
| <i>Lactobacillus delbrueckii subspecies bulgaricus</i>     | $\sim 15 \times 10^9$  |
| <i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i>                             | $\sim 15 \times 10^9$  |

#### What is the function of VSL#3 in the body?

Within your intestine there are many bacteria. Some of these bacteria are “bad” and some are “good”. When you ingest enough of those good bacteria and if your health benefits from that these bacteria are called probiotics. Doctors believe that the probiotics help keep you and your intestine healthy and help prevent the bad bacteria from attacking your intestine.

#### Why do we think probiotics will work in inflammatory bowel disease?

There is some evidence to suggest that patients with inflammatory bowel disease have too many bad bacteria and not enough good bacteria in their intestine. In this regard, providing you with supplemental good bacteria could potentially help treat your inflammatory bowel disease. Some clinical trials are currently underway to test this hypothesis.

#### How is VSL#3 given?

VSL3 comes as a freeze-dried powder. It is mixed up in water or yogurt and taken once or twice daily.

#### What are the side effects of VSL#3?

Some patients complain of some bloating with VSL #3, which is mostly temporary. Therefore it is recommended to take these probiotics once daily in the first week or so.

#### How can I get VSL#3?

VSL3 is available through pharmacies or directly from the distributor:

Ferring Pharmaceuticals

Toll free: 1-800-263-4057

In general, probiotics are not covered yet under your drug insurance plans. The cost of VSL#3 is approximately \$3.50 per packet. You will be instructed to use one or two packets per day.

