J&J Recalls Motrin Caplets, Again

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TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Healthcare giant Johnson & Johnson has issued another recall of Motrin pain relievers, at least the sixth in two years.

It's part of a string of more than two dozen recalls of consumer health products, prescription drugs and medical devices over 2 1/2 years.

This time, it's because Motrin IB pills may not dissolve and begin working as soon as intended as they approach their three-year expiration date. That could delay relief of pain.

The recall covers Motrin IB coated caplets and coated tablets, in packages with either 24 pills or 30 pills.

A company spokeswoman said Thursday that J&J is only recalling packages from retailers, not consumers, because there's no safety concern.

"It's 59 product lots. It's about 12 million bottles," said spokeswoman Bonnie Jacobs.

The packages were distributed in the United States, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Fiji, Belize, St. Lucia and Jamaica. Affected lot numbers are listed on the product's Web site, www.motrin.com.

Consumers with questions can call J&J's Consumer Call Center at 1-888-222-6036, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

The packages were manufactured between February 2009 and July 2011. Some were produced by an outside contract manufacturer and others were manufactured at J&J's factory in Las Piedras, Puerto Rico. That's one of three J&J factories that have been under extra scrutiny by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration over a variety of problems with manufacturing quality.

Johnson & Johnson's McNeil Consumer Healthcare factory in Fort Washington, Pa., has been closed since spring 2010 because of serious problems there. The company is in the process of completely gutting and rebuilding the factory.

Since September 2009, J&J has recalled a host of prescription and nonprescription medicines, as well as replacement hip joints, contact lenses and diabetes test strips. Among the recalls were tens of millions of bottles of children's and adult Tylenol and Motrin, Benadryl, Zyrtec, Rolaids and Simply Sleep pills. The prescription drug recalls have included HIV medicine Prezista and epilepsy pill Topamax.

Reasons for the recalls have ranged from contamination with metal shards and class particles, to nauseating odors and inaccurate levels of active drug ingredients.

The recalls have cost the company $900 million in 2010 alone in lost revenue from products not being on store shelves, on top of costs for upgrading factories and legal expenses. Along with the FDA, Congress has been investigating the handling of the manufacturing problems and recalls by executives at Johnson & Johnson, which stresses in its corporate credo its responsibility to the doctors, patients and parents who use its products.