



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vaccinate Your Family
Media Contact:
Erica DeWald: (908) 812-0084

Merck Media Contacts:
Deb Wambold: (215) 779-2234

Melissa Moody: (973) 275-7075

Gabrielle Union-Wade Joins ‘Don’t Skip’ Campaign to Encourage Doctor Well-Visits and Recommended Vaccinations

New Public Health Campaign Spotlights the Importance of Staying Up to Date with Recommended Vaccinations Against Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

WASHINGTON and KENILWORTH, N.J., May 17, 2021 – Vaccinate Your Family, in collaboration with Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, announced today the launch of a new public health campaign called *Don’t Skip* with actress, activist and author Gabrielle Union-Wade to encourage families to schedule their well-visits and stay up to date on all recommended vaccines.

Parents’ fears about COVID-19, stay-at-home policies and other pandemic-related issues have caused families to stay away from doctors’ offices over the past year, with potentially serious implications to national public health. Missed child well-visits have led to declines in recommended vaccinations, with up to a 26 percent drop in certain childhood vaccinations between January and September 2020, according to one report.

As part of the campaign, a series of new public service announcements feature Union-Wade and her family during moments that reflect some of the realities of life during the pandemic, along with an important message: it’s okay to skip some things right now, but a visit to the doctor isn’t one of them. These visits are important for people of all ages to stay on schedule with their recommended vaccinations, especially for young children and preteens who may have missed some vaccines.

“The health and wellness of my family is my number one priority. Like so many other families, we’ve had to make some adjustments over the past year. But for us, we did not skip

our kids' well-visits and recommended vaccines," said Union-Wade. "If there's one thing the pandemic has taught us, it's that public health matters and we all can do our part to help protect our families and each other. That's why I'm encouraging parents to talk to their kid's doctors now about getting back into the office to stay up to date with their kid's recommended vaccinations."

Timing to return to doctors' offices has become important, as public venues are starting to reopen, and families are planning for summer break activities and a return to school later this year.

"Now is the time for people of all ages to be talking with their doctor about how to stay up to date with their recommended vaccinations, and it's especially important for preteens and young children as communities reopen," said Amy Pisani, executive director of Vaccinate Your Family. "Doctors are taking many precautions to help keep their offices as safe as possible, from special hours for well-visits to wait-in-car policies to limiting the number of people who attend visits. It's important for parents to ask their child's doctor now if their child is due for, or has missed, any recommended vaccinations."

"The decline in recommended vaccination rates and doctor visits reported during the pandemic is a serious public health concern. The scale of this challenge calls for big voices, which is why we are thrilled to have Gabrielle, her family and Vaccinate Your Family involved in this important public health campaign," said Dr. Julie Gerberding, executive vice president and chief patient officer, Merck. "Merck has a proud legacy of advancing important health initiatives and the decline in recommended child vaccinations warrants urgent return to care action. With support from Gabrielle and Vaccinate Your Family, we hope families will be motivated to help stay protected against vaccine-preventable diseases."

More information can be found on DontSkipVaccines.com.

About *Don't Skip*

Don't Skip is a national public health campaign by Vaccinate Your Family (VYF) in collaboration with Merck, featuring Gabrielle Union-Wade and her family. It focuses on encouraging families to return to routine health care, schedule their well-visits and stay up to date on recommended vaccinations, especially those that may have been missed during the pandemic. To learn more, visit DontSkipVaccines.com.

About Vaccinate Your Family

Vaccinate Your Family (VYF) has been working for three decades to help protect people of all ages from vaccine-preventable diseases. Founded by Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter

and Former First Lady of Arkansas Betty Bumpers, the nonprofit organization has been instrumental in educating the public about the importance of timely vaccinations, in addition to combatting vaccine disinformation both nationally and on a global scale. VYF's advocacy efforts have helped to ensure strong vaccination policies and programs that improve vaccination access for everyone in the U.S., including our most vulnerable populations. VYF reaches millions of individuals through their World Health Organization (WHO)-certified [website](#), as well as [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and the [Shot of Prevention](#) blog, where they offer science-based information on vaccines and the diseases they prevent.

About Merck

For 130 years, Merck, known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, has been inventing for life, bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world's most challenging diseases in pursuit of our mission to save and improve lives. We demonstrate our commitment to patients and population health by increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. Today, Merck continues to be at the forefront of research to prevent and treat diseases that threaten people and animals – including cancer, infectious diseases such as HIV and Ebola, and emerging animal diseases – as we aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world. For more information, visit www.merck.com and connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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

This news release of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, 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 the global outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19); 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 2020 Annual Report on Form 10-K and the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC's Internet site (www.sec.gov).

###