

RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC

Form S-3

January 08, 2004

[QuickLinks](#) -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 8, 2004

Registration No. 333-

**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM S-3
REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware

(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

94-3248524

(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

**1180 Veterans Boulevard
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(650) 624-1100**

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of registrant's principal executive offices)

James M. Gower
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer
Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
1180 Veterans Boulevard
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(650) 624-1100

(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of agent for service)

Copy to:

Suzanne Sawochka Hooper, Esq.
Cooley Godward LLP
Five Palo Alto Square
3000 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 94306-2155
(650) 843-5000

Approximate date of proposed sale to the public:
From time to time after the effective date of this Registration Statement.

If the only securities being registered on this form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box. o

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

If any of the securities being registered on this form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box.

If this form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If delivery of the prospectus is expected to be made pursuant to Rule 434, please check the following box.

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Class of Securities to be Registered(1)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(2)	Amount of Registration Fee(3)
Common Stock, par value \$.001 per share		
Preferred Stock, par value \$.001 per share		
Warrants		
Debt Securities		
Total	\$ 75,000,000	\$ 6,068

- (1) There are being registered hereunder such indeterminate number of shares of common stock and preferred stock, such indeterminate number of warrants to purchase common stock, preferred stock or debt securities, and such indeterminate principal amount of debt securities as shall have an aggregate initial offering price not to exceed \$75,000,000. If any debt securities are issued at an original issued discount, then the offering price of such debt securities shall be in such greater principal amount as shall result in an aggregate initial offering price not to exceed \$75,000,000, less the aggregate dollar amount of all securities previously issued hereunder. Any securities registered hereunder may be sold separately or as units with other securities registered hereunder. The securities registered also include such indeterminate amounts and numbers of common stock, preferred stock and debt securities as may be issued upon conversion of or exchange for preferred stock or debt securities that provide for conversion or exchange, upon exercise of warrants or pursuant to the antidilution provisions of any such securities.
- (2) The proposed maximum aggregate offering price per class of security will be determined from time to time by the registrant in connection with the issuance by the registrant of the securities registered hereunder and is not specified as to each class of security pursuant to General Instruction II.D. of Form S-3 under the Securities Act.
- (3) Calculated pursuant to Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act.

The registrant hereby amends this registration statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the registrant shall file a further amendment that specifically states that this registration statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 or until the registration statement shall become effective on such date as the Securities and Exchange Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED JANUARY 8, 2004

The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and is not soliciting offers to buy these securities in any state where such offer or sale is not permitted.

PROSPECTUS

RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.

\$75,000,000

**Common Stock
Preferred Stock
Debt Securities
Warrants**

From time to time, we may sell common stock, preferred stock, debt securities and/or warrants.

We will provide the specific terms of these securities in one or more supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, as well as any documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, carefully before you invest.

Our common stock is traded on The Nasdaq National Market under the trading symbol "RIGL." The applicable prospectus supplement will contain information, where applicable, as to any other listing (if any) on The Nasdaq Stock Market's National Market or any securities exchange of the securities covered by the prospectus supplement. On January 5, 2004, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the Nasdaq National Market was \$19.84 per share.

THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO OFFER OR SELL ANY SECURITIES UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

If any underwriters are involved in the sale of any securities with respect to which this prospectus is being delivered, the names of such underwriters and any applicable commissions or discounts will be set forth in a prospectus supplement. The net proceeds we expect to receive from such sale will also be set forth in a prospectus supplement.

NEITHER THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION NOR ANY STATE SECURITIES COMMISSION HAS APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED OF THESE SECURITIES OR DETERMINED IF THIS PROSPECTUS IS TRUTHFUL OR COMPLETE. ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.

INVESTING IN OUR SECURITIES INVOLVES A HIGH DEGREE OF RISK. SEE THE SECTION ENTITLED "RISK FACTORS" BEGINNING ON PAGE 2 OF THIS PROSPECTUS.

The date of this prospectus is _____, 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Rigel	1
About this Prospectus	1
Risk Factors	2
The Securities We May Offer	2
Forward-Looking Information	3
Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges	4
Use of Proceeds	4

	Page
Description of Capital Stock	4
Description of Debt Securities	8
Description of Warrants	14
Legal Ownership of Securities	16
Plan of Distribution	19
Legal Matters	20
Experts	20
Where You Can Find More Information	21

RIGEL

Rigel's mission is to become a source of novel, small-molecule drugs to meet large, unmet medical needs. Our business model is to develop a portfolio of drug candidates and to take these through Phase II clinical trials, after which we intend to seek partners for completion of clinical trials, regulatory approval and marketing. We have identified three lead product development programs: mast cell inhibition to treat immunologic diseases such as asthma/allergy and autoimmune disorders, antiviral agents to treat hepatitis C and ubiquitin ligases, a new class of cancer drug targets. Rigel has begun clinical testing of its first product candidates, R112 for allergic rhinitis and R803 for hepatitis C, and plans to initiate clinical trials of two additional drug candidates for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and asthma by the end of 2004. We have not yet, however, obtained regulatory approval for the commercial sale of any products. We have incurred net losses since inception and expect to incur substantial and increasing losses for the next several years as we continue to move drug candidates into and through preclinical and clinical stages of drug development and expand our research and development activities. To date, we have funded our operations primarily through the sale of equity securities, non-equity payments from collaborative partners and capital asset lease financings.

We were incorporated in Delaware on June 14, 1996. Our principal executive offices are located at 1180 Veterans Boulevard, South San Francisco, California 94080. Our telephone number is (650) 624-1100 and our website is <http://www.rigel.com>. We have not incorporated by reference into this prospectus the information on our website, and you should not consider it to be a part of this document. Our website address is included in this document as an inactive textual reference only.

Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc., the Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc. logo and all other Rigel names are trademarks of Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc. in the U.S. and in other selected countries. All other brand names or trademarks appearing in this prospectus are the property of their respective holders.

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission using a "shelf" registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may sell common stock, preferred stock, debt securities and/or warrants in one or more offerings, up to a total dollar amount of \$75 million. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell common stock, preferred stock, debt securities and/or warrants, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain more specific information, as set forth below under "The Securities We May Offer." We may also add, update or change in the prospectus supplement any of the information contained in this prospectus. However, no prospectus supplement shall fundamentally change the terms that are set forth in this prospectus or offer a security that is not registered and described in this prospectus at the time of its effectiveness. This prospectus, together with applicable prospectus supplements, includes all material information relating to this offering. Please carefully read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with the additional information described below under "Where You Can Find More Information."

You should rely only on the information we have provided or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information different from that contained in this prospectus. No dealer, salesperson or other person is authorized to give any information or to represent anything not contained in this prospectus. You must not rely on any unauthorized information or representation. This prospectus is an offer to sell only the securities offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. You should assume that the information in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement is accurate only as of the date on the front of the document and that any information we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus or any sale of a security.

RISK FACTORS

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

Except for the historical information contained in this prospectus or incorporated by reference, this prospectus (and the information incorporated by reference in this prospectus) contains forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Our actual results could differ materially from those discussed here or incorporated by reference. Factors that could cause or contribute to such differences include, but are not limited to, those discussed in the section entitled "RISK FACTORS" contained in our filings made with the Securities and Exchange Commission from time to time, including quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, annual reports on Form 10-K and any supplements to this prospectus.

Investment in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should consider carefully these risk factors identified in our most recent annual and quarterly filings, as well as other information in this prospectus and any prospectus supplements and the documents incorporated by reference herein or therein before purchasing any of our securities. Each of these risk factors could adversely affect our business, operating results and financial condition, as well as adversely affect the value of an investment in our securities.

THE SECURITIES WE MAY OFFER

We may offer shares of our common stock and preferred stock, various series of debt securities and/or warrants to purchase any of such securities, with a total value of up to \$75 million, from time to time under this prospectus at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of offering. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we offer a type or series of securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will describe the specific amounts, prices and other important terms of the securities, including, to the extent applicable:

designation or classification;

aggregate principal amount or aggregate offering price;

maturity, if applicable;

rates and times of payment of interest or dividends, if any;

redemption, conversion or sinking fund terms, if any;

voting or other rights, if any;

conversion prices, if any; and

important federal income tax considerations.

The prospectus supplement also may add, update or change information contained in this prospectus or in documents we have incorporated by reference. However, no prospectus supplement shall fundamentally change the terms that are set forth in this prospectus or offer a security that is not registered and described in this prospectus at the time of its effectiveness.

This Prospectus May Not Be Used to Consummate a Sale of Securities Unless It Is Accompanied by a Prospectus Supplement.

We may sell the securities directly to or through agents, underwriters or dealers. We, and our agents or underwriters, reserve the right to accept or reject all or part of any proposed purchase of securities. If we do offer securities through agents or underwriters, we will include in the applicable prospectus supplement:

the names of those agents or underwriters;

applicable fees, discounts and commissions to be paid to them; and

the net proceeds to us.

Common Stock. We may issue shares of our common stock from time to time. Holders of common stock are entitled to one vote per share on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders. Subject to any preferences of outstanding shares of preferred stock, holders of common stock are entitled to dividends when and if declared by our board of directors.

Preferred Stock. We may issue shares of our preferred stock from time to time, in one or more series. Our board of directors shall determine the rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions of the preferred stock, including dividend rights, conversion rights, voting rights, terms of redemption, liquidation preferences, sinking fund terms and the number of shares constituting any series or the designation of any series. Convertible preferred stock will be convertible into our common stock. Conversion may be mandatory or at your option and would be at prescribed conversion rates.

Debt Securities. We may offer debt securities from time to time, in one or more series, as either senior or subordinated debt or as senior or subordinated convertible debt. The senior debt securities will rank equally with any other unsecured and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated debt securities will be subordinate and junior in right of payment, to the extent and in the manner described in the instrument governing the debt, to all of our senior indebtedness. Convertible debt securities will be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or other securities of ours. Conversion may be mandatory or at your option and would be at prescribed conversion rates.

The debt securities will be issued under one or more documents called indentures, which are contracts between us and a national banking association, as trustee. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the debt securities. We urge you, however, to read the prospectus supplements related to the series of debt securities being offered, as well as the complete indentures that contain the terms of the debt securities. Forms of indentures have been filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and supplemental indentures and forms of debt securities containing the terms of debt securities being offered will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part or will be incorporated by reference from reports we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Warrants. We may issue warrants for the purchase of common stock, preferred stock and/or debt securities in one or more series. We may issue warrants independently or together with common stock, preferred stock and/or debt securities, and the warrants may be attached to or separate from these securities. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the warrants. We urge you, however, to read the prospectus supplements related to the series of warrants being offered, as well as the warrant agreements that contain the terms of the warrants. Forms of the the warrant agreements and forms of warrants containing the terms of the warrants being offered have been filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and supplemental agreements and forms of warrants will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part or will be incorporated by reference from reports we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

We will evidence each series of warrants by warrant certificates that we will issue under a separate agreement. We will enter into the warrant agreements with a warrant agent. Each warrant agent will be a bank that we select that has its principal office in the United States and a combined capital and surplus of at least \$50 million. We will indicate the name and address of the warrant agent in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of warrants.

FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION

This prospectus, including the documents that we incorporate by reference, contains statements indicating expectations about future performance and other forward-looking statements that involve

risks and uncertainties. We usually use words such as "may," "will," "should," "expect," "plan," "anticipate," "believe," "estimate," "predict," "future," "intend," "potential" or "continue" or the negative of these terms or similar expressions to identify forward-looking statements. These statements appear throughout this prospectus and are statements regarding our current intent, belief or expectation, primarily with respect to our operations and related industry developments. Examples of these statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the following: our business and scientific strategies; the progress of our product development programs, including clinical testing; our corporate collaborations, including revenues received from these collaborations; our drug discovery technologies; our research and development expenses; protection of our intellectual property; sufficiency of our cash resources; and our operations and legal risks. You should not place undue reliance on these

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

forward-looking statements, which apply only as of the date of this prospectus. Our actual results could differ materially from those anticipated in these forward-looking statements for many reasons. Any forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date on which it is made, and we undertake no obligation to update any forward-looking statement to reflect events or circumstances after the date on which the statement is made or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events. New factors emerge from time to time, and it is not possible for us to predict which factors will arise. In addition, we cannot assess the impact of each factor on our business or the extent to which any factor, or combination of factors, may cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in any forward-looking statements.

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

Our earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges in each of the years in the five-year period ended December 31, 2002 and in the nine-month period ended September 30, 2003. "Earnings" consist of income (loss) from continuing operations before income taxes, extraordinary items, cumulative effect of accounting changes, equity in net losses of affiliates and fixed charges. "Fixed charges" consist of interest expense and the portion of operating lease expense that represents interest. The extent to which earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges is as follows:

	Year Ended December 31,					Nine Months Ended September 30,
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	(in thousands)					
Deficiency of earnings available to cover fixed charges	\$ (10,604)	\$ (12,366)	\$ (25,360)	\$ (23,805)	\$ (37,030)	(29,335)

USE OF PROCEEDS

Except as described in any prospectus supplement, we currently intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of our securities for research and development and general corporate purposes. We may also use a portion of the net proceeds to acquire or invest in businesses, products and technologies that are complementary to our own, although we currently are not planning or negotiating any such transactions. Pending these uses, the net proceeds will be invested in investment-grade, interest-bearing securities.

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

Our authorized capital stock consists of 100 million shares of common stock, \$0.001 par value, and 10 million shares of preferred stock, \$0.001 par value. As of December 31, 2003, there were 14,828,546 shares of our common stock outstanding and no shares of preferred stock outstanding. In addition, certain stockholders held warrants to purchase 1,724,953 shares of our common stock.

Common Stock

The holders of common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders and do not have cumulative voting rights. Accordingly, holders of a majority of the shares of common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors may elect all of the directors standing for election. Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any outstanding shares of preferred stock, the holders of common stock are entitled to receive ratably such dividends as may be declared by the board of directors out of funds legally available therefor. Upon the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of Rigel, holders of our common stock are entitled to share ratably in all assets remaining after payment of liabilities and the liquidation preferences of any outstanding shares of preferred stock. Holders of common stock have no preemptive rights and no right to convert their common stock into any other securities. There are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to our common stock. All outstanding shares of common stock are, and all shares of common stock that may be issued under this prospectus will be, fully paid and non-assessable.

Preferred Stock

Pursuant to our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, our board of directors has the authority, without further action by the stockholders, to issue up to 10 million shares of preferred stock, in one or more series. Our board of directors is authorized to fix or alter from time to time the designation, powers, preferences and rights of the shares of each series, including dividend rights, conversion rights, voting rights, terms of redemption, liquidation preferences and sinking fund terms, as well as the qualifications, limitations or restrictions of any

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

unissued series of preferred stock. Our board of directors may also establish from time to time the number of shares constituting any series of preferred stock, and to increase or decrease the number of shares of any series subsequent to the issuance of shares of that series, but not below the number of shares of any series then outstanding.

We will fix the rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions of the preferred stock of each series in the certificate of designation relating to that series. We will incorporate by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement that includes this prospectus or as an exhibit to a current report on Form 8-K, the form of any certificate of designation that describes the terms of the series of preferred stock we are offering before the issuance of the related series of preferred stock. This description will include:

the title and stated value;

the number of shares we are offering;

the liquidation preference per share;

the purchase price;

the dividend rate, period and payment date and method of calculation for dividends;

whether dividends will be cumulative or non-cumulative and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends will accumulate;

the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any;

the provisions for a sinking fund, if any;

the provisions for redemption or repurchase, if applicable, and any restrictions on our ability to exercise those redemption and repurchase rights;

any listing of the preferred stock on any securities exchange or market;

whether the preferred stock will be convertible into our common stock, and, if applicable, the conversion price, or how it will be calculated, and the conversion period;

5

whether the preferred stock will be exchangeable into debt securities, and, if applicable, the exchange price, or how it will be calculated, and the exchange period;

voting rights, if any, of the preferred stock;

preemption rights, if any;

restrictions on transfer, sale or other assignment, if any;

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

whether interests in the preferred stock will be represented by depositary shares;

a discussion of any material or special United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the preferred stock;

the relative ranking and preferences of the preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights if we liquidate, dissolve or wind up our affairs;

any limitations on issuance of any class or series of preferred stock ranking senior to or on a parity with the series of preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights if we liquidate, dissolve or wind up our affairs; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the preferred stock.

If we issue shares of preferred stock under this prospectus, the shares will be fully paid and non-assessable and will not have, or be subject to, any preemptive or similar rights.

The General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, the state of our incorporation, provides that the holders of preferred stock will have the right to vote separately as a class on any proposal involving fundamental changes in the rights of holders of that preferred stock. This right is in addition to any voting rights that may be provided for in the applicable certificate of designation.

The issuance of preferred stock could adversely affect the voting power, conversion or other rights of holders of common stock. Preferred stock could be issued quickly with terms calculated to delay or prevent a change in control of our company or make removal of management more difficult. Additionally, the issuance of preferred stock may have the effect of decreasing the market price of common stock.

Registration and Participation Rights

As of the date of this prospectus, holders of approximately 9.8 million shares of our common stock and warrants to purchase our common stock are entitled to rights with respect to the registration of those shares of common stock under the Securities Act. These registration rights require, among other things, that if we propose to register any of our securities under the Securities Act, either for our own account or for the account of others, the holders of these shares are entitled to notice of the registration and are entitled to include, at our expense, their shares of common stock in the registration and any related underwriting, provided, among other conditions, that the underwriters may limit the number of shares to be included in the registration. In addition, the holders of these shares may require us, at our expense and subject to limitations, to file a registration statement under the Securities Act with respect to their shares of common stock. These holders have waived these registration rights in connection with the offerings that might be made under this registration statement.

In addition to these registration rights, holders of at least 10% of our outstanding common stock have the right to participate in securities offerings we might undertake in the future by purchasing their pro-rata share of any common or preferred stock or other securities issued by us in such an issuance. This right of participation is subject to some exclusions, including those for securities issued pursuant to

stock option plans, pursuant to public offerings, in connection with any stock split, stock dividend or recapitalization, in connection with equipment lease financings, in connection with corporate collaborations and in connection with acquisitions or transactions approved by our board of directors. In addition, we are prohibited from offering participation rights, rights of first refusal, rights of first offer or similar rights to anyone else on terms more favorable than, or in preference to, the participation rights currently held by these stockholders. These holders have waived these participation rights in connection with the offerings that might be made under this registration statement.

Anti-Takeover Effects of Provisions of Delaware Law and Our Charter Documents.

Delaware Takeover Statute. We are subject to the provisions of Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law. In general, the statute prohibits a publicly-held Delaware corporation such as Rigel from engaging in a business combination with an interested stockholder for a period of three years after the date of the transaction in which the person became an interested stockholder, unless the business combination is approved in a prescribed manner. For purposes of Section 203, a business combination includes a merger, asset sale or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to the interested stockholder, and an interested stockholder is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns (or

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

within three years prior, did own) 15% or more of the corporation's voting stock.

Charter Documents. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation requires that any action required or permitted to be taken by our stockholders must be effected at a duly called annual or special meeting of stockholders and may not be effected by a consent in writing. Additionally, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation:

does not provide for the use of cumulative voting in the election of directors;

provides for a board of directors, classified into three classes of directors;

provides that the authorized number of directors may be changed only by resolution of our board of directors; and

provides for the authority of our board of directors to issue up to 10 million shares of "blank check" preferred stock and to determine the price, powers, preferences and rights of these shares, without stockholder approval.

Our amended and restated bylaws provide that candidates for director may be nominated only by our board of directors or by a stockholder who gives written notice to us no later than 90 days prior nor earlier than 120 days prior to the first anniversary of the last annual meeting of stockholders, subject to certain exceptions. The authorized number of directors is fixed in accordance with our amended and restated certificate of incorporation. Our board of directors may appoint new directors to fill vacancies or newly created directorships. Our amended and restated bylaws also limit who may call a special meeting of stockholders.

Delaware law and these charter provisions may have the effect of deterring hostile takeovers or delaying changes in control of our management, which could depress the market price of our common stock.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is Wells Fargo Bank, N. A. Its address is 161 North Concord Exchange, South St. Paul, MN 55075-1139 and its telephone number is (800) 468-9716.

7

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus. While the terms we have summarized below will apply generally to any future debt securities we may offer, we will describe the particular terms of any debt securities that we may offer in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any debt securities we offer under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms we describe below. However, no prospectus supplement shall fundamentally change the terms that are set forth in this prospectus or offer a security that is not registered and described in this prospectus at the time of its effectiveness. As of the date of this prospectus, Rigel has no outstanding issuer debt.

We will issue the senior notes under the senior indenture that we will enter into with the trustee named in the senior indenture. We will issue the subordinated notes under the subordinated indenture that we will enter into with the trustee named in the subordinated indenture. We have filed forms of these documents as exhibits to the registration statement which includes this prospectus. We use the term "indentures" to refer to both the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture.

The indentures will be qualified under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939. We use the term "debenture trustee" to refer to either the senior trustee or the subordinated trustee, as applicable.

The following summaries of material provisions of the senior notes, the subordinated notes and the indentures are subject to, and qualified in their entirety by reference to, all the provisions of the indenture applicable to a particular series of debt securities. Except as we may otherwise indicate, the terms of the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture are identical.

General

We will describe in each prospectus supplement the following terms relating to a series of notes:

the title;

the principal amount being offered, and if a series, the total amount authorized and the total amount outstanding;

any limit on the amount that may be issued;

whether or not we will issue the series of notes in global form, the terms and who the depositary will be;

the maturity date;

whether and under what circumstances, if any, we will pay additional amounts on any debt securities held by a person who is not a United States person for tax purposes, and whether we can redeem the debt securities if we have to pay such additional amounts;

the annual interest rate, which may be fixed or variable, or the method for determining the rate and the date interest will begin to accrue, the dates interest will be payable and the regular record dates for interest payment dates or the method for determining such dates;

whether or not the notes will be secured or unsecured, and the terms of any secured debt;

the terms of the subordination of any series of subordinated debt;

the place where payments will be payable;

our right, if any, to defer payment of interest and the maximum length of any such deferral period;

8

the date, if any, after which, and the price at which, we may, at our option, redeem the series of notes pursuant to any optional or provisional redemption provisions and the terms of those redemptions provisions;

the date, if any, on which, and the price at which we are obligated, pursuant to any mandatory sinking and or analogous fund provisions or otherwise, to redeem, or at the holder's option to purchase, the series of notes and the currency or currency unit in which the debt securities are payable;

whether the indenture will restrict our ability to pay dividends, or will require us to maintain any asset ratios or reserves;

whether we will be restricted from incurring any additional indebtedness or issuing additional securities;

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

a discussion of any material or special United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the notes;

information describing any book-entry features;

provisions for a sinking fund purchase or other analogous fund, if any;

any provisions for payment of additional amounts for taxes and any provision for redemption, if we must pay such additional amount with respect to any debt security;

whether the debt securities are to be offered at a price such that they will be deemed to be offered at an "original issue discount" as defined in paragraph (a) of Section 1273 of the Internal Revenue Code;

the denominations in which we will issue the series of notes, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the debt securities, including any additional events of default or covenants provided with respect to the debt securities, and any terms that may be required by us or advisable under applicable laws or regulations.

Conversion or Exchange Rights

We will set forth in the prospectus supplement the terms on which a series of notes may be convertible into or exchangeable for common stock or other securities of ours. We will include provisions as to whether conversion or exchange is mandatory, at the option of the holder or at our option. We may include provisions pursuant to which the number of shares of common stock or other securities of ours that the holders of the series of notes receive would be subject to adjustment.

Consolidation, Merger or Sale

The indentures do not contain any covenant that restricts our ability to merge or consolidate, or sell, convey, transfer or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of our assets. However, any successor to or acquirer of such assets must assume all of our obligations under the indentures or the notes, as appropriate. If the debt securities are convertible for our other securities or securities of other entities, the person with whom we consolidate or merge or to whom we sell all of our property must make provisions for the conversion of the debt securities into securities that the holders of the debt securities would have received if they had converted the debt securities before the consolidation, merger or sale.

9

Events of Default Under the Indenture

The following are events of default under the indentures with respect to any series of notes that we may issue:

if we fail to pay interest when due and payable and our failure continues for 90 days and the time for payment has not been extended or deferred;

if we fail to pay the principal, or premium, if any, when due and payable and the time for payment has not been extended or delayed;

if we fail to observe or perform any other covenant contained in the notes or the indentures, other than a covenant specifically relating to another series of notes, and our failure continues for 90 days after we receive notice from the

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

debenture trustee or holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding notes of the applicable series; and

if specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occur.

If an event of default with respect to notes of any series occurs and is continuing, other than an event of default specified in the last bullet point above, the debenture trustee or the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding notes of that series, by notice to us in writing, and to the debenture trustee if notice is given by such holders, may declare the unpaid principal of, premium, if any, and accrued interest, if any, due and payable immediately. If an event of default specified in the last bullet point above occurs with respect to us, the principal amount of and accrued interest, if any, of each issue of debt securities then outstanding shall be due and payable without any notice or other action on the part of the debenture trustee or any holder.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding notes of an affected series may waive any default or event of default with respect to the series and its consequences, except defaults or events of default regarding payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, unless we have cured the default or event of default in accordance with the indenture. Any waiver shall cure the default or event of default.

Subject to the terms of the indentures, if an event of default under an indenture shall occur and be continuing, the debenture trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under such indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders of the applicable series of notes, unless such holders have offered the debenture trustee reasonable indemnity. The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding notes of any series will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the debenture trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the debenture trustee, with respect to the notes of that series, provided that:

the direction so given by the holder is not in conflict with any law or the applicable indenture; and

subject to its duties under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, the debenture trustee need not take any action that might involve it in personal liability or might be unduly prejudicial to the holders not involved in the proceeding.

A holder of the notes of any series will only have the right to institute a proceeding under the indentures or to appoint a receiver or trustee, or to seek other remedies if:

the holder has given written notice to the debenture trustee of a continuing event of default with respect to that series;

10

the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding notes of that series have made written request, and such holders have offered reasonable indemnity to the debenture trustee to institute the proceeding as trustee; and

the debenture trustee does not institute the proceeding, and does not receive from the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding notes of that series other conflicting directions within 90 days after the notice, request and offer.

These limitations do not apply to a suit instituted by a holder of notes if we default in the payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on, the notes.

We will periodically file statements with the debenture trustee regarding our compliance with specified covenants in the indentures.

Modification of Indenture; Waiver

We and the debenture trustee may change an indenture without the consent of any holders with respect to specific matters, including:

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

to fix any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency in the indenture;

to comply with the provisions described above under "Consolidation, Merger or Sale";

to comply with any requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission in connection with the qualification of any indenture under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939;

to add to, delete from or revise the conditions, limitations, and restrictions on the authorized amount, terms, or purposes of issue, authentication and delivery of notes, as set forth in the indenture;

to provide for the issuance of and establish the form and terms and conditions of the notes of any series as provided under "General" to establish the form of any certifications required to be furnished pursuant to the terms of the indenture or any series of notes, or to add to the rights of the holders of any series of notes;

to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment hereunder by a successor trustee;

to provide for uncertificated debt securities and to make all appropriate changes for such purpose;

to add to our covenants such new covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions for the protection of the holders, and to make the occurrence, or the occurrence and the continuance, of a default in any such additional covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions an event of default; or

to change anything that does not materially adversely affect the interests of any holder of notes of any series.

In addition, under the indentures, the rights of holders of a series of notes may be changed by us and the debenture trustee with the written consent of the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding notes of each series that is affected. However, we and the debenture trustee may only make the following changes with the consent of each holder of any outstanding notes affected:

extending the fixed maturity of the series of notes;

reducing the principal amount, reducing the rate of or extending the time of payment of interest, or reducing any premium payable upon the redemption of any notes; or

11

reducing the percentage of notes, the holders of which are required to consent to any amendment, supplement, modification or waiver.

Discharge

Each indenture provides that we can elect to be discharged from our obligations with respect to one or more series of debt securities, except for obligations to:

register the transfer or exchange of debt securities of the series;

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

replace stolen, lost or mutilated debt securities of the series;

maintain paying agencies;

hold monies for payment in trust;

recover excess money held by the debenture trustee;

compensate and indemnify the debenture trustee; and

appoint any successor trustee.

In order to exercise our rights to be discharged, we must deposit with the debenture trustee money or government obligations sufficient to pay all the principal of, any premium, if any, and interest on, the debt securities of the series on the dates payments are due.

Form, Exchange and Transfer

We will issue the notes of each series only in fully registered form without coupons and, unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, in denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof. The indentures provide that we may issue notes of a series in temporary or permanent global form and as book-entry securities that will be deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company or another depository named by us and identified in a prospectus supplement with respect to that series. See "Legal Ownership of Securities" for a further description of the terms relating to any book-entry securities.

At the option of the holder, subject to the terms of the indentures and the limitations applicable to global securities described in the applicable prospectus supplement, the holder of the notes of any series can exchange the notes for other notes of the same series, in any authorized denomination and of like tenor and aggregate principal amount.

Subject to the terms of the indentures and the limitations applicable to global securities set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the notes may present the notes for exchange or for registration of transfer, duly endorsed or with the form of transfer endorsed thereon duly executed if so required by us or the security registrar, at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent designated by us for this purpose. Unless otherwise provided in the notes that the holder presents for transfer or exchange, we will make no service charge for any registration of transfer or exchange, but we may require payment of any taxes or other governmental charges.

We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement the security registrar, and any transfer agent in addition to the security registrar, that we initially designate for any notes. We may at any time designate additional transfer agents or rescind the designation of any transfer agent or approve a change in the office through which any transfer agent acts, except that we will be required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for the notes of each series.

12

If we elect to redeem the notes of any series, we will not be required to:

issue, register the transfer of, or exchange any notes of that series during a period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before the day of mailing of a notice of redemption of any notes that may be selected for redemption and ending at the close of business on the day of the mailing; or

register the transfer of or exchange any notes so selected for redemption, in whole or in part, except the unredeemed portion of any notes we are redeeming in part.

Information Concerning the Debenture Trustee

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

The debenture trustee, other than during the occurrence and continuance of an event of default under an indenture, undertakes to perform only those duties as are specifically set forth in the applicable indenture. Upon an event of default under an indenture, the debenture trustee must use the same degree of care as a prudent person would exercise or use in the conduct of his or her own affairs. Subject to this provision, the debenture trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of the powers given it by the indentures at the request of any holder of notes unless it is offered reasonable security and indemnity against the costs, expenses and liabilities that it might incur.

Payment and Paying Agents

Unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make payment of the interest on any notes on any interest payment date to the person in whose name the notes, or one or more predecessor securities, are registered at the close of business on the regular record date for the interest.

We will pay principal of and any premium and interest on the notes of a particular series at the office of the paying agents designated by us, except that unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make interest payments by check that we will mail to the holder or by wire transfer to certain holders. Unless we otherwise indicate in a prospectus supplement, we will designate the corporate trust office of the debenture trustee in the City of New York as our sole paying agent for payments with respect to notes of each series. We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement any other paying agents that we initially designate for the notes of a particular series. We will maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the notes of a particular series.

All money we pay to a paying agent or the debenture trustee for the payment of the principal of or any premium or interest on any notes that remains unclaimed at the end of two years after such principal, premium or interest has become due and payable will be repaid to us, and the holder of the security thereafter may look only to us for payment thereof.

Governing Law

The indentures and the notes will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, except to the extent that the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 is applicable.

Subordination of Subordinated Notes

The subordinated notes will be unsecured and will be subordinate and junior in priority of payment to certain of our other indebtedness to the extent described in a prospectus supplement. The subordinated indenture does not limit the amount of subordinated notes that we may issue. It also does not limit us from issuing any other secured or unsecured debt.

13

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

The following description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer under this prospectus and the related warrant agreements and warrant certificates. While the terms summarized below will apply generally to any warrants that we may offer, we will describe the particular terms of any series of warrants in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. If we indicate in the prospectus supplement, the terms of any warrants offered under that prospectus supplement may differ from the terms described below. However, no prospectus supplement shall fundamentally change the terms that are set forth in this prospectus or offer a security that is not registered and described in this prospectus at the time of its effectiveness. Specific warrant agreements will contain additional important terms and provisions and will be incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement that includes this prospectus or as an exhibit to a current report on Form 8-K.

General

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms of the series of warrants, including:

the offering price and aggregate number of warrants offered;

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

the currency for which the warrants may be purchased;

if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities with which the warrants are issued and the number of warrants issued with each such security or each principal amount of such security;

if applicable, the date on and after which the warrants and the related securities will be separately transferable;

in the case of warrants to purchase debt securities, the principal amount of debt securities purchasable upon exercise of one warrant and the price at, and currency in which, this principal amount of debt securities may be purchased upon such exercise;

in the case of warrants to purchase common stock or preferred stock, the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock, as the case may be, purchasable upon the exercise of one warrant and the price at which these shares may be purchased upon such exercise;

the effect of any merger, consolidation, sale or other disposition of our business on the warrant agreements and the warrants;

the terms of any rights to redeem or call the warrants;

any provisions for changes to or adjustments in the exercise price or number of securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants;

the dates on which the right to exercise the warrants will commence and expire;

the manner in which the warrant agreements and warrants may be modified;

federal income tax consequences of holding or exercising the warrants;

the terms of the securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of or restrictions on the warrants.

Before exercising their warrants, holders of warrants will not have any of the rights of holders of the securities purchasable upon such exercise, including:

in the case of warrants to purchase debt securities, the right to receive payments of principal of, or premium, if any, or interest on, the debt securities purchasable upon exercise or to enforce covenants in the applicable indenture; or

in the case of warrants to purchase common stock or preferred stock, the right to receive dividends, if any, or, payments upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up or to exercise voting rights, if any.

Exercise of Warrants

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

Each warrant will entitle the holder to purchase the securities that we specify in the applicable prospectus supplement at the exercise price that we describe in the applicable prospectus supplement. Unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the warrants may exercise the warrants at any time up to 5:00 P.M. New York time on the expiration date that we set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void.

Holders of the warrants may exercise the warrants by delivering the warrant certificate representing the warrants to be exercised together with specified information, and paying the required amount to the warrant agent in immediately available funds, as provided in the applicable prospectus supplement. We will set forth on the reverse side of the warrant certificate and in the applicable prospectus supplement the information that the holder of the warrant will be required to deliver to the warrant agent.

Upon receipt of the required payment and the warrant certificate properly completed and duly executed at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will issue and deliver the securities purchasable upon such exercise. If fewer than all of the warrants represented by the warrant certificate are exercised, then we will issue a new warrant certificate for the remaining amount of warrants. If we so indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the warrants may surrender securities as all or part of the exercise price for warrants.

Governing Law

The warrants and warrant agreements will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York.

Enforceability of Rights by Holders of Warrants

Each warrant agent will act solely as our agent under the applicable warrant agreement and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust with any holder of any warrant. A single bank or trust company may act as warrant agent for more than one issue of warrants. A warrant agent will have no duty or responsibility in case of any default by us under the applicable warrant agreement or warrant, including any duty or responsibility to initiate any proceedings at law or otherwise, or to make any demand upon us. Any holder of a warrant may, without the consent of the related warrant agent or the holder of any other warrant, enforce by appropriate legal action its right to exercise, and receive the securities purchasable upon exercise of, its warrants.

15

LEGAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

We can issue securities in registered form or in the form of one or more global securities. We describe global securities in greater detail below. We refer to those persons who have securities registered in their own names on the books that we or any applicable trustee maintain for this purpose as the "holders" of those securities. These persons are the legal holders of the securities. We refer to those persons who, indirectly through others, own beneficial interests in securities that are not registered in their own names, as "indirect holders" of those securities. As we discuss below, indirect holders are not legal holders, and investors in securities issued in book-entry form or in street name will be indirect holders.

Book-Entry Holders

We may issue securities in book-entry form only, as we will specify in the applicable prospectus supplement. This means securities may be represented by one or more global securities registered in the name of a financial institution that holds them as depositary on behalf of other financial institutions that participate in the depositary's book-entry system. These participating institutions, which are referred to as participants, in turn, hold beneficial interests in the securities on behalf of themselves or their customers.

Only the person in whose name a security is registered is recognized as the holder of that security. Securities issued in global form will be registered in the name of the depositary or its participants. Consequently, for securities issued in global form, we will recognize only the depositary as the holder of the securities, and we will make all payments on the securities to the depositary. The depositary passes along the payments it receives to its participants, which in turn pass the payments along to their customers who are the beneficial owners. The depositary and its participants do so under agreements they have made with one another or with their customers; they are not obligated to do so under the terms of the securities.

As a result, investors in a book-entry security will not own securities directly. Instead, they will own beneficial interests in a global security, through a bank, broker or other financial institution that participates in the depositary's book-entry system or holds an interest through a

participant. As long as the securities are issued in global form, investors will be indirect holders, and not holders, of the securities.

Street Name Holders

We may terminate a global security or issue securities in non-global form. In these cases, investors may choose to hold their securities in their own names or in "street name." Securities held by an investor in street name would be registered in the name of a bank, broker or other financial institution that the investor chooses, and the investor would hold only a beneficial interest in those securities through an account he or she maintains at that institution.

For securities held in street name, we will recognize only the intermediary banks, brokers and other financial institutions in whose names the securities are registered as the holders of those securities, and we will make all payments on those securities to them. These institutions pass along the payments they receive to their customers who are the beneficial owners, but only because they agree to do so in their customer agreements or because they are legally required to do so. Investors who hold securities in street name will be indirect holders, not holders, of those securities.

Legal Holders

Our obligations, as well as the obligations of any applicable trustee and of any third parties employed by us or a trustee, run only to the legal holders of the securities. We do not have obligations

16

to investors who hold beneficial interests in global securities, in street name or by any other indirect means. This will be the case whether an investor chooses to be an indirect holder of a security or has no choice because we are issuing the securities only in global form.

For example, once we make a payment or give a notice to the holder, we have no further responsibility for the payment or notice even if that holder is required, under agreements with depositary participants or customers or by law, to pass it along to the indirect holders but does not do so. Similarly, we may want to obtain the approval of the holders to amend an indenture, to relieve us of the consequences of a default or of our obligation to comply with a particular provision of the indenture or for other purposes. In such an event, we would seek approval only from the holders, and not the indirect holders, of the securities. Whether and how the holders contact the indirect holders is up to the holders.

Special Considerations For Indirect Holders

If you hold securities through a bank, broker or other financial institution, either in book-entry form or in street name, you should check with your own institution to find out:

how it handles securities payments and notices;

whether it imposes fees or charges;

how it would handle a request for the holders' consent, if ever required;

whether and how you can instruct it to send you securities registered in your own name so you can be a holder, if that is permitted in the future;

how it would exercise rights under the securities if there were a default or other event triggering the need for holders to act to protect their interests; and

if the securities are in book-entry form, how the depositary's rules and procedures will affect these matters.

Global Securities

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

A global security is a security that represents one or any other number of individual securities held by a depository. Generally, all securities represented by the same global securities will have the same terms.

Each security issued in book-entry form will be represented by a global security that we deposit with and register in the name of a financial institution or its nominee that we select. The financial institution that we select for this purpose is called the depository. Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, The Depository Trust Company, New York, New York, known as DTC, will be the depository for all securities issued in book-entry form.

A global security may not be transferred to or registered in the name of anyone other than the depository, its nominee or a successor depository, unless special termination situations arise. We describe those situations below under "Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated." As a result of these arrangements, the depository, or its nominee, will be the sole registered owner and holder of all securities represented by a global security, and investors will be permitted to own only beneficial interests in a global security. Beneficial interests must be held by means of an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that in turn has an account with the depository or with another institution that does. Thus, an investor whose security is represented by a global security will not be a holder of the security, but only an indirect holder of a beneficial interest in the global security.

If the prospectus supplement for a particular security indicates that the security will be issued in global form only, then the security will be represented by a global security at all times unless and until

17

the global security is terminated. If termination occurs, we may issue the securities through another book-entry clearing system or decide that the securities may no longer be held through any book-entry clearing system.

Special Considerations For Global Securities

As an indirect holder, an investor's rights relating to a global security will be governed by the account rules of the investor's financial institution and of the depository, as well as general laws relating to securities transfers. We do not recognize an indirect holder as a holder of securities and instead deal only with the depository that holds the global security.

If securities are issued only in the form of a global security, an investor should be aware of the following:

An investor cannot cause the securities to be registered in his or her name, and cannot obtain non-global certificates for his or her interest in the securities, except in the special situations we describe below;

An investor will be an indirect holder and must look to his or her own bank or broker for payments on the securities and protection of his or her legal rights relating to the securities, as we describe above;

An investor may not be able to sell interests in the securities to some insurance companies and to other institutions that are required by law to own their securities in non-book-entry form;

An investor may not be able to pledge his or her interest in a global security in circumstances where certificates representing the securities must be delivered to the lender or other beneficiary of the pledge in order for the pledge to be effective;

The depository's policies, which may change from time to time, will govern payments, transfers, exchanges and other matters relating to an investor's interest in a global security. We and any applicable trustee have no responsibility for any aspect of the depository's actions or for its records of ownership interests in a global security. We and the trustee also do not supervise the depository in any way;

The depository may, and we understand that DTC will, require that those who purchase and sell interests in a global security within its book-entry system use immediately available funds, and your broker or bank may require you to do so as well; and

Financial institutions that participate in the depository's book-entry system, and through which an investor holds its interest in a global security, may also have their own policies affecting payments, notices and other matters relating to the securities. There may be more than one financial intermediary in the chain of ownership for an investor. We do not monitor and are not responsible for the actions of any of those intermediaries.

Special Situations When A Global Security Will Be Terminated

In a few special situations described below, the global security will terminate and interests in it will be exchanged for physical certificates representing those interests. After that exchange, the choice of whether to hold securities directly or in street name will be up to the investor. Investors must consult their own banks or brokers to find out how to have their interests in securities transferred to their own name, so that they will be direct holders. We have described the rights of holders and street name investors above.

18

The global security will terminate when the following special situations occur:

if the depository notifies us that it is unwilling, unable or no longer qualified to continue as depository for that global security and we do not appoint another institution to act as depository within 90 days;

if we notify any applicable trustee that we wish to terminate that global security; or

if an event of default has occurred with regard to securities represented by that global security and has not been cured or waived.

The prospectus supplement may also list additional situations for terminating a global security that would apply only to the particular series of securities covered by the prospectus supplement. When a global security terminates, the depository, and not we or any applicable trustee, is responsible for deciding the names of the institutions that will be the initial direct holders.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities through underwriters or dealers, through agents, or directly to one or more purchasers. One or more prospectus supplements will describe the terms of the offering of the securities, including:

the name or names of any underwriters, if any;

the purchase price of the securities and the proceeds we will receive from the sale;

any over-allotment options under which underwriters may purchase additional securities from us;

any agency fees or underwriting discounts and other items constituting agents' or underwriters' compensation;

any initial public offering price;

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers; and

any securities exchange or market on which the securities may be listed.

Only underwriters named in the prospectus supplement are underwriters of the securities offered by the prospectus supplement.

If underwriters are used in the sale, they will acquire the securities for their own account and may resell them from time to time in one or more transactions at a fixed public offering price. The obligations of the underwriters to purchase the securities will be subject to the conditions set forth in the applicable underwriting agreement. We may offer the securities to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters or by underwriters without a syndicate. Subject to certain conditions, the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all the securities of the series offered by the prospectus supplement. Any public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers may change from time to time. We may use underwriters with whom we have a material relationship. We will describe in the prospectus supplement, naming the underwriter, the nature of any such relationship.

We may sell securities directly or through agents we designate from time to time. We will name any agent involved in the offering and sale of securities and we will describe any commissions we will pay the agent in the prospectus supplement.

Unless the prospectus supplement states otherwise, our agent will act on a best-efforts basis for the period of its appointment. However, no prospectus supplement shall fundamentally change the terms that are set forth in this prospectus or offer a security that is not registered and described in this prospectus at the time of its effectiveness.

19

We may authorize agents or underwriters to solicit offers by certain types of institutional investors to purchase securities from us at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. We will describe the conditions to these contracts and the commissions we must pay for solicitation of these contracts in the prospectus supplement.

We may provide agents and underwriters with indemnification against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or contribution with respect to payments that the agents or underwriters may make with respect to such liabilities. Agents and underwriters may engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us in the ordinary course of business.

All securities we offer, other than common stock, will be new issues of securities with no established trading market. Any underwriters may make a market in these securities, but will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. We cannot guarantee the liquidity of the trading markets for any securities.

Any underwriter may engage in overallotment, stabilizing transactions, short covering transactions and penalty bids in accordance with Regulation M under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Overallotment involves sales in excess of the offering size, which create a short position. Stabilizing transactions permit bids to purchase the underlying security so long as the stabilizing bids do not exceed a specified maximum. Short covering transactions involve purchases of the securities in the open market after the distribution is completed to cover short positions. Penalty bids permit the underwriters to reclaim a selling concession from a dealer when the securities originally sold by the dealer are purchased in a covering transaction to cover short positions. Those activities may cause the price of the securities to be higher than it would otherwise be. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue any of the activities at any time.

Any underwriters who are qualified market makers on The Nasdaq National Market may engage in passive market making transactions in the securities on The Nasdaq National Market in accordance with Rule 103 of Regulation M under the Exchange Act during the business day prior to the pricing of the offering, before the commencement of offers or sales of the securities. Passive market makers must comply with applicable volume and price limitations and must be identified as passive market makers. In general, a passive market maker must display its bid at a price not in excess of the highest independent bid for such security; if all independent bids are lowered below the passive market maker's bid, however, the passive market maker's bid must then be lowered when certain purchase limits are exceeded.

In compliance with guidelines of the National Association of Securities Dealers, or NASD, the maximum consideration or discount to be received by any NASD member or independent broker dealer may not exceed 8% of the aggregate amount of the securities offered pursuant to this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement.

LEGAL MATTERS

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

The validity of the securities being offered hereby will be passed upon by Cooley Godward LLP, Palo Alto, California. As of the date of this prospectus, certain partners and associates of Cooley Godward LLP own an aggregate of approximately 17,400 shares of our common stock, either individually or through investment partnerships.

EXPERTS

The financial statements of Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc. appearing in Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc.'s Annual Report (Form 10-K), as amended, for the year ended December 31, 2002, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent auditors, as set forth in their report thereon included therein and

20

incorporated herein by reference. Such financial statements are incorporated herein by reference in reliance upon such report given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

With respect to the unaudited condensed consolidated interim financial information for the three-month periods ended March 31, 2003 and March 31, 2002, the three and six-month periods ended June 30, 2003 and June 30, 2002 and the three and nine-month periods ended September 30, 2003 and September 30, 2002 incorporated by reference in this prospectus, Ernst & Young LLP has reported that it has applied limited procedures in accordance with professional standards for a review of such information. However, its separate reports, included in Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc.'s Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2003, June 30, 2003 and September 30, 2003, and incorporated herein by reference, state that it did not audit and it does not express an opinion on that interim financial information. Accordingly, the degree of reliance on its reports on such information should be restricted considering the limited nature of the review procedures applied. The independent auditors are not subject to the liability provisions of Section 11 of the Securities Act for its reports on the unaudited interim financial information because those reports are not "reports" or a "part" of the Registration Statement prepared or certified by the auditors within the meaning of Sections 7 and 11 of the Securities Act.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We are a reporting company and file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission a registration statement on Form S-3 under the Securities Act with respect to the shares of common stock and preferred stock, debt securities and/or warrants we are offering under this prospectus. This prospectus does not contain all of the information set forth in the registration statement and the exhibits to the registration statement. For further information with respect to us and the securities we are offering under this prospectus, we refer you to the registration statement and the exhibits and schedules filed as a part of the registration statement. You may read and copy the registration statement, as well as our reports, proxy statements and other information, at the Securities and Exchange Commission's public reference room at Room 1024, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. You can request copies of these documents by writing to the Securities and Exchange Commission and paying a fee for the copying cost. Please call the Securities and Exchange Commission at 1-800-SEC-0330 for more information about the operation of the public reference room. Our Securities and Exchange Commission filings are also available at the Securities and Exchange Commission's web site at <http://www.sec.gov>. In addition, you can read and copy our Securities and Exchange Commission filings at the office of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. at 1735 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

The Securities and Exchange Commission allows us to "incorporate by reference" information that we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is an important part of this prospectus. Information in this prospectus supersedes information incorporated by reference that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission prior to the date of this prospectus, while information that we file later with the Securities and Exchange Commission will automatically update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference into this registration statement and prospectus the documents listed below and any future filings we will make with the Securities and Exchange Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act after the date of the initial registration statement but prior to effectiveness of the registration statement and after the date of this prospectus but prior to the termination of the offering of the securities covered by this prospectus.

21

The following documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission are incorporated by reference in this prospectus:

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

1. Our annual report on Form 10-K, as amended, for the year ended December 31, 2002, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 31, 2003;
2. Our quarterly report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2003, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 15, 2003;
3. Our quarterly report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2003, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on August 14, 2003;
4. Our quarterly report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2003, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on November 14, 2003;
5. Our current report of Form 8-K, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 2, 2003;
6. Our current report of Form 8-K, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 24, 2003;
7. Our current report of Form 8-K, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 27, 2003;
8. Our current report of Form 8-K, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on August 4, 2003; and
9. The description of our common stock set forth in our registration statement on Form 8-A, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 3, 2000, including any amendments or reports filed for the purposes of updating this description.

We will furnish without charge to you, on written or oral request, a copy of any or all of the documents incorporated by reference, including exhibits to these documents. You should direct any requests for documents to Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Attention: Corporate Secretary, 1180 Veterans Blvd., South San Francisco, California 94080. Our phone number is (650) 624-1100.

22

PART II INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN THE PROSPECTUS

Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution

The following table sets forth the estimated costs and expenses, other than the underwriting discounts and commissions, payable by the registrant in connection with the offering of the securities being registered. All the amounts shown are estimates, except for the registration fee.

Securities and Exchange Commission registration fee	\$	6,068
Accounting fees and expenses		20,000
Legal fees and expenses		100,000
Trustee's fees		12,500
Printing and miscellaneous expenses		65,000
		<hr/>
Total	\$	203,568
		<hr/>

Item 15. Indemnification of Officers and Directors

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that we must indemnify our directors to the fullest extent under applicable law. Pursuant to Delaware law, this includes elimination of liability for monetary damages for breach of the directors' fiduciary duty of care to Rigel and its stockholders. However, our directors may be personally liable for liability:

for any breach of duty of loyalty to us or to our stockholders;

for acts or omissions not in good faith or that involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;

for unlawful payment of dividends or unlawful stock repurchases or redemptions under Section 174 of the Delaware General Corporation Law; or

for any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

In addition, our amended and restated bylaws provide that:

we are required to indemnify our directors and executive officers to the fullest extent not prohibited by Delaware law or any other applicable law, subject to limited exceptions;

we may indemnify our other officers, employees and other agents as set forth in Delaware law or any other applicable law;

we are required to advance expenses to our directors and executive officers as incurred in connection with legal proceedings against them for which they may be indemnified; and

the rights conferred in the amended and restated bylaws are not exclusive.

We have entered into indemnification agreements with each of our directors and certain officers. These agreements, among other things, require us to indemnify each director and officer to the fullest extent permitted by Delaware law, including indemnification for expenses such as attorneys' fees, judgments, fines and settlement amounts incurred by the director or officer in any action or proceeding, including any action by or in the right of Rigel, arising out of the person's services as a director or officer of us, any subsidiary of ours or any other company or enterprise to which the person provides services at our request. At present, we are not aware of any pending or threatened litigation or proceeding involving any of our directors, officers, employees or agents in which indemnification would be required or permitted. We believe that our charter provisions and indemnification agreements are necessary to attract and retain qualified persons as directors and officers.

II-1

The underwriting agreement that we might enter into (Exhibit 1.1) will provide for indemnification by any underwriters of Rigel, our directors, our officers who sign the registration statement and our controlling persons for some liabilities, including liabilities arising under the Securities Act.

Item 16. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules

(a)

Exhibits

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

Exhibit Number	Description of Document
1.1	Form of Underwriting Agreement.(1)
4.1	Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Company.(2)
4.2	Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Company.(3)
4.3	Specimen Common Stock Certificate.(3)
4.4	Specimen Preferred Stock Certificate and Form of Certificate of Designation of Preferred Stock.(1)
4.5	Form of Senior Debt Indenture.
4.6	Form of Subordinated Debt Indenture.
4.7	Form of Senior Note.(1)
4.8	Form of Subordinated Note.(1)
4.9	Form of Common Stock Warrant Agreement and Warrant Certificate.
4.10	Form of Preferred Stock Warrant Agreement and Warrant Certificate.
4.11	Form of Debt Securities Warrant Agreement and Warrant Certificate.
5.1	Opinion of Cooley Godward LLP.
12.1	Statement of Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges.
15.1	Letter Regarding Unaudited Interim Financial Information.
23.1	Consent of Ernst & Young LLP, independent auditors.
23.2	Consent of Cooley Godward LLP (included in Exhibit 5.1).
24.1	Power of Attorney (included in the signature page).
25.1	Statement of Eligibility of Trustee under the Senior Debt Indenture.
25.2	Statement of Eligibility of Trustee under the Subordinated Debt Indenture.

(1) To be filed by amendment or as an exhibit to a current report of the registrant on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.

(2) Filed as an exhibit to the registrant's current report on Form 8-K (File No. 000-29889), originally filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 24, 2003, and incorporated herein by reference.

(3) Filed as an exhibit to the registrant's registration statement on Form S-1 or amendments thereto (File No. 333-45864), originally filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 15, 2000, and incorporated herein by reference.

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

(1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:

(i) to include any prospectus required by section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act;

(ii) to reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective registration statement; and

(iii) to include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement.

provided, however, that paragraphs (1)(i) and (1)(ii) do not apply if the registration statement is on Form S-3, Form S-8 or Form F-3, and the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Securities and Exchange Commission by the registrant pursuant to section 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of the securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of this offering.

(4) That: (i) for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, the information omitted from the form of prospectus filed as part of the registration statement in reliance upon Rule 430A and contained in the form of prospectus filed by the registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(1) or (4) or 497(h) under the Securities Act shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the time it was declared effective; and (ii) for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each post-effective amendment that contains a form of prospectus shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

(5) That, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to section 13(a) or section 15(d) of the Exchange Act (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to section 15(d) of the Exchange Act) that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

II-3

(6) To file an application for the purpose of determining the eligibility of the trustee to act under subsection (a) of section 310 of the Trust Indenture Act in accordance with the rules and regulations prescribed by the Securities and Exchange Commission under section 305(b)(2) of the Trust Indenture Act.

Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission this form of indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against these liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by a director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of this issue.

II-4

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of South San Francisco, State of California, on January 8, 2004.

RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.

By: /s/ JAMES M. GOWER

James M. Gower
*Chairman of the Board and
Chief Executive Officer*

POWER OF ATTORNEY

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS, that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints James M. Gower and James H. Welch, and each of them, as true and lawful attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full powers of substitution and resubstitution, for them and in their name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign any and all amendments (including pre-effective and post-effective amendments and registration statements filed pursuant to Rule 462) to this registration statement, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), and generally to do all such things in their names and behalf in their capacities as officers and directors to enable Rigel to comply with the provisions of the Securities Act of 1933 and all requirements of the SEC, granting unto said attorneys-in-fact and agents, and each of them, full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite and necessary to be done in connection therewith, as fully to all intents and purposes as he or she might or could do in person, ratifying and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents, or any of them, or their or his or her substitutes or substitute, may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed below by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>/s/ JAMES M. GOWER</u> James M. Gower	Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer)	January 8, 2004
<u>/s/ JAMES H. WELCH</u> James H. Welch	Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Secretary (Principal Financial and Accounting Officer)	January 8, 2004
<u>/s/ DONALD G. PAYAN</u> Donald G. Payan	Executive Vice President, Chief Scientific Officer and Director	January 8, 2004
<u>/s/ JEAN DELEAGE</u> Jean Deleage	Director	January 8, 2004
<u>/s/ ALAN D. FRAZIER</u> Alan D. Frazier	Director	January 8, 2004

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

Signature	Title	Date
/s/ DENNIS J. HENNER	Director	January 8, 2004
Dennis J. Henner		

II-5

/s/ WALTER H. MOOS	Director	January 8, 2004
Walter H. Moos		
/s/ STEPHEN A. SHERWIN	Director	January 8, 2004
Stephen A. Sherwin		
/s/ NICHOLAS J. SIMON, III	Director	January 8, 2004
Nicholas J. Simon, III		

II-6

INDEX TO EXHIBITS

Exhibit Number	Description of Document
1.1	Form of Underwriting Agreement.(1)
4.1	Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Company.(2)
4.2	Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Company.(3)
4.3	Specimen Common Stock Certificate.(3)
4.4	Specimen Preferred Stock Certificate and Form of Certificate of Designation of Preferred Stock.(1)
4.5	Form of Senior Debt Indenture.
4.6	Form of Subordinated Debt Indenture.
4.7	Form of Senior Note.(1)
4.8	Form of Subordinated Note.(1)
4.9	Form of Common Stock Warrant Agreement and Warrant Certificate.
4.10	Form of Preferred Stock Warrant Agreement and Warrant Certificate.
4.11	Form of Debt Securities Warrant Agreement and Warrant Certificate.
5.1	Opinion of Cooley Godward LLP.

Edgar Filing: RIGEL PHARMACEUTICALS INC - Form S-3

Exhibit Number	Description of Document
12.1	Statement of Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges.
15.1	Letter Regarding Unaudited Interim Financial Information.
23.1	Consent of Ernst & Young LLP, independent auditors.
23.2	Consent of Cooley Godward LLP (included in Exhibit 5.1).
24.1	Power of Attorney (included in the signature page).
25.1	Statement of Eligibility of Trustee under the Senior Debt Indenture.
25.2	Statement of Eligibility of Trustee under the Subordinated Debt Indenture.

- (1) To be filed by amendment or as an exhibit to a current report of the registrant on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.
- (2) Filed as an exhibit to the registrant's current report on Form 8-K (File No. 000-29889), originally filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 24, 2003, and incorporated herein by reference.
- (3) Filed as an exhibit to the registrant's registration statement on Form S-1 or amendments thereto (File No. 333-45864), originally filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 15, 2000, and incorporated herein by reference.

QuickLinks

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

PART II INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN THE PROSPECTUS

Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution

Item 15. Indemnification of Officers and Directors

Item 16. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules

Item 17. Undertakings