

DANAHER CORP /DE/
Form 424B2
June 20, 2011
Table of Contents

The information in this preliminary prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities and we are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

**Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2)
Registration No. 333-159060**

Subject to Completion

Preliminary Prospectus Supplement Dated June 20, 2011

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

(To Prospectus dated May 8, 2009)

\$

\$ % Senior Notes due

\$ % Senior Notes due

\$ % Senior Notes due

We are offering \$ aggregate principal amount of our % senior notes due , which we refer to as the Notes, \$ aggregate principal amount of our % senior notes due , which we refer to as the Notes, and \$ aggregate principal amount of our % senior notes due , which we refer to as the Notes. We refer to the Notes, the Notes and the Notes collectively as the notes.

The Notes will mature on , , the Notes will mature on , and the Notes will mature on , . We will pay interest on the notes on and of each year. The first such payment will be made on , 2011. The notes of each series will be issued only in denominations of \$2,000 and integral multiples of \$1,000.

We may redeem some or all of the notes of any series at any time at the applicable redemption price described in this prospectus supplement under the heading, Description of Notes Optional Redemption. We will be required to redeem each series of notes, in whole and not in part, under the circumstances and at the redemption prices described in this prospectus supplement under the heading Description of Notes Special Mandatory Redemption. If a change of control triggering event as described in this prospectus supplement under the heading Description of Notes Change of Control occurs, we may be required to offer to purchase each series of notes from their holders.

The notes are unsecured obligations and will rank equally with all of our other existing and future unsecured senior indebtedness. There are no sinking funds for the notes. The notes will not be listed on any securities exchange.

Investing in the notes involves risks. You should read this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus carefully before you make your investment decision. See **Risk Factors** beginning on page S-12 of this prospectus supplement, as well as documents we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission that are incorporated by reference herein for more information.

| | Per | Note | Per | Note | Per | Note | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-------|
| Public offering price | | % | | % | | % | \$ |
| Underwriting discount | | % | | % | | % | \$ |
| Proceeds, before expenses, to us | | % | | % | | % | \$ |

The public offering prices set forth above do not include accrued interest, if any. Interest on the notes will accrue from _____, 2011.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities, or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The underwriters expect to deliver the notes through the facilities of The Depository Trust Company, and its participants Clearstream Banking S.A. and Euroclear Bank S.A./N.V., against payment in New York, New York on or about _____, 2011.

Joint Book-Running Managers

BofA Merrill Lynch

**Deutsche Bank
Securities**

BNP PARIBAS

HSBC

Wells Fargo Securities

Co-Managers

**Banca IMI
SunTrust Robinson Humphrey**

Mitsubishi UFJ Securities

**Scotia Capital
SMBC Nikko**

The date of this prospectus supplement is _____, 2011

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prospectus Supplement

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| <u>About This Prospectus Supplement</u> | ii |
| <u>Forward-Looking Information</u> | S-1 |
| <u>Where You Can Find More Information</u> | S-4 |
| <u>Summary</u> | S-6 |
| <u>Risk Factors</u> | S-12 |
| <u>Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u> | S-15 |
| <u>Use of Proceeds</u> | S-16 |
| <u>Capitalization</u> | S-17 |
| <u>Description of Notes</u> | S-18 |
| <u>Material U.S. Federal Tax Considerations</u> | S-25 |
| <u>Underwriting</u> | S-30 |
| <u>Legal Matters</u> | S-34 |
| <u>Experts</u> | S-34 |

Prospectus

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| <u>About This Prospectus</u> | 1 |
| <u>Forward-Looking Information</u> | 1 |
| <u>Where You Can Find More Information</u> | 3 |
| <u>Danaher Corporation</u> | 4 |
| <u>Use of Proceeds</u> | 5 |
| <u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u> | 5 |
| <u>Description of Debt Securities</u> | 6 |
| <u>Description of Capital Stock</u> | 18 |
| <u>Description of Warrants</u> | 21 |
| <u>Description of Depositary Shares</u> | 22 |
| <u>Description of the Purchase Contracts and Units</u> | 24 |
| <u>Forms of Securities</u> | 24 |
| <u>Plan of Distribution</u> | 26 |
| <u>Legal Matters</u> | 29 |
| <u>Experts</u> | 29 |

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any free writing prospectus we provide to you. We and the underwriters have not authorized anyone else to provide you with different or additional information. We are not making an offer of the notes in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any free writing prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of that document.

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of the offering of the notes and other matters relating to us and our financial condition. The second part is the accompanying base prospectus, which gives more general information about securities we may offer from time to time, some of which does not apply to the notes we are offering. Generally, when we refer to the prospectus, we are referring to both parts of this document combined. If information in this prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus differs from information in the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement or the related free writing prospectus.

Except as the context otherwise requires, or as otherwise specified or used in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus, the terms we, our, us, the Company, and Danaher refer to Danaher Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries. References in this prospectus supplement to U.S. dollars, U.S. \$ or \$ are to the currency of the United States of America.

The distribution of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and the offering of the notes in certain jurisdictions may be restricted by law. Persons who come into possession of this prospectus supplement, any related free writing prospectus and the accompanying prospectus should inform themselves about and observe any such restrictions. This prospectus supplement, any related free writing prospectus and the accompanying prospectus do not constitute, and may not be used in connection with, an offer or solicitation by anyone in any jurisdiction in which such offer or solicitation is not authorized or in which the person making such offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to any person to whom it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation.

You should not consider any information in this prospectus supplement, any related free writing prospectus or the accompanying prospectus to be investment, legal or tax advice. You should consult your own counsel, accountant and other advisors for legal, tax, business, financial and related advice regarding the purchase of the notes. We are not making any representation to you regarding the legality of an investment in the notes by you under applicable investment or similar laws.

You should read and consider all information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, any related free writing prospectus and the accompanying prospectus that we provide or make available to you before making your investment decision.

Table of Contents

FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION

Certain information and statements included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, any related free writing prospectus or the accompanying prospectus are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws. All statements other than statements of historical fact are statements that could be deemed forward-looking statements, including, without limitation, statements regarding: projections of revenue, expenses, profit, profit margins, tax rates, tax provisions, cash flows, pension and benefit obligations and funding requirements, our liquidity position or other financial measures; management's plans and strategies for future operations, including statements relating to anticipated operating performance, cost reductions, restructuring activities, new product and service developments, competitive strengths or market position, acquisitions and related synergies (including with respect to the pending acquisition of Beckman Coulter, Inc. (the Beckman Coulter Acquisition)), divestitures, securities offerings, stock repurchases and executive compensation; growth, declines and other trends in markets we sell into; the anticipated impact of adopting new accounting pronouncements; the anticipated outcome of outstanding claims, legal proceedings, tax audits and other contingent liabilities; foreign currency exchange rates and fluctuations in those rates; general economic conditions and the existence, length or timing of an economic recovery; assumptions underlying any of the foregoing; and any other statements that address events or developments that we intend or believe will or may occur in the future. Forward-looking statements may be characterized by terminology such as believe, anticipate, should, could, would, intend, plan, will, expects, estimates, project, potential, forecast, positioned and similar references to future periods. These statements are based on assumptions and assessments made by our management in light of their experience and perceptions of historical trends, current conditions, expected future developments and other factors they believe to be appropriate. Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, and actual results, developments and business decisions may differ materially from those envisaged by such forward-looking statements. Accordingly, you should not place undue reliance on any such forward-looking statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those envisaged in the forward-looking statements include the following:

We may not complete the pending Beckman Coulter Acquisition in the time frame we anticipate, or at all; the acquired business may underperform relative to our expectations and the Beckman Coulter Acquisition may cause our financial results to differ from our own or the investment community's expectations; and we may not be able to achieve anticipated cost savings or other synergies.

Instability in the global economy and financial markets may adversely affect our operating results, financial condition and liquidity.

The restructuring actions that we have taken to reduce costs could have long-term adverse effects on our business.

Our growth could suffer if the markets into which we sell our products decline, do not grow as anticipated or experience cyclicality.

We face intense competition and if we are unable to compete effectively, we may face decreased demand, decreased market share or price reductions for our products.

Our growth depends in part on the timely development and commercialization, and customer acceptance, of new products and product enhancements based on technological innovation.

Any inability to consummate acquisitions at our historical rate and at appropriate prices could negatively impact our growth rate and the price of our securities.

Our acquisition of businesses could negatively impact our profitability and return on invested capital.

Edgar Filing: DANAHER CORP /DE/ - Form 424B2

The indemnification provisions of acquisition agreements by which we have acquired companies may not fully protect us and may result in unexpected liabilities.

Divestitures could negatively impact our business, and contingent liabilities from businesses that we have sold could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

S-1

Table of Contents

We may be required to recognize impairment charges for our goodwill and other indefinite lived intangible assets.

Foreign currency exchange rates may adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

Our reputation, ability to do business and results of operations may be impaired by improper conduct by any of our employees, agents or business partners.

Changes in our tax rates or exposure to additional income tax liabilities could affect our profitability. In addition, audits by tax authorities could result in additional tax payments for prior periods.

If we do not or cannot adequately protect our intellectual property, or if third parties infringe our intellectual property rights, we may suffer competitive injury or expend significant resources enforcing our rights.

Third parties may claim that we are infringing or misappropriating their intellectual property rights and we could suffer significant litigation expenses, losses or licensing expenses or be prevented from selling products or services.

We are subject to a variety of litigation and similar proceedings in the course of our business that could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

Our operations, products and services expose us to the risk of environmental, health and safety liabilities, costs and violations that could adversely affect our financial condition, results of operations and reputation.

Product defects and unanticipated use or inadequate disclosure with respect to our products could adversely affect our reputation and results of operations.

Our businesses are subject to extensive regulation; failure to comply with those regulations could adversely affect our financial condition, results of operations and reputation.

We have outstanding debt, and our debt will increase as a result of this offering and the Beckman Coulter Acquisition and if we incur additional debt and do not retire existing debt.

Our indebtedness may limit our operations and our use of our cash flow, and any failure to comply with the covenants that apply to our indebtedness could adversely affect our liquidity and financial condition.

Our defined benefit pension plans are subject to financial market risks that could adversely affect our results of operations and cash flows.

We may incur higher costs to produce our products if commodity prices rise.

Edgar Filing: DANAHER CORP /DE/ - Form 424B2

If we cannot adjust the purchases required for our manufacturing activities to reflect changing market conditions or customer demand, our profitability may suffer. In addition, our reliance upon sole sources of supply for certain materials and components could cause production interruptions, delays and inefficiencies.

If we cannot adjust our manufacturing capacity to reflect the demand for our products, our profitability may suffer.

Changes in governmental regulations may reduce demand for our products or increase our expenses.

We may be unable to adjust to changes in the healthcare industry, some of which could adversely affect our business.

Work stoppages, union and works council campaigns, labor disputes and other matters associated with our labor force could adversely impact our results of operations and cause us to incur incremental costs.

Adverse changes in our relationships with, or the financial condition, performance or purchasing patterns of, key distributors and other channel partners could adversely affect our results of operations.

S-2

Table of Contents

International economic, political, legal and business factors could negatively affect our results of operations, cash flows and financial condition.

If we suffer loss to our facilities, distribution systems or information technology systems due to catastrophe, our operations could be seriously harmed.

We own a 50% interest in, but do not control, the Apex Tool Group joint venture, and as a result we may not be able to direct management of the joint venture in a manner that we believe is in Danaher's best interests.

See Part I Item 1A and Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Overview of the Company's 2010 Annual Report on Form 10-K and Risk Factors and Recent Developments in this prospectus supplement for a further discussion regarding some of the reasons that actual results, developments and business decisions may differ materially from the results contemplated by our forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of the document in which they are made. We do not assume any obligation or intend to update or revise any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events and developments or otherwise.

S-3

Table of Contents

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act). You may read and copy all or any portion of this information at the SEC s principal office in Washington, D.C., and copies of all or any part thereof may be obtained from the Public Reference Room of the SEC located at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549 after payment of fees prescribed by the SEC. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information about the Public Reference Room.

The SEC also maintains a website that contains reports, proxy statements and other information about issuers, like Danaher, who file electronically with the SEC. The address of that site is www.sec.gov.

Our website address is www.danaher.com. This reference to our website is intended to be an inactive textual reference only. Our website and the information contained therein or connected thereto are not incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are part of a registration statement and do not contain all of the information included in the registration statement. Whenever a reference is made in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus to any contract or other document of Danaher, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of the registration statement for a copy of the contract or document.

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, except for any information that is superseded by subsequent incorporated documents or by information that is contained directly in the accompanying prospectus or this prospectus supplement. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus incorporate by reference the documents set forth below that Danaher has previously filed with the SEC and that are not delivered with this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. These documents contain important information about Danaher and its financial condition.

Danaher SEC Filings (File No. 1-08089)

Annual Report on Form 10-K

Period

Fiscal year ended December 31, 2010 (including information specifically incorporated by reference from our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A filed with the SEC on April 4, 2011, but excluding portions included therein that have been superseded by our Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on April 21, 2011, as described below)

Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q

Quarterly period ended April 1, 2011

Current Reports on Form 8-K

February 7, February 10, April 21 (only with respect to Item 8.01, Exhibit 23.1 under Item 9.01 and Exhibit 99.1 Audited reclassified historical consolidated financial information for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2008, 2009 and 2010 under Item 9.01), May 11, June 15 and June 17, 2011

All documents filed by us pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act (in each case, other than those documents or the portions of those documents not deemed to be filed) between the date of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and the termination of the offering shall also be deemed to be incorporated herein by reference. Any statement contained in any document incorporated or

Table of Contents

deemed to be incorporated by reference herein or in the accompanying prospectus shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus or in any other subsequently filed document which also is or is deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus modifies or supersedes such statement. Any statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

To obtain a copy of these filings at no cost, you may write or telephone us at the following address:

Danaher Corporation

2200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 800W

Washington, D.C. 20037-1701

Attention: Investor Relations

(202) 828-0850

Exhibits to the filings will not be sent, however, unless those exhibits have specifically been incorporated by reference into such document.

S-5

Table of Contents

SUMMARY

The following summary highlights selected information contained elsewhere in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and in the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and may not contain all the information you will need in making your investment decision. You should read this entire prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus carefully, including the Risk Factors section contained in this prospectus supplement, the Risk Factors section of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010 and our consolidated financial statements and the related notes and the other documents incorporated by reference herein.

Danaher Corporation

Overview

We design, manufacture and market professional, medical, industrial and commercial products and services, which are typically characterized by strong brand names, innovative technology and major market positions. Our research and development, manufacturing, sales, distribution, service and administrative facilities are located in more than 50 countries. Our business consists of five segments: Test & Measurement; Environmental; Life Sciences & Diagnostics; Dental; and Industrial Technologies.

We strive to create shareholder value through:

delivering sales growth, excluding the impact of acquired businesses, in excess of the overall market growth for our products and services;

upper quartile financial performance compared to our peer companies; and

upper quartile cash flow generation from operations compared to our peer companies.

To accomplish these goals, we use a set of tools and processes, known as the Danaher Business System (DBS), which are designed to continuously improve business performance in the critical areas of quality, delivery, cost and innovation. Within the DBS framework, we pursue a number of ongoing strategic initiatives relating to idea generation, product development and commercialization, global sourcing of materials and services, manufacturing improvement and sales and marketing. To further these objectives we also acquire businesses that either strategically fit within our existing business portfolio or expand our portfolio into a new and attractive business area. Given the rapid pace of technological development and the specialized expertise typical of our served markets, acquisitions also provide us important access to new technologies and domain expertise. We believe there are many acquisition opportunities available within our target markets. The extent to which we make and effectively integrate appropriate acquisitions will affect our overall growth and operating results. We also continually assess the strategic fit of our existing businesses and may divest businesses that are deemed not to fit with our strategic plan or are not achieving the desired return on investment.

Our principal executive offices are located at 2200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 800W, Washington, D.C. 20037-1701. Our telephone number is (202) 828-0850.

Recent Developments

Pending Acquisition of Beckman Coulter, Inc.

On February 6, 2011, Danaher, Djanet Acquisition Corp., a Delaware corporation and an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of Danaher (Purchaser) and Beckman Coulter, Inc., a Delaware corporation (Beckman Coulter), entered into a definitive Agreement and Plan of Merger (the

Merger Agreement), pursuant to which

S-6

Table of Contents

Danaher, through Purchaser, commenced an offer (the Offer) to acquire all of the outstanding shares of Beckman Coulter s common stock, par value \$0.10 per share (the Beckman Coulter Shares), for \$83.50 per share in cash, without interest (the Offer Price) to be followed by a second step cash-out merger at the Offer Price. The Beckman Coulter Acquisition is expected to be completed in the first half of 2011. However, there can be no assurance that the Beckman Coulter Acquisition will be completed. See Risk Factors Risks Related to the Beckman Coulter Acquisition.

Danaher anticipates financing the Beckman Coulter Acquisition through a combination of available cash, proceeds from the issuance of commercial paper, proceeds from the offering of shares of our common stock expected to close on June 21, 2011 and proceeds from the issuance of the notes offered hereby. Danaher also has entered into an additional credit facility in order to expand borrowing capacity under its commercial paper program, or fund a portion of the Beckman Coulter acquisition. The Merger Agreement does not contain a financing condition. See Financing below.

Beckman Coulter develops, manufactures and markets products that simplify, automate and innovate complex biomedical testing. Its diagnostic systems are found in hospitals and other clinical settings around the world and produce information used by physicians to diagnose disease, make treatment decisions and monitor patients. Scientists use its life science research instruments to study complex biological problems including causes of disease and potential new therapies or drugs. Beckman Coulter had revenues of approximately \$3.7 billion in 2010, and would become part of Danaher s Life Sciences & Diagnostics segment, joining Danaher s Leica, AB Sciex, Radiometer and Molecular Devices businesses.

Beckman Coulter has advised Danaher that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently conducted inspections of five of the facilities operated by Beckman Coulter, all of which were completed as of June 3, 2011. Beckman Coulter has received Form 483 Inspectional Observations from the FDA (the 483 Observations) with respect to the completed inspections, has shared the 483 Observations with Danaher and has responded or is in process of responding to such 483 Observations. Beckman Coulter has advised that most of the 483 Observations relate to matters currently being addressed by Beckman Coulter in connection with its previously disclosed compliance and quality system improvement initiative.

Completion of the Offer is subject to several conditions, including (i) that a majority of the Beckman Coulter Shares outstanding (determined on a fully diluted basis) be validly tendered and not validly withdrawn prior to the expiration of the Offer; (ii) the receipt of required government approvals inside and outside the United States; (iii) the absence of a material adverse effect on Beckman Coulter and (iv) certain other customary conditions. On June 16, 2011, Danaher announced that all applicable government approvals with respect to the Offer had been received.

The Merger Agreement also provides that following consummation of the Offer and satisfaction of certain customary conditions, Purchaser will be merged with and into Beckman Coulter (the Merger), with Beckman Coulter surviving as a wholly-owned indirect subsidiary of Danaher. Upon completion of the Merger, each Beckman Coulter Share outstanding immediately prior to the effective time of the Merger (excluding those Beckman Coulter Shares that are held by (i) Danaher, Purchaser, Beckman Coulter or their respective subsidiaries and (ii) stockholders of Beckman Coulter who properly exercised their appraisal rights under the Delaware General Corporation Law) will be converted into the right to receive the Offer Price.

If Purchaser holds 90% or more of the outstanding Beckman Coulter Shares following the completion of the Offer, the parties will effect the Merger as a short-form merger without the need for approval by Beckman Coulter s stockholders. Otherwise, Beckman Coulter may hold a special stockholders meeting to obtain stockholder approval of the Merger. Subject to the terms of the Merger Agreement, applicable law and the number of authorized Beckman Coulter Shares available under Beckman Coulter s Certificate of Incorporation, Beckman Coulter has granted Purchaser an irrevocable option (the Top-Up Option), exercisable after completion of the Offer, to purchase additional Beckman Coulter Shares from Beckman Coulter as necessary so that Danaher, Purchaser or their subsidiaries own one Beckman Coulter Share more than 90% of the total

Table of Contents

Beckman Coulter Shares outstanding immediately after the issuance of the Beckman Coulter Shares upon exercise of the Top-Up Option (the Top-Up Shares) on a fully diluted basis. Purchaser will pay the Offer Price for each Top-Up Share acquired upon exercise of the Top-Up Option.

The Merger Agreement can be terminated by Danaher or Beckman Coulter under certain circumstances, and Beckman Coulter will be required to pay Danaher a termination fee of \$165 million in connection with certain terminations.

A copy of the Merger Agreement is included as an exhibit to our Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on February 10, 2011, which is incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. The foregoing description of the Beckman Coulter Acquisition and the Merger Agreement does not purport to be complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to such exhibit. This offering is not conditioned upon the completion of the Beckman Coulter Acquisition.

Financing

We estimate that the total amount of funds needed to purchase all Beckman Coulter Shares pursuant to the Offer, pay the merger consideration in connection with the Merger and pay related fees, expenses and other amounts expected to become due and payable by Purchaser as a result of the Offer and the Merger (other than the retirement of Beckman Coulter's convertible notes) will be approximately \$6.0 billion (the Closing Obligations). We estimate that the total amount of funds we will need to retire Beckman Coulter's outstanding convertible notes (including with respect to Beckman Coulter Shares underlying such notes that are properly converted as a result of the conversion right arising out of the consummation of the Offer, with funding and settlement of any such conversion occurring 24 trading days after conversion) will be approximately \$700 million. These obligations total approximately \$6.7 billion and, with respect to the \$700 million of such amount associated with the convertible notes, such portion is expected to become due and payable only after the consummation of the Offer and the Merger. In addition, as a result of the Offer and the Merger, Danaher will assume approximately \$800 million of indebtedness and acquire approximately \$450 million of cash, net of the fees, expenses and other amounts expected to become due and payable by Beckman Coulter as a result of the Offer and the Merger.

Danaher expects to fund the Closing Obligations and the retirement of Beckman Coulter's outstanding convertible notes through (1) approximately \$2.3 billion of available cash, (2) anticipated net proceeds, after expenses and the underwriters' discount, of approximately \$965.3 million from the issuance of Danaher common stock, which is expected to close on June 21, 2011 (including proceeds from the exercise of the underwriters' option to purchase additional shares of common stock, which was exercised in full) as reported in Danaher's Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on June 15, 2011 (the Common Stock Offering), (3) approximately \$1.8 billion of net proceeds from the sale of the notes offered hereby, and (4) approximately \$1.65 billion of net proceeds from the sale of commercial paper that Danaher expects to issue under its \$4.0 billion U.S. commercial paper program prior to the closing of the Offer.

In the event that Danaher is unable to issue the notes offered hereby in the desired amount prior to the closing of the Offer, Danaher intends to finance any shortfall by issuing additional commercial paper, and if Danaher is unable to issue commercial paper in the required amount, Danaher intends to finance any shortfall with borrowings under the Bridge Facility and/or the Existing Facility (each as defined below).

In connection with the Offer, on June 17, 2011, Danaher entered into a 364-day revolving credit facility (the Bridge Facility), as reported in Danaher's Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on June 17, 2011. The Bridge Facility provides for a borrowing capacity of up to \$3.0 billion, provided that commitments under the Bridge Facility will be reduced by the net cash proceeds of certain equity or debt issuances by Danaher or any of

Table of Contents

its subsidiaries completed on or after June 17, 2011, including the net proceeds of this offering, but excluding the net proceeds of the Common Stock Offering (but in no event shall the foregoing require aggregate commitments to be reduced to below \$2.2 billion).

For additional information about the Bridge Facility, please see the Current Report on Form 8-K filed by Danaher on June 17, 2011 and the Bridge Facility attached as Exhibit 10.1 thereto, which are incorporated by reference herein. For additional information about Danaher's existing \$1.45 billion multi-year revolving credit facility (the Existing Facility), please see the description of the Existing Facility included in Danaher's Annual Report on 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010 and the Existing Facility attached as Exhibits 10.20 and 10.21 thereto, which are incorporated by reference herein.

As of June 17, 2011, Danaher had, and as of June 20, 2011, Danaher has, aggregate committed financing for the Offer and Merger of \$6.75 billion (an amount that exceeds the amount of funds required to consummate the transactions) consisting of \$3.0 billion of committed financing under the Bridge Facility, \$1.45 billion of committed financing under the Existing Facility and \$2.3 billion of available cash. Following the expected June 21, 2011 closing of the Common Stock Offering, Danaher anticipates having aggregate committed financing for the Offer and Merger of approximately \$ 7.72 billion.

Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges

Our ratios of earnings to fixed charges are set forth on page S-15 under the heading, Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges.

Table of Contents

The Offering

The following is a brief summary of some of the terms of this offering. For a more complete description of the terms of the notes see Description of Notes in this prospectus supplement and the Description of Debt Securities in the accompanying prospectus.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Issuer | Danaher Corporation |
| Notes Offered | <p>\$ aggregate principal amount of % senior notes due</p> <p>\$ aggregate principal amount of % senior notes due</p> <p>\$ aggregate principal amount of % senior notes due</p> |
| Maturity | <p>Notes: ,</p> <p>Notes: ,</p> <p>Notes: ,</p> |
| Interest Payment Dates | and , beginning on , 2011 |
| Ranking | <p>Each series of notes will:</p> <p>be general unsecured obligations of ours;</p> <p>rank equally in right of payment with all of our existing and any future unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness, including each other series of notes offered hereby;</p> <p>rank senior in right of payment to any of our existing and future indebtedness that is subordinated to the notes; and</p> <p>be effectively subordinated in right of payment to any of our existing and future secured indebtedness to the extent of the assets securing such indebtedness, and structurally subordinated to all existing and any future indebtedness and any other liabilities of our subsidiaries.</p> |

See Risk Factors Risks Related to the Notes in this prospectus supplement.

Optional Redemption

We may redeem some or all of the notes of any series at any time at the applicable redemption price as described in this prospectus supplement.

Special Mandatory Redemption

If we do not consummate the Beckman Coulter Acquisition on or prior to December 31, 2011, or the Merger Agreement is terminated prior to that date, we will be required to redeem in whole and not in part each series of notes on the special mandatory redemption date at a redemption price equal to 101% of the aggregate principal amount of the notes outstanding, plus accrued and unpaid interest from the

Table of Contents

date of initial issuance, or the most recent date to which interest has been paid or duly provided for, whichever is later, to, but excluding, the special mandatory redemption date, if any. See Description of Notes Special Mandatory Redemption.

Change of Control

If a change of control triggering event (as defined herein) occurs, each holder of notes may require us to repurchase some or all of its notes at a purchase price equal to 101% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued interest. A change of control triggering event means the occurrence of both a change of control and a rating event. See Description of Notes Change of Control.

Use of Proceeds

We anticipate that we will use the net proceeds from this offering to pay a portion of the purchase price of the Beckman Coulter Acquisition and for general corporate purposes if any proceeds remain. See Use of Proceeds.

Risk Factors

See Risk Factors beginning on page S-12 of this prospectus supplement and the documents incorporated by reference in the accompanying prospectus, for a discussion of risks you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in the notes.

Governing Law

New York.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

An investment in the notes involves risks. You should carefully consider the risks and uncertainties described in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the risk factors set forth in the documents and reports filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference herein, such as the risk factors under the heading "Risk Factors" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010 on file with the SEC, before you make an investment decision pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. The risks and uncertainties we have described are not the only ones facing our Company. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our business operations.

Risks Related to the Beckman Coulter Acquisition

We may not complete the Beckman Coulter Acquisition within the time frame we anticipate, or at all; the acquired business may underperform relative to our expectations, and the Beckman Coulter Acquisition may cause our financial results to differ from our own or the investment community's expectations; and we may not be able to achieve anticipated cost savings or other synergies.

The Beckman Coulter Acquisition is subject to a number of closing conditions, as described above, and the completion of the Beckman Coulter Acquisition is subject to a number of risks and uncertainties. The unpredictability of the business and regulatory conditions affecting the industries in which we and Beckman Coulter operate, the requirement that a majority of the Beckman Coulter Shares outstanding (determined on a fully diluted basis) be validly tendered and not validly withdrawn prior to the expiration of the Offer and other risks and uncertainties may adversely affect our ability to complete the Beckman Coulter Acquisition within the time frame we anticipate or at all.

In addition, if the Beckman Coulter Acquisition is consummated, the acquired business may underperform relative to our expectations; it may cause our financial results to differ from our own or the investment community's expectations; and we may not be able to achieve anticipated cost savings or other synergies.

Risks Related to the Notes

We have outstanding debt, and our debt will increase as a result of this offering and the Beckman Coulter Acquisition and if we incur additional debt and do not retire existing debt.

We have outstanding debt and other financial obligations and significant unused borrowing capacity. As of April 1, 2011, after giving pro forma effect to this offering, we would have had approximately \$_____ of debt on a consolidated basis. In addition, after the closing of this offering we expect to have the ability to incur an additional \$3.65 billion of debt under our outstanding credit facilities and commercial paper program. We may also obtain additional long-term debt and lines of credit to meet future financing needs, and anticipate issuing commercial paper and assuming additional debt in connection with the Beckman Coulter Acquisition. See "Summary Recent Developments Financing." Our debt level and related debt service obligations could have negative consequences, including:

requiring us to dedicate significant cash flow from operations to the payment of principal and interest on our debt, which would reduce the funds we have available for other purposes, such as acquisitions and stock repurchases;

reducing our flexibility in planning for or reacting to changes in our business and market conditions; and

exposing us to interest rate risk since a portion of our debt obligations are at variable rates.

We may incur significantly more debt in the future. If we add new debt, the risks described above could increase.

Table of Contents

Our current revolving credit facilities impose restrictions on us, including certain restrictions on our ability to incur liens on our assets, and require us to maintain a consolidated leverage ratio (the ratio of consolidated indebtedness to consolidated indebtedness plus shareholders equity) as of the last day of any fiscal quarter of 0.65 to 1.0 or less. Our credit facilities provide credit support for our commercial paper program; there are currently no amounts outstanding under our credit facilities. See Summary Recent Developments Financing. Our long-term debt obligations include covenants that may adversely affect our ability to incur certain secured indebtedness or engage in certain types of sale and leaseback transactions. Our ability to comply with these restrictions and covenants may be affected by events beyond our control. If we breach any of these restrictions or covenants and do not obtain a waiver from the lenders, then, subject to applicable cure periods, our outstanding indebtedness could be declared immediately due and payable.

There are no financial covenants in the indenture.

Neither we nor any of our subsidiaries are restricted from incurring additional unsecured debt or other liabilities, including additional senior debt, under the indenture. If we incur additional debt or liabilities, our ability to pay our obligations on the notes could be adversely affected. We expect that we will from time to time incur additional debt and other liabilities. In addition, we are not restricted under the indenture from paying dividends or issuing or repurchasing our securities.

There are no financial covenants in the indenture. However, there is a financial covenant in the agreement governing our outstanding credit facility and there may be financial covenants in the agreements governing our future indebtedness. You are not protected under the indenture in the event of a highly leveraged transaction, reorganization, a default under our existing indebtedness, restructuring, merger or similar transaction that may adversely affect you, except to the extent described under Description of Debt Securities Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets included in the accompanying prospectus.

The notes will not be guaranteed by any of our subsidiaries and will be structurally subordinated to the debt and other liabilities of our subsidiaries, which means that creditors of our subsidiaries will be paid from the subsidiaries' assets before holders of the notes would have any claims to those assets.

We are a holding company and conduct substantially all of our operations through subsidiaries. However, the notes will be obligations exclusively of Danaher Corporation and will not be guaranteed by any of our subsidiaries. As a result, the notes will be structurally subordinated to all debt and other liabilities of our subsidiaries (including liabilities to trade creditors), which means that creditors of our subsidiaries will be paid from the subsidiaries' assets before holders of the notes would have any claims to those assets.

If we do not consummate the Beckman Coulter Acquisition on or prior to December 31, 2011, or the Merger Agreement is terminated prior to that date, we will be required to redeem the notes. We may not be able to redeem all of the notes. In addition, if we redeem the notes, you may not obtain your expected return on the notes.

We may not be able to consummate the Beckman Coulter Acquisition within the timeframe specified under Description of Notes Special Mandatory Redemption. Our ability to consummate the Beckman Coulter Acquisition is subject to various closing conditions, certain of which are beyond our control. If we are not able to consummate the transaction on or prior to December 31, 2011, or the Merger Agreement is terminated at any time prior to that date, we will be required to redeem all of the notes at a redemption price equal to 101% of the aggregate principal amount of the notes outstanding, plus accrued and unpaid interest, if any, from the date of initial issuance, or the most recent date to which interest has been paid or duly provided for, whichever is later, to, but excluding, the special mandatory redemption date. Our lenders under our current revolving credit facility may have the right to prohibit any such redemption, in which event we would seek to obtain waivers from the

Table of Contents

required lenders under such credit facility, but we may not be successful in obtaining such waivers. In addition, if we do redeem the notes pursuant to the special mandatory redemption provisions, you may not obtain your expected return on the notes and may not be able to reinvest the proceeds from a special mandatory redemption in an investment that results in a comparable return.

We may not be able to repurchase all of the notes upon a change of control triggering event.

As described under Description of Notes Change of Control, we may be required to offer to repurchase the notes upon the occurrence of a change of control triggering event. We may not have sufficient funds to repurchase the notes in cash at that time or have the ability to arrange necessary financing on acceptable terms. In addition, the terms of our other debt agreements or applicable law may limit our ability to repurchase the notes for cash. The occurrence of a change of control could also constitute an event of default under our credit facilities and under our other indebtedness. Our bank lenders may have the right to prohibit a repurchase upon a change of control triggering event, in which event we would seek to obtain waivers from the required lenders under our credit facilities, but we may not be successful in obtaining such waivers.

Active trading markets for the notes may not develop.

Each series of notes constitutes a new issue of securities, for which there is no existing trading market. We do not intend to apply for listing of any series of notes offered hereby on any securities exchange or for quotation of any series of notes offered hereby in any automated dealer quotation system. We cannot provide you with any assurance regarding whether trading markets for the notes will develop, the ability of holders of the notes to sell their notes or the prices at which holders may be able to sell their notes. The underwriters have advised us that they currently intend to make markets in the notes of each series. However, the underwriters are not obligated to do so, and any market-making with respect to the notes may be discontinued at any time without notice. If no active trading markets develop, you may be unable to resell the notes at their fair market value or at any price.

If trading markets do develop, changes in our credit ratings or the debt markets could adversely affect the market prices of the notes. The prices for the notes will depend on many factors, including:

our credit ratings with major credit rating agencies;

the prevailing interest rates being paid by other companies similar to us;

our financial condition, financial performance and future prospects; and

the overall condition of the financial markets.

The condition of the financial markets and prevailing interest rates have fluctuated significantly in the past and are likely to fluctuate in the future. Such fluctuations could have an adverse effect on the prices of the notes.

In addition, credit rating agencies continually review their ratings for the companies that they follow, including us. A negative change in our rating could have an adverse effect on the prices of the notes.

Table of Contents**RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

The following table sets forth our ratios of earnings to fixed charges for each of the periods indicated. You should read this table in conjunction with the consolidated financial statements and notes incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

| | Three Months Ended | | Year Ended December 31, | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | April 1, 2011 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges(1) | 16.6x | 16.4x | 13.9x | 13.2x | 11.3x | 17.9x |

- (1) These ratios include Danaher Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries. The ratio of earnings to fixed charges was computed by dividing earnings by fixed charges for the periods indicated, where earnings consist of (1) earnings from continuing operations (excluding earnings from 50% owned affiliates) before income taxes; plus (2) fixed charges, and fixed charges consist of (A) interest, whether expensed or capitalized, on all indebtedness, (B) amortization of premiums, discounts and capitalized expenses related to indebtedness, and (C) an interest component representing the estimated portion of rental expense that management believes is attributable to interest. Interest on FASB Interpretation No. 48 liabilities is included in the tax provision in our consolidated condensed statements of earnings and is excluded from the computation of fixed charges.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We estimate that the net proceeds from the sale of the notes in this offering will be approximately \$ _____, after deducting the underwriters discounts and commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us. We anticipate that we will use the net proceeds from this offering to pay a portion of the purchase price of the Beckman Coulter Acquisition and for general corporate purposes if any proceeds remain. Pending any specific application, we may initially invest net proceeds in cash equivalents and short-term marketable securities.

S-16

Table of Contents**CAPITALIZATION**

The following table sets forth our capitalization as of April 1, 2011 on an actual basis and on an as adjusted basis to give effect to the sale of the notes in this offering. You should read this table in conjunction with Use of Proceeds and our consolidated financial statements and related notes incorporated by reference in the accompanying prospectus. The following table does not include any adjustments for (1) our offering of 19,250,000 shares of common stock, which is expected to close on June 21, 2011 and result in net proceeds, after expenses and the underwriters discount, of approximately \$965.3 million (including proceeds from the exercise by the underwriters of their option to purchase additional shares of common stock, which was exercised in full), (2) the anticipated issuance of commercial paper to fund the Beckman Coulter Acquisition, or (3) any future borrowings under the Existing Facility or the Bridge Facility. The following table also does not reflect any adjustments related to the closing of the Beckman Coulter Acquisition. The as adjusted information may not reflect our cash, short-term debt and capitalization in the future.

| (Dollar amounts in millions) | Actual | As Adjusted for this Offering(1) |
|--|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents(1) | \$ 1,593.6 | \$ |
| U.S. dollar-denominated commercial paper(1) | 180.0 | 180.0 |
| 4.5% guaranteed Eurobond notes due 2013 (500 million) | 711.5 | 711.5 |
| 5.625% notes due 2018 | 500.0 | 500.0 |
| 5.40% notes due 2019 | 750.0 | 750.0 |
| Zero coupon Liquid Yield Option Notes due 2021 (LYONs) | 420.2 | 420.2 |
| % notes due offered hereby | | |
| % notes due offered hereby | | |
| % notes due offered hereby | | |
| Other borrowings | 165.3 | 165.3 |
| Total | 2,727.0 | |
| Less currently payable | 58.9 | 58.9 |
| Long-term debt | 2,668.1 | |
| Total debt | 2,727.0 | |
| Total stockholders equity(1) | 14,723.7 | |
| Total capitalization | \$ 17,450.7 | \$ |

- (1) Does not include any adjustments for (1) our offering of 19,250,000 shares of common stock, which is expected to close on June 21, 2011 and result in net proceeds, after expenses and the underwriters discount, of approximately \$965.3 million (including proceeds from the exercise by the underwriters of their option to purchase additional shares of common stock, which was exercised in full), (2) the anticipated issuance of commercial paper to fund the Beckman Coulter Acquisition, (3) any future borrowings under the Existing Facility or the Bridge Facility, or (4) the closing of the Beckman Coulter Acquisition.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF NOTES

The following description of the particular terms of the notes offered hereby (referred to in the accompanying prospectus as "debt securities") supplements, and to the extent it is inconsistent therewith replaces, the description of the general terms and provisions of debt securities set forth in the accompanying prospectus, to which description reference is hereby made. In this section "Description of Notes," the terms "we," "our," "us," "the Company" and "Danaher" refer to Danaher Corporation only.

General

Each series of the notes will be issued under an indenture dated December 11, 2007, between us and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A., as trustee, as supplemented with respect to each series of notes by a supplemental indenture to be entered into between us and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. (as successor to The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.), as trustee (together, the "Senior Indenture"). You may request a copy of the Senior Indenture and the form of notes from the trustee.

We will issue the notes of each series in fully registered book-entry form without coupons and in denominations of \$2,000 and integral multiples of \$1,000 thereafter. We do not intend to apply for the listing of the notes on a national securities exchange or for quotation of the notes on any automated dealer quotation system.

The following statements relating to the notes and the Senior Indenture are summaries of certain provisions thereof and are subject to the detailed provisions of the form of notes and the Senior Indenture, to which reference is hereby made. Certain provisions of the Senior Indenture are summarized in the accompanying prospectus. We encourage you to read the summaries of the notes and the Senior Indenture in both this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, as well as the form of notes and the Senior Indenture.

The notes will be our unsecured senior obligations. The notes will also be effectively subordinated to our existing and future secured indebtedness as to the assets securing such indebtedness and structurally subordinated to the existing and future indebtedness and any other liabilities of our subsidiaries. The cover page of this prospectus supplement sets forth the maturity date, the aggregate principal amount and the interest rate of each series of notes. The notes will bear interest from the date of issuance, payable semiannually on each _____ and _____, beginning on _____, 2011, to the persons in whose names the notes are registered at the close of business on the record date for such interest, which shall be _____ or _____ (whether or not a business day), as the case may be, next preceding such interest payment date. Interest will be computed on the basis of a 360-day year composed of twelve 30-day months. Payments of principal and interest to owners of book-entry interests (as described below) are expected to be made in accordance with the procedures of The Depository Trust Company ("DTC") and its participants in effect from time to time.

If an interest payment date for the notes falls on a date that is not a business day (as defined below), then interest will be paid on the next day that is a business day, and no interest on such payment will accrue for the period from and after such interest payment date. If a redemption date or the maturity date for any note falls on a date that is not a business day, the related payments of principal, premium, if any, and interest may be made on the next succeeding business day, and no additional interest will accumulate on the amount payable for the period from and after the redemption date or maturity date.

Business day, means any calendar day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday in New York, New York and on which commercial banks are open for business in New York, New York.

The notes will not be entitled to the benefit of any sinking funds.

Table of Contents

Optional Redemption

The Notes and Notes will be redeemable, in whole at any time or in part from time to time, at our option at a redemption price equal to the greater of:

(i) 100% of the principal amount of such notes to be redeemed; or

(ii) the sum of the present values of the remaining scheduled payments of principal and interest thereon (not including any portion of such payments of interest accrued as of the date of redemption), discounted to the date of redemption on a semiannual basis (assuming a 360-day year consisting of twelve 30-day months) at the Treasury Rate (as defined below), plus basis points in the case of the Notes and basis points in the case of the Notes,

plus in each case accrued interest thereon to, but excluding, the date of redemption. Notwithstanding the foregoing, installments of interest on the Notes and Notes that are due and payable on interest payment dates falling on or prior to a redemption date will be payable on the interest payment date to the registered holders as of the close of business on the relevant record date according to such notes and the Senior Indenture.

Prior to , (three months prior to their maturity date), the Notes will be redeemable, in whole at any time or in part from time to time, at our option at a redemption price equal to the greater of:

(i) 100% of the principal amount of the Notes to be redeemed; or

(ii) the sum of the present values of the remaining scheduled payments of principal and interest thereon (not including any portion of such payments of interest accrued as of the date of redemption), discounted to the date of redemption on a semiannual basis (assuming a 360-day year consisting of twelve 30-day months) at the Treasury Rate (as defined below), plus basis points,

plus in each case accrued interest thereon to, but excluding, the date of redemption. Notwithstanding the foregoing, installments of interest on the Notes that are due and payable on interest payment dates falling on or prior to a redemption date will be payable on the interest payment date to the registered holders as of the close of business on the relevant record date according to the Notes and the Senior Indenture.

In addition, on or after , (three months prior to their maturity date), the Notes will be redeemable, in whole at any time or in part from time to time, at our option at a redemption price equal to 100% of the principal amount of the Notes to be redeemed, plus accrued interest thereon to, but excluding, the date of redemption.

Comparable Treasury Issue means the United States Treasury security selected by the Quotation Agent as having an actual or interpolated maturity comparable to the remaining term of the notes to be redeemed that would be utilized, at the time of selection and in accordance with customary financial practice, in pricing new issues of corporate debt securities of comparable maturity to the remaining term of such notes.

Comparable Treasury Price means, with respect to any redemption date, (i) the average of four Reference Treasury Dealer Quotations for such redemption date, after excluding the highest and lowest such Reference Treasury Dealer Quotations, or (ii) if we obtain fewer than four such Reference Treasury Dealer Quotations, the average of all such quotations, or (iii) if only one Reference Treasury Dealer Quotation is received, such quotation.

Quotation Agent means the Reference Treasury Dealer appointed by us.

Reference Treasury Dealer means (i) Deutsche Bank Securities Inc., Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated, BNP Paribas Securities Corp., HSBC Securities (USA) Inc. and Wells Fargo Securities,

Table of Contents

LLC (or their respective affiliates that are Primary Treasury Dealers) and their respective successors; provided, however, that if any of the foregoing shall cease to be a primary U.S. Government securities dealer in the United States of America (a Primary Treasury Dealer), we will substitute therefor another Primary Treasury Dealer, and (ii) any other Primary Treasury Dealer selected by us.

Reference Treasury Dealer Quotations means, with respect to each Reference Treasury Dealer and any redemption date, the average, as determined by us, of the bid and asked prices for the Comparable Treasury Issue (expressed in each case as a percentage of its principal amount) quoted in writing to us by such Reference Treasury Dealer at 3:30 p.m., New York City time, on the third business day preceding such redemption date.

Treasury Rate means, with respect to any redemption date, the rate per annum equal to the semiannual equivalent yield to maturity (or interpolated yield to maturity on a day count basis) of the Comparable Treasury Issue, assuming a price for the Comparable Treasury Issue (expressed as a percentage of its principal amount) equal to the Comparable Treasury Price of such redemption date.

Notice of any redemption will be mailed at least 30 days but not more than 60 days before the redemption date to each registered holder of the notes to be redeemed. Unless we default in payment of the redemption price, on and after the redemption date, interest will cease to accrue on the series of notes or portions thereof called for redemption. If less than all of any series notes is to be redeemed, the notes of such series to be redeemed shall be selected by the Trustee by a method the Trustee deems to be fair and appropriate provided, that if at the time of redemption the notes of such series to be redeemed are registered as a Global Note (as defined below), DTC shall determine, in accordance with its procedures, the principal amount of the notes of such series to be redeemed held by each of its participants that holds a position in such series of notes.

Special Mandatory Redemption

If we do not consummate the Beckman Coulter Acquisition on or prior to December 31, 2011, or the Merger Agreement is terminated prior to that date, we will be required to redeem in whole and not in part each series of notes on the special mandatory redemption date (as defined below) at a redemption price equal to 101% of the aggregate principal amount of the notes outstanding, plus accrued and unpaid interest from the date of initial issuance, or the most recent date to which interest has been paid or duly provided for, whichever is later, to, but excluding, the special mandatory redemption date. The special mandatory redemption date means the earlier to occur of (1) January 31, 2012, if the Beckman Coulter Acquisition has not been completed on or prior to December 31, 2011, or (2) the 30th day (or if such day is not a business day, the first business day thereafter) following the termination of the Merger Agreement.

We will cause the notice of special mandatory redemption to be mailed, with a copy to the trustee, within five business days after the occurrence of the event triggering redemption to each holder of notes at its registered address. If funds sufficient to pay the special mandatory redemption price of all notes to be redeemed on the special mandatory redemption date are deposited with the trustee or a paying agent on or before the special mandatory redemption date, on and after the special mandatory redemption date, the notes will cease to bear interest.

Change of Control

If a change of control triggering event occurs, unless we have exercised our option to redeem the notes as described above, we will be required to make an offer (the change of control offer) to each holder of the notes to repurchase all or any part (equal to \$2,000 or an integral multiple of \$1,000 in excess thereof) of that holder's notes on the terms set forth in the notes. In the change of control offer, we will be required to offer payment in cash equal to 101% of the aggregate principal amount of notes repurchased, plus accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on the notes repurchased to the date of repurchase (the change of control payment). Within 30 days following any change of control triggering event or, at our option, prior to any change of control, but after public

Table of Contents

announcement of the transaction that constitutes or may constitute the change of control, a notice will be mailed to holders of the notes describing the transaction that constitutes or may constitute the change of control triggering event and offering to repurchase the notes on the date specified in the notice, which date will be no earlier than 30 days and no later than 60 days from the date such notice is mailed (the change of control payment date).

The notice will, if mailed prior to the date of the consummation of the change of control, state that the offer to purchase is conditioned on the change of control triggering event occurring on or prior to the change of control payment date.

On the change of control payment date, we will, to the extent lawful:

accept for payment all notes or portions of notes properly tendered pursuant to the change of control offer;

deposit with the paying agent an amount equal to the change of control payment in respect of all notes or portions of notes properly tendered; and

deliver or cause to be delivered to the trustee the notes properly accepted together with an officers certificate stating the aggregate principal amount of notes or portions of notes being repurchased.

We will not be required to make a change of control offer upon the occurrence of a change of control triggering event if a third party makes such an offer in the manner, at the times and otherwise in compliance with the requirements for an offer made by us and the third party repurchases all notes properly tendered and not withdrawn under its offer. In addition, we will not repurchase any notes if there has occurred and is continuing on the change of control payment date an event of default under the Senior Indenture, other than a default in the payment of the change of control payment upon a change of control triggering event.

We will comply with the requirements of Rule 14e-1 under the Exchange Act, and any other securities laws and regulations thereunder to the extent those laws and regulations are applicable in connection with the repurchase of the notes as a result of a change of control triggering event. To the extent that the provisions of any such securities laws or regulations conflict with the change of control offer provisions of the notes, we will comply with those securities laws and regulations and will not be deemed to have breached our obligations under the change of control offer provisions of the notes by virtue of any such conflict.

For purposes of the change of control offer provisions of the notes, the following terms will be applicable:

Change of control means the occurrence of any of the following:

(1) the consummation of any transaction (including, without limitation, any merger or consolidation) the result of which is that any person (as that term is used in Section 13(d)(3) of the Exchange Act) (other than us or one of our subsidiaries) becomes the beneficial owner (as defined in Rules 13d-3 and 13d-5 under the Exchange Act), directly or indirectly, of more than 50% of our voting stock or other voting stock into which our voting stock is reclassified, consolidated, exchanged or changed, measured by voting power rather than number of shares;

(2) the direct or indirect sale, transfer, conveyance or other disposition (other than by way of merger or consolidation), in one or more series of related transactions, of all or substantially all of our assets and the assets of our subsidiaries, taken as a whole, to one or more persons (other than us or one of our subsidiaries); or

(3) the first day on which a majority of the members of our Board of Directors are not continuing directors.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a transaction will not be deemed to involve a change of control if (1) we become a direct or indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of a holding company and (2)(A) the direct or indirect

Table of Contents

holders of the voting stock of such holding company immediately following that transaction are substantially the same as the holders of our voting stock immediately prior to that transaction or (B) immediately following that transaction no person (other than a holding company satisfying the requirements of this sentence) is the beneficial owner, directly or indirectly, of more than 50% of the voting stock of such holding company.

The definition of change of control includes a phrase relating to the direct or indirect sale, lease, transfer, conveyance or other disposition of all or substantially all of our and our subsidiaries' properties or assets taken as a whole. Although there is a limited body of case law interpreting the phrase substantially all, there is no precise established definition of the phrase under applicable law. Accordingly, the ability of a holder of notes to require us to repurchase such holder's notes as a result of a sale, lease, transfer, conveyance or other disposition of less than all of our and our subsidiaries' assets taken as a whole to another person or group may be uncertain.

Change of control triggering event means the occurrence of both a change of control and a rating event.

Continuing directors means, as of any date of determination, any member of our Board of Directors who:

(1) was a member of such Board of Directors on the date the notes were issued; or

(2) was nominated for election, elected or appointed to such Board of Directors with the approval of a majority of the continuing directors who were members of such Board of Directors at the time of such nomination, election or appointment (either by a specific vote or by approval of our proxy statement in which such member was named as a nominee for election as a director, without objection to such nomination).

Investment grade rating means a rating equal to or higher than Baa3 (or the equivalent) by Moody's and BBB- (or the equivalent) by S&P, and the equivalent investment grade credit rating from any additional rating agency or rating agencies selected by us.

Moody's means Moody's Investors Service Inc.

Rating agencies means (1) each of Moody's and S&P; and (2) if either of Moody's or S&P ceases to rate the notes or fails to make a rating of the notes publicly available for reasons outside of our control, a nationally recognized statistical rating organization within the meaning of Rule 15c3-1(c)(2)(vi)(F) under the Exchange Act selected by us (as certified by a resolution of our Board of Directors) as a replacement agency for Moody's or S&P, or both of them, as the case may be.

Rating event means the rating on the notes is lowered by each of the rating agencies and the notes are rated below an investment grade rating by each of the rating agencies on any day within the 60-day period (which 60-day period will be extended so long as the rating of the notes is under publicly announced consideration for a possible downgrade by any of the rating agencies) after the earlier of (1) the occurrence of a change of control and (2) public notice of the occurrence of a change of control or our intention to effect a change of control; provided, however, that a rating event otherwise arising by virtue of a particular reduction in rating will not be deemed to have occurred in respect of a particular change of control (and thus will not be deemed a rating event for purposes of the definition of change of control triggering event) if the rating agencies making the reduction in rating to which this definition would otherwise apply do not announce or publicly confirm or inform the trustee in writing at our or its request that the reduction was the result, in whole or in part, of any event or circumstance comprised of or arising as a result of, or in respect of, the applicable change of control (whether or not the applicable change of control has occurred at the time of the rating event).

S&P means Standard & Poor's Rating Services, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Voting stock means, with respect to any specified person (as that term is used in Section 13(d)(3) of the Exchange Act) as of any date, the capital stock of such person that is at the time entitled to vote generally in the election of the board of directors of such person.

Table of Contents**Defeasance; Satisfaction and Discharge**

The notes will be subject to defeasance and discharge and to defeasance of certain covenants as set forth in the Senior Indenture. See Description of Debt Securities Legal Defeasance and Covenant Defeasance and Description of Debt Securities Satisfaction and Discharge of the Indentures in the accompanying prospectus.

Book-Entry System

The certificates representing the notes of each series will be issued in the form of one or more fully registered global notes without coupons (the Global Note) and will be deposited with, or on behalf of, DTC and registered in the name of Cede & Co., as the nominee of DTC. Beneficial interests in the Global Notes may be held through the Euroclear System (Euroclear) and Clearstream Banking, S.A. (Clearstream) (as indirect participants in DTC). Except in limited circumstances, the notes will not be issuable in definitive form. Unless and until they are exchanged in whole or in part for the individual notes represented thereby, any interests in the Global Note may not be transferred except as a whole by DTC to a nominee of DTC or by a nominee of DTC to DTC or another nominee of DTC or by DTC or any nominee of DTC to a successor depository or any nominee of such successor. See Forms of Securities in the accompanying prospectus. Transfers of beneficial interests in the Global Notes will be subject to the applicable rules and procedures of DTC and its direct and indirect participants (including, if applicable, those of Euroclear and Clearstream), which may change from time to time.

DTC has advised us that DTC is a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law, a banking organization within the meaning of the New York Banking Law, a member of the Federal Reserve System, a clearing corporation within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code and a clearing agency registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Exchange Act. DTC holds securities that its participants (Participants) deposit with DTC. DTC also facilitates the settlement among Participants of securities transactions, such as transfers and pledges, in deposited securities through electronic computerized book-entry changes in Participants accounts, thereby eliminating the need for physical movement of securities certificates. Direct Participants include securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations (including Euroclear and Clearstream), and certain other organizations (Direct Participants). DTC is owned by a number of its Direct Participants and by The New York Stock Exchange, Inc., the American Stock Exchange, Inc. and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. Access to the DTC system is also available to others such as securities brokers and dealers, banks and trust companies that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a Direct Participant, either directly or indirectly. The rules applicable to DTC and its Participants are on file with the SEC. Euroclear and Clearstream will hold interests in the Global Notes on behalf of their participants through customers securities accounts in their respective names and on the books of their respective depositories, which are Euroclear Bank S.A./N.V., as operator of Euroclear and Citibank, N.A., as operator of Clearstream.

Transfers between the Participants will be effected in accordance with DTC s procedures and will be settled in same-day funds, and transfers between participants in Euroclear and Clearstream will be effected in accordance with their respective rules and operating procedures.

Cross-market transfers between the Participants in DTC, on the one hand, and Euroclear and Clearstream participants, on the other hand, will be effected through DTC in accordance with DTC s rules on behalf of Euroclear or Clearstream, as the case may be, by its respective depository; however, such cross-market transactions will require delivery of instructions to Euroclear or Clearstream, as the case may be, by the counterparty in such system in accordance with the rules and procedures and within the established deadlines (Brussels time) of such system. Euroclear or Clearstream, as the case may be, will, if the transaction meets its settlement requirements, deliver instructions to its respective depository to take action to effect final settlement on its behalf by delivering or receiving interests in the relevant Global Note in DTC, and making or receiving payment in accordance with normal procedures for same-day funds settlement applicable to DTC. Euroclear participants and Clearstream participants may not deliver instructions directly to the depositories for Euroclear and Clearstream.

Table of Contents

DTC has advised the Company that it will take any action permitted to be taken by a holder of notes only at the direction of one or more Participants to whose account DTC has credited the interests in the Global Notes and only in respect of such portion of the aggregate principal amount of the notes as to which such Participant or Participants has or have given such direction. However, if there is an event of default under any series of notes, DTC reserves the right to exchange the applicable Global Notes for Certificated Notes, and to distribute such notes to the Participants.

Although DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream have agreed to the foregoing procedures to facilitate transfers of interests in the Global Notes among participants in DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream, they are under no obligation to perform or to continue to perform such procedures, and may discontinue such procedures at any time. None of the Company, the trustee or any of their respective agents will have any responsibility for the performance by DTC, Euroclear or Clearstream or their respective participants or indirect participants of their respective obligations under the rules and procedures governing their operations.

Concerning the Trustee

The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. will be the trustee under the Senior Indenture. We may maintain deposit accounts or conduct other banking transactions with the trustee in the ordinary course of business.

Governing Law

The Senior Indenture and the notes will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York.

Table of Contents

MATERIAL U.S. FEDERAL TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a summary of the material U.S. federal income and estate (with respect to non-U.S. holders, as defined below) tax considerations related to the purchase, ownership and disposition of the notes. This summary is based upon provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code), the U.S. Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder (the U.S. Treasury Regulations), administrative rulings and judicial decisions in effect as of the date of this prospectus supplement, any of which may subsequently be changed, possibly retroactively, or interpreted differently by the Internal Revenue Service (the IRS), so as to result in U.S. federal income and estate tax consequences different from those discussed below. Except where noted, this summary deals only with notes held as capital assets (generally for investment purposes) by a beneficial owner who purchases notes on original issuance at the initial offering price at which a substantial amount of the notes are sold for cash to persons other than bond houses, brokers, or similar persons or organizations acting in the capacity of underwriters, placement agents or wholesalers, which we refer to as the issue price. This summary does not address all aspects of U.S. federal income taxation that may be relevant to a particular holder in light of that holder's individual circumstances nor does it address any U.S. federal estate or gift tax consequences (except as set forth below with respect to non-U.S. holders, as defined below), U.S. federal alternative minimum tax consequences or state, local, or foreign tax consequences of the purchase, ownership and disposition of the notes. This summary also does not consider any specific facts or circumstances that may apply to a holder and does not address the special tax rules applicable to particular holders, such as:

insurance companies;

tax-exempt organizations;

banks and other financial institutions;

brokers or dealers in securities or currencies or traders in securities that elect to use a mark-to-market method of accounting for their securities;

partnerships or other pass-through entities and their members;

regulated investment companies or real estate investment trusts;

pension plans;

non-U.S. corporations that are classified as passive foreign investment companies or controlled foreign corporations for U.S. federal income tax purposes;

persons holding notes as a part of a straddle, hedge, conversion or constructive sale transaction, synthetic security or other integrated investment;

U.S. holders (as defined below) of notes whose functional currency is not the U.S. dollar; or

certain former citizens or residents of the United States.

Edgar Filing: DANAHER CORP /DE/ - Form 424B2

If a partnership (including any entity or arrangement treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) holds notes, the tax treatment of a partner will generally depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. A beneficial owner that is a partnership and partners in such a partnership should consult their own tax advisors.

This summary of material U.S. federal income and estate (with respect to non-U.S. holders, as defined below) tax considerations is for general information only and is not tax advice for any particular investor. This summary does not address the tax considerations arising under the laws of any foreign, state, or local jurisdiction. If you are considering the purchase of notes, you should consult your own tax advisors concerning the U.S. federal income and estate tax consequences to you in light of your own specific situation, as well as consequences arising under the laws of any other taxing jurisdiction.

S-25

Table of Contents

In this discussion, we use the term "U.S. holder" to refer to a beneficial owner of notes, that is, for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

an individual citizen or resident of the United States;

a corporation (or any other entity or arrangement treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes) created or organized in or under the laws of the United States, any state thereof or the District of Columbia;

an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

a trust, if it (i) is subject to the primary supervision of a court within the U.S. and one or more U.S. persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust, or (ii) has a valid election in effect under applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations to be treated as a U.S. person.

We use the term "non-U.S. holder" to describe a beneficial owner (other than a partnership or other pass-through entity) of notes that is not a U.S. holder.

Consequences to U.S. Holders

Payments of interest

It is anticipated, and this discussion assumes, that the issue price of the notes will be equal to the stated principal amount or if the issue price is less than the stated principal amount, the difference will be a de minimis amount (as set forth in the applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations). In such case (subject to the discussion below under "Additional payments"), interest on a note generally will be taxable to a U.S. holder as ordinary income at the time it is received or accrued in accordance with the U.S. holder's usual method of accounting for tax purposes. If, however, the issue price of the notes is less than the stated principal amount and the difference is more than a de minimis amount (as set forth in the applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations), a U.S. holder will be required to include the difference in income as original issue discount as it accrues in accordance with a constant yield method (as set forth in the applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations).

Additional payments

In certain circumstances, we may be obligated to pay amounts in excess of stated interest or principal on the notes. For example, if we are required to repurchase the notes in connection with a Change of Control Triggering Event as described in "Description of Notes Change of Control," we must pay a 1% premium. In addition, if we are required to redeem the notes as described in "Description of Notes Special Mandatory Redemption," we must pay a 1% premium. Also, we may redeem the notes at any time, and upon such a redemption we may be required to pay amounts in excess of accrued interest and principal on the notes as described in "Description of Notes Optional Redemption." The possibility of such payments may implicate special rules under U.S. Treasury Regulations governing contingent payment debt instruments. According to those regulations, the possibility that additional payments will be made will not cause the notes to be contingent payment debt instruments if, as of the date the notes are issued, there is only a remote chance that such payments will be made. We have determined, and intend to take the position, that the likelihood that we will (i) be obligated to repurchase the notes upon a change of control, (ii) redeem the notes at our option, and/or (iii) be required to redeem the notes as described in "Description of Notes Special Mandatory Redemption" is remote under the applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations. Therefore, we do not intend to treat the possibility of such events occurring as subjecting the notes to the contingent payment debt rules. If any additional payments are in fact made, U.S. holders generally will be required to recognize such amounts as income.

Our determination that the notes are not contingent payment debt instruments is binding on U.S. holders unless they disclose their contrary positions to the IRS in the manner required by applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations. Our determination that the notes are not contingent payment debt instruments is not, however, binding on the IRS. If the IRS were to successfully challenge our determination and the notes were treated as

Table of Contents

contingent payment debt instruments, U.S. holders would be required, among other things, to (i) accrue interest income based on a projected payment schedule and comparable yield, which may be a higher rate than the stated interest rate on the notes, regardless of their method of tax accounting and (ii) treat as ordinary income, rather than capital gain, any gain recognized on a sale, exchange or redemption of a note. In the event that any of the above contingencies were to occur, it would affect the amount and timing of the income recognized by a U.S. holder.

Sale, redemption or other taxable disposition of notes

A U.S. holder generally will recognize gain or loss upon the sale, redemption or other taxable disposition of a note equal to the difference between the amount realized and such U.S. holder's adjusted tax basis in the note. The amount realized will equal the amount of the cash and the fair market value of any property received in exchange for the note (other than amounts attributable to accrued but unpaid interest, which amounts will be treated as ordinary interest income for U.S. federal income tax purposes to the extent not previously included in income). A U.S. holder's tax basis in a note will generally be equal to the amount that such U.S. holder paid for the note. Any gain or loss recognized on a taxable disposition of the note will generally be capital gain or loss. If, at the time of the sale, redemption or other taxable disposition of the note, a U.S. holder is treated as holding the note for more than one year, such capital gain or loss will be a long-term capital gain or loss. Otherwise, such capital gain or loss will be a short-term capital gain or loss. For certain non-corporate U.S. holders, under current law, long-term capital gains are taxed at preferential rates. A U.S. holder's ability to deduct capital losses is subject to significant limitations under the Code.

Assumption of our obligations under the notes

Under certain circumstances, our obligations under the notes and the indenture may be assumed by another person. An assumption by another person of our obligations under the notes and the indenture might be deemed for U.S. federal income tax purposes to be an exchange by a holder of the notes for new notes, resulting in recognition of gain or loss for such purposes and possibly other adverse tax consequences to the holder. Holders should consult their own tax advisors regarding the tax consequences of such an assumption.

Information reporting and backup withholding

Information reporting requirements generally will apply to payments of interest on the notes and to the proceeds of a sale of a note paid to a U.S. holder unless the U.S. holder is an exempt recipient (such as a corporation). Backup withholding at the applicable rate will apply to those payments if the U.S. holder fails to provide its correct taxpayer identification number, or certification of its exempt status, (generally by providing an IRS Form W-9 or an approved substitute), or if the U.S. holder is notified by the IRS that the U.S. holder has failed to report in full payments of interest and dividend income. Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amounts withheld under the backup withholding rules will be allowed as a refund or a credit against a U.S. holder's U.S. federal income tax liability provided that the required information is timely furnished to the IRS.

Consequences to Non-U.S. Holders

Payments of interest

In general, payments of interest on the notes to a non-U.S. holder will be considered portfolio interest and, subject to the discussions below of income effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business and backup withholding, will not be subject to U.S. federal income or withholding tax, provided that:

the non-U.S. holder does not directly or indirectly, actually or constructively, own 10% or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of Danaher's stock entitled to vote within the meaning of Section 871(h)(3) of the Code;

the non-U.S. holder is not, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, a controlled foreign corporation that is related to us (actually or constructively) through stock ownership; and

Table of Contents

(a) the non-U.S. holder provides its name, address, and taxpayer identification number, if any, and certifies, under penalties of perjury, that it is not a U.S. person (which certification may be made on an IRS Form W-8BEN or other applicable form) or (b) the non-U.S. holder holds the notes through certain foreign intermediaries or certain foreign partnerships, and the non-U.S. holder and the foreign intermediary or foreign partnership satisfy the certification requirements of applicable Treasury Regulations. Special certification rules apply to non-U.S. holders that are pass-through entities.

If a non-U.S. holder cannot satisfy the requirements described above, payments of interest generally will be subject to the 30% U.S. federal withholding tax, unless the non-U.S. holder provides us with a properly executed (i) IRS Form W-8BEN (or other applicable form) claiming an exemption from or reduction in withholding under an applicable income tax treaty or (ii) IRS Form W-8ECI (or other applicable form) stating that interest paid on the notes is not subject to withholding tax because it is effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder's conduct of a trade or business in the United States and includable in the non-U.S. holder's gross income.

If (i) a non-U.S. holder is engaged in a trade or business in the United States, (ii) interest on the notes is effectively connected with the conduct of that trade or business and (iii) if certain income tax treaty provisions apply, such interest is attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment or fixed base, then, although the non-U.S. holder will be exempt from the 30% withholding tax (provided the certification requirements discussed above are satisfied), the non-U.S. holder will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on that interest on a net income basis at regular graduated U.S. federal income tax rates, generally in the same manner as if the non-U.S. holder were a U.S. holder. In addition, if a non-U.S. holder is a foreign corporation, it may be subject to a branch profits tax equal to 30% (or a lesser rate under an applicable income tax treaty) of its effectively connected earnings and profits for the taxable year, subject to certain adjustments.

Sale, redemption or other taxable disposition of notes

Gain realized by a non-U.S. holder on the sale, redemption or other taxable disposition of a note will not be subject to U.S. income tax unless:

that gain is effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder's conduct of a trade or business in the United States (and, under some income tax treaties, is attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment or fixed base); or

the non-U.S. holder is an individual who is present in the United States for 183 days or more in the taxable year of that disposition and certain other conditions are met.

If a non-U.S. holder is described in the first bullet point above, it will be subject to tax on the net gain derived from the sale, redemption, or other taxable disposition of the notes, generally in the same manner as if the non-U.S. holder were a U.S. holder. In addition, if a non-U.S. holder is a foreign corporation, it may be subject to the branch profits tax equal to 30% (or a lesser rate under an applicable income tax treaty) of its effectively connected earnings and profits for the taxable year, subject to certain adjustments. If a non-U.S. holder is an individual described in the second bullet point above, such holder will be subject to a flat 30% tax on the gain derived from the sale, redemption, or other taxable disposition, which may be offset by certain U.S. source capital losses.

Information reporting and backup withholding

Generally, we must report annually to the IRS and to non-U.S. holders the amount of interest paid to non-U.S. holders and the amount of tax, if any, withheld with respect to those payments. Copies of the information returns reporting such interest payments and withholding may also be made available to the tax authorities in the country in which a non-U.S. holder resides under the provisions of an applicable income tax treaty.

Table of Contents

In general, a non-U.S. holder will not be subject to backup withholding with respect to payments of interest that we make, provided that the statement described above in the last bullet point under "Consequences to non-U.S. holders" "Payments of interest" has been received and we do not have actual knowledge or reason to know that the holder is a U.S. person, as defined under the Code, who is not an exempt recipient. In addition, a non-U.S. holder will be subject to information reporting and, depending on the circumstances, backup withholding with respect to the proceeds of the sale of a note within the United States or conducted through certain U.S.-related financial intermediaries, unless the statement described above has been received, and the payor does not have actual knowledge or reason to know that the holder is a U.S. person, as defined under the Code, who is not an exempt recipient, or the non-U.S. holder otherwise establishes an exemption.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amounts withheld under the backup withholding rules will be allowed as a refund or a credit against a non-U.S. holder's U.S. federal income tax liability, provided that the required information is furnished timely to the IRS. The backup withholding and information reporting rules are complex, and non-U.S. holders are urged to consult their own tax advisors regarding application of these rules to their particular circumstances.

U.S. federal estate taxes

A note beneficially owned by an individual who is not a citizen or resident of the U.S. (as specially defined for U.S. federal estate tax purposes) at the time of his or her death generally will not be subject to U.S. federal estate tax as a result of the individual's death, provided that:

the individual does not directly or indirectly, actually or constructively, own 10% or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of Danaher's stock entitled to vote within the meaning of Section 871(h)(3) of the Code; and

interest payments with respect to such note, if received at the time of the individual's death, would not have been effectively connected with the conduct of a U.S. trade or business by the individual.

Table of Contents

UNDERWRITING

The Company and the underwriters for the offering named below have entered into a purchase agreement with respect to the notes. Subject to certain conditions, each underwriter has severally agreed to purchase the principal amount of each series of notes indicated in the following table.

| Underwriters | Principal Amount of Notes | Principal Amount of Notes | Principal Amount of Notes |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. | | | |
| Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated | | | |
| BNP Paribas Securities Corp. | | | |
| HSBC Securities (USA) Inc. | | | |
| Wells Fargo Securities, LLC | | | |
| Banca IMI S.p.A. | | | |
| Mitsubishi UFJ Securities (USA), Inc. | | | |
| Scotia Capital (USA) Inc. | | | |
| SunTrust Robinson Humphrey, Inc. | | | |
| SMBC Nikko Capital Markets Limited | | | |
| Total | \$ | \$ | \$ |

The underwriters are committed to take and pay for all of the notes being offered, if any are taken.

Notes sold by the underwriters to the public will initially be offered at the initial public offering price set forth on the cover of this prospectus supplement. Any notes sold by the underwriters to securities dealers may be sold at a discount from the initial public offering price of up to % of the principal amount of the Notes, % of the principal amount of the Notes and % of the principal amount of the Notes. Any such securities dealers may resell any notes purchased from the underwriters to certain other brokers or dealers at a discount from the initial public offering price of up to % of the principal amount of Notes, % of the principal amount of the Notes and % of the principal amount of the Notes. If all the notes are not sold at the initial offering prices, the underwriters may change the offering prices and the other selling terms. The offering of the notes by the underwriters is subject to receipt and acceptance and subject to the underwriters' right to reject any order in whole or in part.

The following table shows the underwriting discount that we will pay to the underwriters in connection with the offering of each series of notes (expressed as a percentage of the principal amount of each series of notes):

| Per | Note | Paid by us |
|-----|------|------------|
| Per | Note | % |
| Per | Note | % |
| Per | Note | % |

Each series of notes is a new issue of securities with no established trading market. The Company has been advised by the underwriters that the underwriters intend to make a market in such notes but are not obligated to do so and may discontinue market making at any time without notice. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity of the trading market for the notes.

In connection with the offering, the underwriters may purchase and sell notes in the open market. These transactions may include short sales, stabilizing transactions and purchases to cover positions created by short sales. Short sales involve the sale by the underwriters of a greater number of a particular series of notes than they

Table of Contents

are required to purchase in the offering. Stabilizing transactions consist of certain bids or purchases made for the purpose of preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of a particular series of notes while the offering is in progress.

The underwriters also may impose a penalty bid. This occurs when a particular underwriter repays to the underwriters a portion of the underwriting discount received by it because the representatives have repurchased notes sold by or for the account of such underwriter in stabilizing or short covering transactions.

These activities by the underwriters, as well as other purchases by the underwriters for their own accounts, may stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of any series of notes. As a result, the price of such notes may be higher than the price that otherwise might exist in the open market. If these activities are commenced, they may be discontinued by the underwriters at any time. These transactions may be effected in the over-the-counter market or otherwise.

The company estimates that its share of the total expenses of the offering, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$2 million.

The company has agreed to indemnify the several underwriters against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933.

Certain of the underwriters and their respective affiliates have, from time to time, performed, and may in the future perform, various financial advisory and investment banking services for the company, for which they received or will receive customary fees and expenses. In addition, certain of the underwriters or their respective affiliates have been or are lenders under one or more of our credit facilities.

In addition, in the ordinary course of their business activities, the underwriters and their affiliates may make or hold a broad array of investments and actively trade debt and equity securities (or related derivative securities) and financial instruments (including bank loans) for their own account and for the accounts of their customers. Such investments and securities activities may involve securities and/or instruments of ours and our affiliates. The underwriters and their affiliates may also make investment recommendations and/or publish or express independent research views in respect of such securities or financial instruments and may hold, or recommend to clients that they acquire, long and/or short positions in such securities and instruments.

Banca IMI S.p.A. is not a U.S. registered broker-dealer and will not effect any offers or sales of the notes in the United States unless it is through one or more U.S. registered broker-dealers as permitted by the regulations of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.

SMBC Nikko Capital Markets Limited is not a U.S. registered broker-dealer and, therefore, intends to participate in the offering outside of the United States and, to the extent that the offering is within the United States, as facilitated by an affiliated U.S. registered broker-dealer, SMBC Nikko Securities America, Inc. (SMBC Nikko-SI), as permitted under applicable law. To that end, SMBC Nikko Capital Markets Limited and SMBC Nikko-SI have entered into an agreement pursuant to which SMBC Nikko-SI provides certain advisory and/or other services with respect to this offering. In return for the provision of such services by SMBC Nikko-SI, SMBC Nikko Capital Markets Limited will pay to SMBC Nikko-SI a mutually agreed-fee.

European Economic Area

In relation to each Member State of the European Economic Area which has implemented the Prospectus Directive (each, a Relevant Member State), each underwriter has severally represented and agreed that with effect from and including the date on which the Prospectus Directive is implemented in that Relevant Member State (the Relevant Implementation Date) it has not made and will not make an offer of notes to the public in that Relevant Member State prior to the publication of a prospectus in relation to the notes which has been approved

Table of Contents

by the competent authority in that Relevant Member State or, where appropriate, approved in another Relevant Member State and notified to the competent authority in that Relevant Member State, all in accordance with the Prospectus Directive, except that it may, with effect from and including the Relevant Implementation Date, make an offer of notes to the public in that Relevant Member State at any time:

(a) to legal entities which are authorized or regulated to operate in the financial markets or, if not so authorized or regulated, whose corporate purpose is solely to invest in securities;

(b) to any legal entity which has two or more of (1) an average of at least 250 employees during the last financial year; (2) a total balance sheet of more than 43,000,000 and (3) an annual net turnover of more than 50,000,000, as shown in its last annual or consolidated accounts;

(c) to fewer than 100, or, if the Relevant Member State has implemented the relevant provisions of the 2010 PD Amending Directive, 150, natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the Prospectus Directive) subject to obtaining the prior consent of the representatives for any such offer; or

(d) in any other circumstances which do not require the publication by the Issuer of a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive.

For the purposes of this provision, the expression an offer of notes to the public in relation to any notes in any Relevant Member State means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of the offer and the notes to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase or subscribe the notes, as the same may be varied in that Relevant Member State by any measure implementing the Prospectus Directive in that Relevant Member State and the expression Prospectus Directive means Directive 2003/71/EC (and amendments thereto, including the 2010 PD Amending Directive) and includes any relevant implementing measure in each Relevant Member State and the expression 2010 PD Amending Directive means Directive 2010/73/EU.

United Kingdom

Each underwriter has severally represented and agreed that it has only communicated or caused to be communicated and will only communicate or cause to be communicated an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity (within the meaning of Section 21 of the Financial Services Markets Act 2000, as amended) received by it in connection with the issue or sale of the notes in circumstances in which Section 21(1) of the FSMA does not apply.

Hong Kong

The notes may not be offered or sold by means of any document other than (i) in circumstances which do not constitute an offer to the public within the meaning of the Companies Ordinance (Cap.32, Laws of Hong Kong), or (ii) to professional investors within the meaning of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap.571, Laws of Hong Kong) and any rules made thereunder, or (iii) in other circumstances which do not result in the document being a prospectus within the meaning of the Companies Ordinance (Cap.32, Laws of Hong Kong), and no advertisement, invitation or document relating to the notes may be issued or may be in the possession of any person for the purpose of issue (in each case whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere), which is directed at, or the contents of which are likely to be accessed or read by, the public in Hong Kong (except if permitted to do so under the laws of Hong Kong) other than with respect to notes which are or are intended to be disposed of only to persons outside Hong Kong or only to professional investors within the meaning of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571, Laws of Hong Kong) and any rules made thereunder.

Table of Contents

Japan

The notes have not been and will not be registered under the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law of Japan, as amended (the FIEL), and disclosure under the FIEL has not been and will not be made with respect to the notes. Each underwriter has represented and agreed that the notes which its purchases will be purchased by it as principal and that, in connection with the offering and distribution of the notes, neither such underwriter nor any person acting on its behalf has offered or sold, or will offer or sell, any notes, directly or indirectly, in Japan or to, or for the benefit of, any resident of Japan (which term shall mean any person resident in Japan, including any corporation or other entity organized under the laws of Japan), or to others for reoffering or resale, directly or indirectly, in Japan or to, or for the benefit of, any resident of Japan, except (1) pursuant to an exemption from the registration requirements of, and otherwise in compliance with, the FIEL and (2) in compliance with any other applicable laws, regulations and governmental guidelines of Japan. As part of the offering, the underwriters may offer the notes in Japan to a list of 49 offerees in accordance with the above provisions.

Singapore

This prospectus has not been and will not be registered as a prospectus with the Monetary Authority of Singapore under the Securities and Futures Act, Cap. 289 of Singapore (the SFA). Accordingly, this prospectus or any other document or material in connection with the offer or sale, or invitation for subscription or purchase, of the notes may not be circulated or distributed, nor may the notes be offered or sold, or be made the subject of an invitation for subscription or purchase, whether directly or indirectly, to any person in Singapore other than under exemptions provided in the SFA for offers made (i) to an institutional investor, (ii) to a relevant person as defined under Section 275(2) and pursuant to Section 275(1) of the SFA, or any person pursuant to an offer referred to in Section 275(1A) of the SFA, and in accordance with the conditions specified in Section 275 of the SFA, (iii) by way of private placement to no more than 50 persons within any period of 12 months pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions specified in, Section 272B of the SFA, or (iv) otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA.

Where the notes are subscribed for or purchased under Section 275 of the SFA by a relevant person that is specified in Section 276 of the SFA, namely (a) a corporation (which is not an accredited investor as defined under Section 4A of the SFA) the sole business of which is to hold investments and the entire share capital of which is owned by one or more individuals, each of whom is an accredited investor; or (b) a trust (where the trustee is not an accredited investor) whose sole purpose is to hold investments and each beneficiary is an accredited investor, the shares, debentures and units of shares and debentures of that corporation or the beneficiaries' rights and interest (howsoever described) in that trust shall not be transferable for six months after that corporation or that trust has acquired the notes pursuant to an offer made under Section 275 of the SFA, except: (1) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the SFA or to a relevant person defined in Section 275(2) of the SFA, or to any person pursuant to an offer that is made on terms that such shares, debentures and units of shares and debentures of that corporation or such rights or interest in that trust are acquired at a consideration of not less than 200,000 Singapore dollars (or its equivalent in a foreign currency) for each transaction, whether such amount is to be paid for in cash or by exchange of securities or other assets, and further for corporations, in accordance with the conditions specified in Section 275(1A) of the SFA; (2) where no consideration is or will be given for the transfer; or (3) where the transfer is by operation of law.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Certain legal matters in connection with the offering of the notes will be passed upon for us by Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP. Certain legal matters in connection with the offering of the notes will be passed upon for the underwriters by Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, New York, New York.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our consolidated financial statements included in our Current Report on Form 8-K filed on April 21, 2011, and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2010, as set forth in their reports, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's reports, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

S-34

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

Danaher Corporation

Senior Debt Securities

Subordinated Debt Securities

Preferred Stock

Common Stock

Warrants

Depositary Shares

Purchase Contracts

Units

Danaher Corporation may offer and sell the securities listed above from time to time in one or more classes or series and in amounts, at prices and on terms that we may determine at the time of the offering. We will provide the specific terms of the securities in one or more supplements to this prospectus. In addition, selling securityholders may sell these securities, from time to time, on terms described in the applicable prospectus supplement. You should read this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission, together with the information contained in the documents referred to under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**, carefully before you invest in our securities.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol **DHR**.

We and/or the selling securityholders may offer and sell these securities to or through one or more underwriters, dealers and agents, or directly to purchasers, on a continuous or delayed basis.

You should carefully consider the risk factors included in our periodic reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, and the applicable prospectus supplement before you invest in any of our securities.

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.

The date of this prospectus is May 8, 2009.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| <u>About this Prospectus</u> | 1 |
| <u>Forward-Looking Information</u> | 1 |
| <u>Where You Can Find More Information</u> | 3 |
| <u>Danaher Corporation</u> | 4 |
| <u>Use of Proceeds</u> | 5 |
| <u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u> | 5 |
| <u>Description of Debt Securities</u> | 6 |
| <u>Description of Capital Stock</u> | 18 |
| <u>Description of Warrants</u> | 21 |
| <u>Description of Depositary Shares</u> | 22 |
| <u>Description of Purchase Contracts and Units</u> | 24 |
| <u>Forms of Securities</u> | 24 |
| <u>Plan of Distribution</u> | 26 |
| <u>Legal Matters</u> | 29 |
| <u>Experts</u> | 29 |

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which we refer to as the SEC, using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we and/or selling securityholders may offer and sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings from time to time. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we and/or selling securityholders may offer. Each time we or any selling securityholder uses this prospectus to offer securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus that will describe the specific type, amount, price and other material terms of the securities being offered at that time. The prospectus supplement and/or any applicable free writing prospectus may also add, update or change the information in this prospectus. You should read this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus or other offering material that we authorize, together with the information contained in the documents referred to under the heading "Where You Can Find More Information."

When acquiring any securities discussed in this prospectus, you should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement or any free writing prospectus that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. We are not offering the securities in any jurisdiction in which an offer or solicitation is not authorized or in which the person making such offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to anyone to whom it is unlawful to make an offer or solicitation.

You should not assume that the information in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement, any free writing prospectus or other offering material that we authorize or any document incorporated by reference, is truthful or complete at any date other than the date mentioned on the cover page of those documents.

Unless otherwise indicated or unless the context requires otherwise, when used in this prospectus, the terms "DanaHER," "we," "our" and "us" refer to DanaHER Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries.

FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION

Certain information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or in our communications and discussions through webcasts, conference calls and other presentations, may be deemed to be "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the federal securities laws. All statements other than statements of historical fact are statements that could be deemed forward-looking statements, including statements regarding: projections of revenue, profit, profit margins, expenses and cost-reduction activities, our effective tax rate, our tax provisions and changes to our tax provisions, tax audits, cash flows, liquidity position, pension and benefit obligations and funding requirements, our liquidity position or other financial measures; plans, strategies and objectives of management for future operations, including statements relating to anticipated operating performance, new product and service developments, purchase commitments, potential acquisitions and synergies, potential offerings of securities, our stock repurchase program and executive compensation; growth and other trends in markets we sell into; economic conditions and the anticipated duration of the current economic downturn; the impact of adopting new accounting pronouncements; the outcome of outstanding claims, legal proceedings or other contingent liabilities; planned restructuring activities, including estimates of the scope, timing and cost of such activities; assumptions underlying any of the foregoing; and any other statements that address activities, events or developments that DanaHER intends, expects, projects, believes or anticipates will or may occur in the future. Forward-looking statements may be characterized by terminology such as "believe," "anticipate," "should," "would," "intend," "plan," "expects," "estimates," "projects," "positioned," "strategy" and similar expressions. These statements are based on assumptions and assessments made by our management in light of their experience and perception of historical trends, current conditions, expected future developments and other factors they believe to be appropriate. These forward-looking statements are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties, including but not limited to the following:

Deteriorating general economic conditions and uncertainties in the global financial markets may adversely affect our operating results and financial condition.

Table of Contents

We face intense competition and if we are unable to compete effectively, we may face decreased demand or price reductions for our products.

Our growth depends in part on the timely development and commercialization, and customer acceptance, of new products and product enhancements based on technological innovation.

Our revenues could decline further if the markets into which we sell our products continue to decline or do not grow as anticipated.

Our acquisition of businesses could negatively impact our profitability and return on invested capital.

Any inability to consummate acquisitions at our prior rate could negatively impact our growth rate.

The indemnification provisions of acquisition agreements by which we have acquired companies may not fully protect us and may result in unexpected liabilities.

Contingent liabilities from businesses that we have sold could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

Our indebtedness may limit our operations and our use of our cash flow.

We may be required to recognize impairment charges for our long-lived assets.

Foreign currency exchange rates may adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

If we do not or cannot adequately protect our intellectual property, or if third parties infringe our intellectual property rights, we may suffer competitive injury or expend significant resources enforcing our rights.

Third parties may claim that we are infringing or misappropriating their intellectual property rights and we could suffer significant litigation expenses, losses or licensing expenses or be prevented from selling products or services.

We are subject to a variety of litigation in the course of our business that could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

Our operations expose us to the risk of environmental liabilities, costs, litigation and violations that could adversely affect our financial condition, results of operations and reputation.

Our businesses are subject to extensive regulation; failure to comply with those regulations could adversely affect our results of operations, financial condition and reputation.

Edgar Filing: DANAHER CORP /DE/ - Form 424B2

Our reputation and our ability to do business may be impaired by improper conduct by any of our employees, agents or business partners.

Changes in our tax rates or exposure to additional income tax liabilities could affect our profitability. In addition, audits by tax authorities could result in additional tax payments for prior periods.

Our defined benefit pension plans are subject to financial market risks that could adversely affect our results of operations and cash flows.

We have experienced and may continue to experience higher costs to produce our products as a result of rising prices for commodities.

If we cannot adjust our purchases of materials, components and equipment required for our manufacturing activities to reflect changing market conditions or customer demand, our income and results of operations may suffer.

If we cannot adjust our manufacturing capacity to reflect the demand for our products, our income and results of operations may suffer.

Changes in governmental regulations may reduce demand for our products or increase our expenses.

Work stoppages, union and works council campaigns, labor disputes and other matters associated with our labor force could adversely impact our results of operations and cause us to incur incremental costs.

Table of Contents

Adverse changes in our relationships with, or the financial condition or performance of, key distributors, resellers and other channel partners could adversely affect our results of operations.

The inability to hire, train and retain a sufficient number of qualified officers and other employees could impede our ability to compete successfully.

International economic, political, legal and business factors could negatively affect our results of operations, cash flows and financial condition.

Cyclical economic conditions have affected and may continue to adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

If we suffer loss to our facilities, distribution systems or information technology systems due to catastrophe, our operations could be seriously harmed.

Any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and actual results, developments and business decisions may differ materially from those envisaged by such forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of the document, webcast, call or other presentation in which they are made. We do not assume any obligation to update any forward-looking statement. See the risk factors included in our periodic reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Securities Exchange Act), and in any applicable prospectus supplement for a further discussion regarding some of the reasons that actual results may be materially different from those that we anticipate.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC under the Securities Exchange Act. You may read and copy all or any portion of this information at the SEC's Public Reference Room located at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information about the operation of its Public Reference Room. Our SEC filings are also available at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, NY 10005.

The SEC also maintains a web site that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information about issuers, like Danaher, who file electronically with the SEC. The address of that site is www.sec.gov.

Our website address is www.danaher.com. This reference to our website is intended to be an inactive textual reference only. Our website and the information contained in or linked to our website are not incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

This prospectus is part of the registration statement and does not contain all of the information included in the registration statement. Whenever a reference is made in this prospectus to any contract or other document of Danaher, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of the registration statement for a copy of the contract or document.

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus, except for any information that is superseded by subsequent incorporated documents or by information that is contained directly in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents set forth below that Danaher has previously filed with the SEC and that are not delivered with this prospectus. These documents contain important information about Danaher and its financial condition.

Table of Contents

| Danaher SEC Filings (File No. 1-08089) | Period |
|---|---|
| Annual Report on Form 10-K | Fiscal year ended December 31, 2008 |
| Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q | Quarterly period ended April 3, 2009 |
| Current Reports on Form 8-K | Filed on March 3, March 6 and May 5, 2009 |
| The description of Danaher common stock as set forth in its Registration Statement on Form 8-B, including all amendments and reports filed for the purpose of updating such description | Filed on November 3, 1986 |

All documents filed by us pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act (excluding any information furnished under Items 2.02, 7.01 or 8.01 in any Current Report on Form 8-K) on or after the date of this prospectus and before the termination of the offering of securities under this prospectus shall also be deemed to be incorporated herein by reference. Any statement contained in any document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in this prospectus or in any other subsequently filed document which also is or is deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus modifies or supersedes such statement. Any statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus.

To obtain a copy of these filings at no cost, you may write or telephone us at:

Danaher Corporation
 2099 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., 12th Floor
 Washington, D.C. 20006-1813
 Attention: Investor Relations
 (202) 828-0850

Exhibits to the filings will not be sent, however, unless those exhibits have specifically been incorporated by reference into such document.

DANAHER CORPORATION

Danaher Corporation derives its sales from the design, manufacture and marketing of professional, medical, industrial, commercial and consumer products, which are typically characterized by strong brand names, proprietary technology and major market positions. Danaher's business consists of four segments: Professional Instrumentation, Medical Technologies, Industrial Technologies, and Tools & Components.

Danaher Corporation was incorporated in the State of Delaware in 1986, and our principal executive offices are located at 2099 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., 12th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006- 1813. Our telephone number is (202) 828-0850.

For additional information concerning Danaher, please see our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and our other filings with the SEC, which are incorporated by reference into this document. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Table of Contents**USE OF PROCEEDS**

Unless we inform you otherwise in a prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus, we expect to use the net proceeds from the sale of securities for general corporate purposes. These purposes may include, but are not limited to:

reduction or refinancing of debt or other corporate obligations;

acquisitions;

capital expenditures;

share repurchases and dividends; and

working capital.

Pending any specific application, we may initially invest funds in short-term marketable securities or apply them to the reduction of short-term indebtedness. We will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of securities covered by this prospectus that are sold by the selling securityholders.

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

The following table sets forth our ratio of earnings to fixed charges for each of the periods indicated.

| | Fiscal Year Ended December 31 | | | | | Quarter ended April 3, 2009 |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | |
| Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges | 17.3x | 23.0x | 16.6x | 14.1x | 13.4x | 12.8x |

The ratio of earnings to fixed charges was computed by dividing earnings by fixed charges for the periods indicated, where earnings consist of (1) earnings from continuing operations before income taxes; plus (2) fixed charges, and fixed charges consist of (A) interest, whether expensed or capitalized, on all indebtedness, (B) amortization of premiums, discounts and capitalized expenses related to indebtedness, and (C) an interest component representing the estimated portion of rental expense that management believes is attributable to interest. Interest on FIN 48 liabilities is included in the tax provision in our consolidated condensed statement of earnings and is excluded from the computation of fixed charges.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

This section describes the general terms and provisions of the debt securities that we may issue separately, upon exercise of a debt warrant, in connection with a purchase contract or as part of a unit from time to time in the form of one or more series of debt securities. The applicable prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus will describe the specific terms of the debt securities offered through that prospectus supplement as well as any general terms described in this section that will not apply to those debt securities. As used in this prospectus, "debt securities" means the senior and subordinated debentures, notes, bonds and other evidences of indebtedness that we issue and a trustee authenticates and delivers under the applicable indenture. As used in this Description of Debt Securities, the terms "Danaher," "we," "our" and "us" refer to Danaher Corporation and do not, unless the context otherwise indicates, include our subsidiaries.

Senior debt securities will be issued under an indenture dated December 11, 2007 between Danaher and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A., as trustee, that has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and is incorporated by reference into this prospectus, subject to such amendments or supplemental indentures as are adopted, from time to time, including the supplemental indenture dated as of December 11, 2007 and the supplemental indenture dated as of March 5, 2009. This indenture is referred to as the "senior indenture." Subordinated debt securities will be issued under a separate indenture to be entered into by us and a trustee or trustees identified in the prospectus supplement, the form of which is included as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and is incorporated by reference into this prospectus. This indenture is referred to as the "subordinated indenture." We refer to the indentures described above as the "indentures" or the "indenture," as applicable. The following summaries of certain provisions of the indentures and the debt securities are not complete and the summaries are subject to the detailed provisions of the applicable indenture. You should refer to the applicable indenture for more specific information. In addition, you should consult the applicable prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus for particular terms of our debt securities.

The indentures will not limit the aggregate principal amount of debt securities that we may issue, and will permit us to issue securities from time to time in one or more series. The general provisions of the indentures do not contain any provisions that would limit our ability to incur indebtedness or that would afford holders of debt securities protection in the event of a highly leveraged or similar transaction involving us. However, the senior indenture does restrict us and our subsidiaries from granting certain security interests on certain of our or their property or assets unless the senior debt securities are equally secured. See "Covenants in the Senior Indenture" below.

The debt securities will be unsecured obligations of Danaher. We currently conduct substantially all of our operations through subsidiaries, and the holders of debt securities (whether senior or subordinated debt securities) will be effectively subordinated to the creditors of our subsidiaries. This means that creditors of our subsidiaries will have a claim to the assets of our subsidiaries that is superior to the claim of our creditors, including holders of our debt securities.

The applicable prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus will describe the following terms of any series of debt securities that we may offer:

the title and type of the debt securities;

whether the debt securities will be senior or subordinated debt securities, and, with respect to debt securities issued under the subordinated indenture, as applicable, that the subordination provisions of the indenture shall apply to the securities of that series or that any different subordination provisions, including different definitions of the terms "senior indebtedness" or "existing subordinated indebtedness," shall apply to securities of that series;

any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities;

Table of Contents

the person who will receive interest payments on any debt securities if other than the registered holder;

the price or prices at which we will sell the debt securities;

the maturity date or dates of the debt securities;

the rate or rates, which may be fixed or variable, per annum at which the debt securities will bear interest and the date from which such interest will accrue;

the dates on which interest will be payable and the related record dates;

whether any index, formula or other method will determine payments of principal, premium or interest and the manner of determining the amount of such payments;

the place or places of payments on the debt securities;

whether the debt securities are redeemable;

any redemption dates, prices, obligations and restrictions on the debt securities;

any mandatory or optional sinking fund or purchase fund or analogous provisions;

the denominations of the debt securities if other than \$1,000 or multiples of \$1,000;

the currency of principal and interest payments if other than U.S. dollars, and the manner of determining the equivalent thereof in U.S. dollars for any purpose under the indenture;

if the principal of or any premium or interest on any debt securities of any series is payable, at our election or the election of the holder, in one or more currencies other than that in which such debt securities are stated to be payable, the currency or currencies in which such principal, premium or interest shall be payable and other terms and conditions regarding such payment;

the amount that we will pay the holder if the maturity of the debt securities is accelerated, if other than their principal amount;

the amount that will be deemed to be the principal amount of the debt securities as of a particular date before maturity if the principal amount payable at the stated maturity date will not be able to be determined on that date;

the applicability of the legal defeasance and covenant defeasance provisions in the applicable indenture;

if the debt securities will be issued only in the form of one or more book-entry securities, the name of the depository or its nominee and the circumstances under which the book-entry security may be transferred or exchanged to someone other than the depository or its nominee;

any provisions granting special rights if certain events happen;

any deletions from, changes in or additions to the events of default or the covenants specified in the indenture, or to the right of the trustee or the requisite holders of such securities to declare the principal amount of such securities due and payable;

any trustees, authenticating or paying agents, transfer agents, registrars or other agents for the debt securities;

any conversion or exchange features of the debt securities;

whether we will issue the debt securities as original issue discount securities for federal income tax purposes;

any special tax implications of the debt securities;

the terms of payment upon acceleration; and

any other material terms of the debt securities not inconsistent with the provisions of the indenture.

Table of Contents

Debt securities may bear interest at fixed or floating rates. We may issue our debt securities at an original issue discount, bearing no interest or bearing interest at a rate that, at the time of issuance, is below market rate, to be sold at a substantial discount below their stated principal amount. Generally speaking, if our debt securities are issued at an original issue discount and there is an event of default or acceleration of their maturity, holders will receive an amount less than their principal amount. Tax and other special considerations applicable to any series of debt securities, including original issue discount securities, will be described in the prospectus supplement in which we offer those debt securities.

We will have the ability under the indenture to reopen a previously issued series of debt securities and issue additional debt securities of that series or establish additional terms of the series. We are also permitted to issue debt securities with the same terms as previously issued debt securities.

We will comply with Section 14(e) under the Exchange Act and any other tender offer rules under the Exchange Act that may then apply to any obligation we may have to purchase debt securities at the option of the holders. Any such obligation applicable to a series of debt securities will be described in the related prospectus supplement.

Payment and Paying Agents

Unless the applicable prospectus supplement indicates otherwise, payment of interest on a debt security (other than a bearer debt security) on any interest payment date will be made to the person in whose name such debt security is registered at the close of business on the regular record date for such interest payment.

Generally, we will pay the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on our registered debt securities either at the office of the paying agent designated by us in the applicable prospectus supplement or, if we elect, we may pay interest by mailing a check to your address as it appears on our register or by wire transfer to an account maintained by the person entitled thereto as specified in the securities register. We may at any time designate additional paying agents or rescind the designation of any paying agent or approve a change in the office through which any paying agent acts, except that we will be required to maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of a particular series.

All moneys paid by us to a paying agent or the trustee, or held, for the payment of the principal of or any premium or interest on any debt security which remain unclaimed at the end of two years after such principal, premium or interest has become due and payable will be repaid to us, or discharged from trust, and the holder of such debt security shall thereafter, as an unsecured general creditor, look only to us for payment thereof, subject to applicable escheat laws.

Senior Debt Securities

Senior debt securities will be issued under the senior indenture. Payment of the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on senior debt securities will rank equally with all of our other unsecured and unsubordinated debt.

Subordinated Debt Securities

Subordinated debt securities will be issued under the subordinated indenture. Subordinated debt securities of a particular series will be subordinate in right of payment, to the extent and in the manner set forth in the subordinated indenture and the prospectus supplement relating to those subordinated debt securities, to the prior payment of all of our indebtedness that is designated as senior indebtedness with respect to that series. The definition of senior indebtedness will include, among other things, senior debt securities and will be specifically set forth in that prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

Upon any payment or distribution of our assets to creditors or upon our total or partial liquidation or dissolution or in a bankruptcy, receivership, or similar proceeding relating to us or our property, holders of senior indebtedness will be entitled to receive payment in full of the senior indebtedness before holders of subordinated debt securities will be entitled to receive any payment with respect to the subordinated debt securities and, until the senior indebtedness is paid in full, any distribution to which holders of subordinated debt securities would otherwise be entitled (other than securities of Danaher or any other corporation provided for by a plan of reorganization or readjustment the payment of which is subordinate, at the least to the extent provided pursuant to these subordination provisions, to the payment of all senior indebtedness then outstanding and to any securities issued in respect thereof under any such plan of reorganization or readjustment) will be made to the holders of senior indebtedness, all as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. In the event of any such proceeding, after payment in full of all sums owing with respect to senior indebtedness, the holders of subordinated debt securities, together with the holders of any of our obligations ranking on a parity with the subordinated debt securities, will be entitled to be paid from our remaining assets the amounts then due and owing with respect to such subordinated debt securities and other obligations, before any payments or distributions will be made on account of any of our capital stock or other obligations ranking junior to such subordinated debt securities and other obligations.

If we default in the payment of any principal of, premium, if any, or interest on any senior indebtedness, whether at maturity or at a date fixed for prepayment or by declaration of acceleration or otherwise, then, upon written notice of such default to us by the holders of senior indebtedness or any trustee therefor, unless and until such default shall have been cured or waived or shall have ceased to exist, no direct or indirect payment shall be made or agreed to be made on account of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on any of the subordinated debt securities, or in respect of any redemption, repayment, retirement, purchase or other acquisition of any of the subordinated debt securities.

By reason of this subordination, in the event of insolvency, our creditors who are holders of senior indebtedness or holders of any indebtedness or preferred stock of our subsidiaries, as well as certain of our general creditors, may recover more, ratably, than the holders of the subordinated debt securities.

Events of Default

Except as may be provided otherwise in a prospectus supplement, any of the following events will constitute an event of default for a series of debt securities under the indenture:

failure to pay interest on our debt securities of that series for thirty days past the applicable due date;

failure to pay principal of, or premium, if any, on our debt securities of that series when due (whether at maturity, upon acceleration or otherwise);

failure to deposit any sinking fund payment on debt securities of that series when due;

failure to perform, or breach of, any other covenant, agreement or warranty for the benefit of the holders of the security in the indenture, other than a covenant, agreement or warranty a default in whose performance or breach is dealt with elsewhere in the indenture, or which is included in the indenture solely for the benefit of a different series of our debt securities, which continues for 90 days after written notice from the trustee or holders of 25% of the outstanding principal amount of the debt securities of that series as provided in the indenture;

specified events relating to our bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization; and

any other event of default provided with respect to debt securities of that series pursuant to the applicable supplement.

An event of default with respect to one series of debt securities is not necessarily an event of default for another series.

Table of Contents

If there is an event of default with respect to a series of our debt securities, which continues for the requisite amount of time, either the trustee or holders of at least 25% of the aggregate principal amount outstanding of that series may declare the principal amount of all of the debt securities of that series to be due and payable immediately, except that if an event of default occurs due to bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization as provided in the applicable indenture, then the principal of and interest on the debt securities shall become due and payable immediately without any act by the trustee or any holder of debt securities. If the securities were issued at an original issue discount, less than the stated principal amount may become payable. However, at any time after an acceleration with respect to debt securities of any series has occurred, but before a judgment or decree based on such acceleration has been obtained, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may, under certain circumstances, rescind and annul such acceleration.

The holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series may, on behalf of the holders of all debt securities of that series, waive any past default or event of default and its consequences for that series, except (1) a default in the payment of the principal, premium, or interest with respect to those debt securities or (2) a default with respect to a provision of the applicable indenture that cannot be amended without the consent of each holder affected by the amendment. In case of a waiver of a default, that default shall cease to exist, and any event of default arising from that default shall be deemed to have been cured for all purposes. The holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount outstanding of the debt securities of any series may also, on behalf of the holders of all debt securities of that series, waive, with respect to that series, our compliance with certain restrictive covenants in the applicable indenture.

If any event which is, or after notice or lapse of time or both would become, an event of default (collectively referred to in this paragraph as a default) occurs and is continuing with respect to debt securities of a particular series and if it is known to any specified responsible officer of the trustee, the trustee will mail to each holder of such debt securities notice of such default within 90 days after it occurs or, if later, after the trustee obtains knowledge of such default. Except in the case of default in the payment of principal, premium, or interest with respect to the debt securities of that series or in the making of any sinking fund payment with respect to the debt securities of that series, the trustee may withhold such notice if and so long as the corporate trust committee or a committee of specified responsible officers of the trustee in good faith determines that withholding the notice is in the interests of the holders of such debt securities.

A holder may institute a suit against us for enforcement of such holder's rights under the applicable indenture, for the appointment of a receiver or trustee, or for any other remedy only if the following conditions are satisfied:

the holder gives the trustee written notice of a continuing event of default with respect to a series of our debt securities held by that holder;

holders of at least 25% of the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series make a request, in writing, and offer reasonable indemnity, to the trustee for the trustee to institute the requested proceeding;

the trustee does not receive direction contrary to the holder's request from holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series within 60 days following such notice, request and offer of indemnity under the terms of the applicable indenture; and

the trustee does not institute the requested proceeding within 60 days following such notice.

The indentures will require us every year to deliver to the trustee a statement as to performance of our obligations under the indentures and as to any defaults.

A default in the payment of any of our debt securities, or a default with respect to our debt securities that causes them to be accelerated, may give rise to a cross-default under our other indebtedness.

Table of Contents

Satisfaction and Discharge of the Indentures

An indenture will generally cease to be of any further effect with respect to a series of debt securities if:

we have delivered to the applicable trustee for cancellation all debt securities of that series (with certain limited exceptions); or

all debt securities of that series not previously delivered to the trustee for cancellation have become due and payable, will become due and payable within one year, or are to be called for redemption within one year under arrangements satisfactory to the trustee, and in any such case we have deposited with the trustee as trust funds the entire amount sufficient to pay at maturity or upon redemption all of the principal, premium and interest due with respect to those debt securities;

and if, in either case, we also pay or cause to be paid all other sums payable under the applicable indenture by us and deliver to the trustee an officer's certificate and opinion of counsel stating that all conditions precedent to the satisfaction and discharge of the indenture have been complied with.

Legal Defeasance And Covenant Defeasance

Any series of our debt securities will be subject to the defeasance and discharge provisions of the applicable indenture unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement. If those provisions are applicable, we may elect either:

legal defeasance, which will permit us to defease and be discharged from, subject to limitations, all of our obligations with respect to those debt securities, including any subordination provisions; or

covenant defeasance, which will permit us to be released from our obligations to comply with certain covenants relating to those debt securities as described in the applicable prospectus supplement, which may include obligations concerning subordination of our subordinated debt securities.

If we exercise our legal defeasance option with respect to a series of debt securities, payment of those debt securities may not be accelerated because of an event of default. If we exercise our covenant defeasance option with respect to a series of debt securities, payment of those debt securities may not be accelerated because of an event of default related to the specified covenants.

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may invoke legal defeasance or covenant defeasance with respect to any series of our debt securities only if:

with respect to debt securities denominated in U.S. dollars, we irrevocably deposit with the trustee, in trust, an amount in U.S. dollars, U.S. government obligations (taking into account payment of principal and interest thereon in accordance with their terms) or a combination thereof which will provide money in an amount sufficient to pay, when due upon maturity or redemption, as the case may be, the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on those debt securities;

with respect to debt securities denominated in a currency other than U.S. dollars, we irrevocably deposit with the trustee, in trust, an amount in such currency, obligations of the foreign government that issued such currency (taking into account payment of principal and interest thereon in accordance with their terms) or a combination thereof which will provide money in an amount sufficient to pay, when due upon maturity or redemption, as the case may be, the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on those debt securities;

Edgar Filing: DANAHER CORP /DE/ - Form 424B2

we deliver to the trustee a certificate from a nationally recognized firm of independent accountants expressing their opinion that the payments of principal and interest when due on the deposited U.S. government obligations or foreign government obligations, as applicable, plus any deposited money will provide cash at such times and in such amounts as will be sufficient to pay the principal, premium, and interest when due with respect to all the debt securities of that series to maturity or redemption, as the case may be;

Table of Contents

no event which is, or after notice or lapse of time would become, an event of default under the indenture shall have occurred and be continuing at the time of such deposit or, with regard to any default relating to our bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, at any time on or prior to the 90th day after such deposit;

the deposit does not cause the trustee to have a conflicting interest within the meaning of the Trust Indenture Act (assuming all securities under the indenture are in default within the meaning of such Act);

the deposit is not a default under any other agreement binding on us;

such deposit will not result in the trust arising from such deposit constituting an investment company under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, unless such trust is registered under, or exempt from, such Act;

we deliver to the trustee an opinion of counsel addressing certain federal income tax matters relating to the defeasance;

if the securities are to be redeemed prior to the stated maturity (other than from mandatory sinking fund payments or analogous payments), notice of such redemption shall have been duly given or provision for such notice satisfactory to the trustee shall have been made;

with respect to any series of subordinated debt securities, at the time of such deposit, (1) no default in the payment of principal, premium or interest with respect to any senior indebtedness shall have occurred and be continuing, (2) no event of default shall have resulted in any senior indebtedness becoming, and continuing to be, due and payable prior to the date it would otherwise have become due and payable (unless payment of such senior indebtedness has been provided for), and (3) no other event of default shall have occurred and be continuing which permits the holders thereof to declare such indebtedness due and payable prior to the date it would otherwise have become due and payable; and

we deliver to the trustee an officers' certificate and an opinion of counsel, each stating that all conditions precedent to the defeasance and discharge of the debt securities of that series as contemplated by the applicable indenture have been complied with.

Modification and Waiver

We and the trustee may enter into supplemental indentures for the purpose of modifying or amending an indenture with the consent of holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of each series of our outstanding debt securities affected. However, unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, the consent of all of the holders of our debt securities that are affected thereby is required for any of the following modifications or amendments:

to reduce the percentage in principal amount of debt securities of any series whose holders must consent to a supplemental indenture, or consent to any waiver of compliance with certain provisions of the indenture, or consent to certain defaults under the indenture, in each case as provided for in the indenture;

to reduce the rate of, or change the stated maturity of any installment of, interest on any debt security;

to reduce the principal of or change the stated maturity of principal of, or any installment of principal of or interest on, any debt security or reduce the amount of principal of any original issue discount security that would be due and payable upon declaration of acceleration of maturity;

to reduce the premium payable upon the redemption of any debt security;

to make any debt security, or any premium or interest thereon, payable in a currency other than that stated in that debt security;

to change any place of payment where any debt security or any premium or interest thereon is payable;

Table of Contents

to change the right to convert any debt security in accordance with its terms;

to impair the right to bring a lawsuit for the enforcement of any payment on or after the stated maturity of any debt security (or in the case of redemption, on or after the date fixed for redemption);

to modify the provisions of the indenture with respect to subordination of debt securities in a manner adverse to any registered holder of a debt security; or

generally, to modify any of the above provisions of the indenture or any provisions providing for the waiver of past defaults or waiver of compliance with certain covenants, except to increase the percentage in principal amount of debt securities of any series whose holders must consent to an amendment or waiver, as applicable, or to provide that certain other provisions of the indenture cannot be modified or waived without the consent of the holder of each outstanding debt security affected by the modification or waiver.

In addition, we and the trustee with respect to an indenture may enter into supplemental indentures without the consent of the holders of debt securities for one or more of the following purposes (in addition to any other purposes specified in an applicable prospectus supplement):

to evidence that another person has become our successor and that the successor assumes our covenants, agreements, and obligations in the indenture and in the debt securities;

to surrender any of our rights or powers under the indenture, or to add to our covenants further covenants for the protection of the holders of all or any series of debt securities;

to add any additional events of default for the benefit of the holders of all or any series of debt securities;

to cure any ambiguity, to correct or supplement any provision in the indenture that may be defective or inconsistent with any other provision in the indenture, or to make other provisions in regard to matters or questions arising under the indenture;

to add to or change any of the provisions of the indenture as necessary to permit or facilitate the issuance of debt securities in bearer form, registrable or not registrable as to principal, and with or without interest coupons, or to permit or facilitate the issuance of debt securities in uncertificated form;

to secure the debt securities;

to add to, change, or eliminate any of the provisions of the indenture with respect to one or more series of debt securities, so long as the addition, change, or elimination not otherwise permitted under the indenture will (1) neither apply to any debt security of any series created before the execution of the supplemental indenture and entitled to the benefit of that provision nor modify the rights of the holders of that debt security with respect to that provision or (2) become effective only when there is none of that debt security outstanding;

to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment by a successor or separate trustee with respect to the debt securities of one or more series and to add to or change any of the provisions of the indenture as necessary to provide for the administration of the

indenture by more than one trustee;

with respect to the subordinated indenture, to add to, change or eliminate any of the subordination provisions in the indenture or change the definition of "senior indebtedness" in respect of one or more series of debt securities, provided that any such addition, change or elimination does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of outstanding debt securities in any material respect;

to establish the form or terms of debt securities of any series; and

to make provisions with respect to the conversion rights of holders, including providing for the conversion of debt securities of any series into any security or securities of ours.

Table of Contents

Certain Covenants

In addition to such other covenants, if any, as may be described in the accompanying prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus and except as may be otherwise set forth in the accompanying prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus, the indenture will require us, subject to certain limitations described therein, to, among other things, do the following:

deliver to the trustee all information, documents and reports required to be filed by us with the SEC under Section 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, within 15 days after the same is filed with the SEC;

deliver to the trustee annual officers' certificates with respect to our compliance with our obligations under the indenture;

maintain the existence, rights and franchises of us and our significant subsidiaries, except to the extent our board of directors determines that the preservation thereof is no longer desirable in the conduct of our business and that the loss thereof is not adverse in any material respect to the holders of the debt securities; and

pay, and cause our significant subsidiaries to pay, our and their taxes, assessments and government levies when due, except to the extent the same is being contested in good faith by appropriate proceedings.

Covenants in the Senior Indenture

You can find the definitions of certain terms used in this description under the subheading *Certain Definitions*.

Limitation on Secured Debt

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus, we will not, and will not permit any Subsidiary to, create, assume, or guarantee any Secured Debt without making effective provision for securing the senior debt securities equally and ratably with such Secured Debt. This covenant does not apply to debt secured by:

purchase money mortgages created to secure payment for the acquisition or construction of any property including, but not limited to, any indebtedness incurred by us or a Subsidiary prior to, at the time of, or within 180 days after the later of the acquisition, the completion of construction (including any improvements on an existing property) or the commencement of commercial operation of such property, which indebtedness is incurred for the purpose of financing all or any part of the purchase price of such property or construction or improvements on such property;

mortgages, pledges, liens, security interest or encumbrances (collectively referred to as security interests) on property, or any conditional sales agreement or any title retention with respect to property, existing at the time of acquisition thereof, whether or not assumed by us or a Subsidiary;

security interests on property or shares of capital stock or indebtedness of any corporation or firm existing at the time such corporation or firm becomes a Subsidiary;

security interests in property or shares of capital stock or indebtedness of a corporation existing at the time such corporation is merged into or consolidated with us or a Subsidiary or at the time of a sale, lease, or other disposition of the properties of a corporation or firm as an entirety or substantially as an entirety to us or a Subsidiary, provided that no such security interests shall extend to any other Principal Property of ours or such Subsidiary prior to such acquisition or to other Principal Property thereafter

acquired other than additions or improvements to the acquired property;

security interests on our property or property of a Subsidiary in favor of the United States of America or any state thereof, or in favor of any other country, or any department, agency, instrumentality or political subdivision thereof (including, without limitation, security interests to secure indebtedness of

Table of Contents

the pollution control or industrial revenue type) in order to permit us or any Subsidiary to perform a contract or to secure indebtedness incurred for the purpose of financing all or any part of the purchase price for the cost of constructing or improving the property subject to such security interests or which is required by law or regulation as a condition to the transaction of any business or the exercise of any privilege, franchise or license;

security interests on any property or assets of any Subsidiary to secure indebtedness owing by it to us or to another Subsidiary;

any mechanics, materialmen's, carriers or other similar lien arising in the ordinary course of business, including construction of facilities, in respect of obligations which are not yet due or which are being contested in good faith;

any security interest for taxes, assessments or government charges or levies not yet delinquent, or already delinquent, but the validity of which is being contested in good faith;

any security interest arising in connection with legal proceedings being contested in good faith, including any judgment lien so long as execution thereof is being stayed;

landlords' liens on fixtures located on premises leased by us or a Subsidiary in the ordinary course of business; or

any extension, renewal or replacement, or successive extensions, renewals or replacements, in whole or in part, of any security interest referred to in the foregoing bullets.

Limitation on Sale and Leaseback Transactions

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus, the senior indenture provides that we will not, and will not permit any Subsidiary to, enter any lease longer than three years (excluding leases of newly acquired, improved or constructed property) covering any Principal Property of ours or any Subsidiary that is sold to any other person in connection with such lease (a Sale and Leaseback Transaction), unless either:

we or such Subsidiary would be entitled, without equally and ratably securing the senior debt securities, to incur Indebtedness secured by a mortgage on the Principal Property leased pursuant to any of the bullets referenced above under Limitation on Secured Debt, or

an amount equal to the value of the Principal Property so leased is applied to the retirement, within 120 days of the effective date of such arrangement, of indebtedness for borrowed money incurred or assumed by us or a Subsidiary which is recorded as Funded Debt as shown on our most recent consolidated balance sheet and which in the case of such Indebtedness of ours, is not subordinate and junior in right of payment to the prior payment of the senior debt securities.

Exempted Indebtedness

Notwithstanding the limitations on Secured Debt and Sale and Leaseback Transactions described above, we and any one or more Subsidiaries may, without securing the senior debt securities, issue, assume, or guarantee Secured Debt or enter into any Sale and Leaseback Transaction which would otherwise be subject to the foregoing restrictions, provided that, after giving effect thereto, the aggregate amount of such Secured Debt then outstanding (not including Secured Debt permitted under the foregoing exceptions) and the Attributable Debt of Sale and Leaseback Transactions, other than Sale and Leaseback Transactions described in either bullet of the preceding paragraph, at such time does not exceed 15% of Consolidated Net Assets.

Certain Definitions

Edgar Filing: DANAHER CORP /DE/ - Form 424B2

Set forth below are certain defined terms used in the senior indenture. Reference is made to the senior indenture for a complete definition of these terms, as well as any other capitalized terms used herein for which no

Table of Contents

definition is provided. Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, the following terms will mean as follows for purposes of covenants that may be applicable to any particular series of senior debt securities.

The term **Attributable Debt**, in respect of a Sale and Leaseback Transaction, means, as of any particular time, the present value (discounted at the rate of interest implicit in the lease involved in such Sale and Leaseback Transaction, as determined in good faith by us) of the obligation of the lessee thereunder for rental payments (excluding, however, any amounts required to be paid by such lessee, whether or not designated as rent or additional rent, on account of maintenance and repairs, insurance, taxes, assessments, water rates or similar charges or any amounts required to be paid by such lessee thereunder contingent upon the amount of sales, maintenance and repairs, insurance, taxes, assessments, water rates or similar charges) during the remaining term of such lease (including any period for which such lease has been extended or may, at the option of the lessor, be extended).

The term **Consolidated Assets** means the aggregate of all assets of us and our Subsidiaries (including the value of all existing Sale and Leaseback Transactions and any assets resulting from the capitalization of other long-term lease obligations in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States (GAAP)), appearing on the most recent available consolidated balance sheet of us and our Subsidiaries at their net book values, after deducting related depreciation, amortization and other valuation reserves, all prepared in accordance with GAAP.

The term **Consolidated Current Liabilities** means the aggregate of the current liabilities of us and our Subsidiaries appearing on the most recent available consolidated balance sheet of us and our Subsidiaries, all in accordance with GAAP. In no event shall Consolidated Current Liabilities include any obligation of us and our Subsidiaries issued under a revolving credit or similar agreement if the obligation issued under such agreement matures by its terms within twelve months from the date thereof but by the terms of such agreement such obligation may be renewed or extended or the amount thereof reborrowed or refunded at our option or the option of any Subsidiary for a term in excess of twelve months from the date of determination.

The term **Consolidated Net Assets** means Consolidated Assets after deduction of Consolidated Current Liabilities.

The term **Funded Debt** means all indebtedness for money borrowed having a maturity of more than twelve months from the date of the most recent consolidated balance sheet of us and our Subsidiaries or renewable and extendable beyond twelve months at the option of the borrower and all obligations in respect of lease rentals which under GAAP would be shown on our consolidated balance sheet as a liability item other than a current liability; provided, however, that Funded Debt shall not include any of the foregoing to the extent that such indebtedness or obligations are not required by GAAP to be shown on our balance sheet.

The term **Principal Property** means any manufacturing plant, warehouse, office building or parcel of real property (including fixtures but excluding leases and other contract rights which might otherwise be deemed real property) owned by us or any Subsidiary, whether owned on the date of the indenture or thereafter, provided each such plant, warehouse, office building or parcel of real property has a gross book value (without deduction for any depreciation reserves) at the date as of which the determination is being made of in excess of two percent of the Consolidated Net Assets of us and our Subsidiaries, other than any such plant, warehouse, office building or parcel of real property or portion thereof which, in the opinion of our board of directors (evidenced by a certified board resolution delivered to the trustee), is not of material importance to the business conducted by us and our Subsidiaries taken as a whole.

The term **Secured Debt** means Indebtedness for borrowed money and any Funded Debt which, in each case, is secured by a security interest in:

any Principal Property, or

any shares of capital stock or Indebtedness of any Subsidiary.

Table of Contents

The term **Subsidiary** means any corporation or other entity (including, without limitation, partnerships, joint ventures and associations) of which at least a majority of the outstanding stock having by the terms thereof ordinary voting power for the election of directors of such corporation or other entity (irrespective of whether or not at the time the stock of any other class or classes of such corporation shall have or might have voting power by reason of the happening of any such contingency) is at the time directly or indirectly owned by Danaher, or by one or more Subsidiaries of Danaher, or by Danaher and one or more other Subsidiaries.

Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, our indentures prohibit us from consolidating with or merging into another business entity, or conveying, transferring or leasing our properties and assets substantially as an entirety to any business entity, unless:

the surviving or acquiring entity is a U.S. corporation, limited liability company, partnership or trust, and it expressly assumes our obligations with respect to outstanding debt securities by executing a supplemental indenture;

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no event of default, or event which, after notice or lapse of time or both, would become an event of default, shall have happened and be continuing; and

we have delivered to the trustee an officers' certificate and an opinion of counsel, each stating that the consolidation, merger, conveyance, transfer or lease and, if a supplemental indenture is required in connection with such transaction, such supplemental indenture, comply with the indenture and all conditions precedent relating to such transaction have been complied with.

Conversion Rights

We will describe the terms upon which debt securities may be convertible into our common stock or other securities in a prospectus supplement. These terms will include the type of securities the debt securities are convertible into, the conversion price or manner of calculation thereof, the conversion period, provisions as to whether conversion will be at our option or the option of the holders, the events requiring an adjustment of the conversion price and provisions affecting conversion in the event of the redemption of the debt securities and any restrictions on conversion. They may also include provisions adjusting the number of shares of our common stock or other securities issuable upon conversion.

Denomination

Normally, we will denominate and make payments on debt securities in U.S. dollars. If we issue debt securities denominated, or with payments, in a foreign or composite currency, a prospectus supplement will specify the currency or composite currency. Except as may be provided otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus, we will issue registered securities in denominations of \$1,000 or integral multiples of \$1,000.

Our Debt Trustee

Unless stated in the applicable prospectus supplement, (i) the trustee may also be the trustee under any other indenture for debt securities and (ii) any trustee or its affiliates may lend money to us and/or may from time to time have other business arrangements with us. If and when the trustee becomes a creditor of ours, the trustee will be subject to the provisions of the Trust Indenture Act regarding the collection of claims against us.

Governing Law

The indentures and the debt securities will be governed by the laws of the State of New York.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

General

The following summary description of our capital stock is based on the provisions of the Delaware General Corporation Law (the "DGCL") and our certificate of incorporation and bylaws, as amended and restated through the date of this prospectus. This description does not purport to be complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the terms of the restated certificate of incorporation and bylaws. See "Where You Can Find More Information."

Our authorized capital stock consists of 1,000,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, and 15,000,000 shares of preferred stock, without par value. As of May 5, 2009, we had 318,704,681 shares of our common stock outstanding and no shares of preferred stock outstanding.

Common Stock

Each stockholder of record of our common stock is entitled to one vote for each share held on every matter properly submitted to the stockholders for their vote, including the election of directors. Holders of our common stock do not have cumulative voting rights. After satisfaction of the dividend rights of holders of preferred stock, holders of common stock are entitled ratably to any dividend declared by the board of directors out of funds legally available for this purpose. Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of our common stock are entitled to receive ratably our net assets available, if any, after the payment of all debts and other liabilities and subject to the prior rights of any outstanding preferred stock. Holders of our common stock have no redemption or conversion rights, no sinking fund provisions and no preemptive right to subscribe for or purchase additional shares of any class of our capital stock. The outstanding shares of our common stock are fully paid and nonassessable, and any shares of common stock issued in an offering pursuant to this prospectus and any shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of common stock warrants or conversion or exchange of debt securities which are convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock, or in connection with the obligations of a holder of purchase contracts to purchase our common stock, when issued in accordance with their terms will be fully paid and nonassessable. The rights, preferences and privileges of holders of common stock are subject to, and may be adversely affected by, the rights of the holders of shares of any series of preferred stock that we may designate and issue in the future.

Preferred Stock

This section describes the general terms and provisions of our preferred stock. The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the specific terms of the shares of preferred stock offered through that prospectus supplement, as well as any general terms described in this section that will not apply to those shares of preferred stock. We will file a copy of the certificate of designation that contains the terms of each new series of preferred stock with the SEC each time we issue a new series of preferred stock. Each certificate of designation will establish the number of shares included in a designated series and fix the designation, powers, privileges, preferences and rights of the shares of each series as well as any applicable qualifications, limitations or restrictions. You should refer to the applicable certificate of designation as well as our restated certificate of incorporation before deciding to buy shares of our preferred stock as described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Our board of directors has been authorized to provide for the issuance of up to 15,000,000 shares of our preferred stock in multiple series without the approval of stockholders. With respect to each series of our preferred stock, our board of directors has the authority to fix the following terms:

the designation of the series;

the number of shares within the series;

whether dividends are cumulative and, if cumulative, the dates from which dividends are cumulative;

Table of Contents

the rate of any dividends, any conditions upon which dividends are payable, and the dates of payment of dividends;

whether interests in the shares of preferred stock will be represented by depositary shares as more fully described below under Description of Depositary Shares ;

whether the shares are redeemable, the redemption price and the terms of redemption;

the amount payable to you for each share you own if we dissolve or liquidate;

whether the shares are convertible or exchangeable, the price or rate of conversion or exchange, and the applicable terms and conditions;

any restrictions on issuance of shares in the same series or any other series;

voting rights applicable to the series of preferred stock; and

any other rights, priorities, preferences, restrictions or limitations of such series.

Your rights with respect to your shares of preferred stock will be subordinate to the rights of our general creditors. Shares of our preferred stock that we issue in accordance with their terms will be fully paid and nonassessable, and will not be entitled to preemptive rights unless specified in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Our ability to issue preferred stock, or rights to purchase such shares, could discourage an unsolicited acquisition proposal. For example, we could impede a business combination by issuing a series of preferred stock containing class voting rights that would enable the holders of such preferred stock to block a business combination transaction. Alternatively, we could facilitate a business combination transaction by issuing a series of preferred stock having sufficient voting rights to provide a required percentage vote of the stockholders. Additionally, under certain circumstances, our issuance of preferred stock could adversely affect the voting power of the holders of our common stock. Although our board of directors is required to make any determination to issue any preferred stock based on its judgment as to the best interests of our stockholders, our board of directors could act in a manner that would discourage an acquisition attempt or other transaction that some, or a majority, of our stockholders might believe to be in their best interests or in which stockholders might receive a premium for their stock over prevailing market prices of such stock. Our board of directors does not at present intend to seek stockholder approval prior to any issuance of currently authorized stock, unless otherwise required by law or applicable stock exchange requirements.

Limitation on Directors Liability

Our restated certificate of incorporation provides, as authorized by Section 102(b)(7) of the DGCL, that our directors will not be personally liable to us or our stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except for liability:

for any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to us or our stockholders;

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

for unlawful payments of dividends or unlawful stock repurchases or redemptions as provided in Section 174 of the DGCL; or

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

The inclusion of this provision in our restated certificate of incorporation may have the effect of reducing the likelihood of derivative litigation against directors, and may discourage or deter stockholders or management from bringing a lawsuit against directors for breach of their duty of care, even though such an action, if successful, might otherwise have benefited us and our stockholders.

Table of Contents

Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law

Section 203 of the DGCL prohibits a defined set of transactions between a Delaware corporation, such as us, and an interested stockholder. An interested stockholder is defined as a person who, together with any affiliates or associates of such person, beneficially owns, directly or indirectly, 15% or more of the outstanding voting shares of a Delaware corporation. This provision may prohibit business combinations between an interested stockholder and a corporation for a period of three years after the date the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder. The term business combination is broadly defined to include mergers, consolidations, sales or other dispositions of assets having a total value in excess of 10% of the consolidated assets of the corporation, and some other transactions that would increase the interested stockholder's proportionate share ownership in the corporation.

This prohibition is effective unless:

the business combination is approved by the corporation's board of directors prior to the time the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder;

the interested stockholder acquired at least 85% of the voting stock of the corporation, other than stock held by directors who are also officers or by qualified employee stock plans, in the transaction in which it becomes an interested stockholder; or

the business combination is approved by a majority of the board of directors and by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding voting stock that is not owned by the interested stockholder.

In general, the prohibitions do not apply to business combinations with persons who were stockholders before we became subject to Section 203.

Advance Notice Bylaw Provisions

Our bylaws establish advance notice procedures with respect to stockholder proposals and the nomination of candidates for election as directors, other than proposals and nominations made by or at the direction of the board of directors.

Special Charter Provisions

Our restated certificate of incorporation divides our board of directors into three classes of directors serving staggered, three-year terms. Vacancies, and newly-created directorships resulting from any increase in the size of our board, may be filled by our board, even if the directors then on the board do not constitute a quorum or only one director is left in office. These provisions, together with the provisions of Section 203 of the DGCL, could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control or the removal of existing management, of deterring potential acquirors from making an offer to our stockholders and of limiting any opportunity to realize premiums over prevailing market prices for our common stock in connection therewith. This could be the case notwithstanding that a majority of our stockholders might benefit from such a change in control or offer.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

Computershare Investor Services, LLC serves as the registrar and transfer agent for the common stock.

Stock Exchange Listing

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the trading symbol **DHR**.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

General

We may issue warrants to purchase our debt or equity securities. We may issue warrants independently or together with any offered securities and the warrants may be attached to or separate from those offered securities. We will issue the warrants under warrant agreements to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as warrant agent, all as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants of the series being offered and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any holders or beneficial owners of warrants.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the following terms, where applicable, of warrants in respect of which this prospectus is being delivered:

the title of the warrants;

the designation, amount and terms of the securities for which the warrants are exercisable;

the designation and terms of the other securities, if any, with which the warrants are to be issued and the number of warrants issued with each such security;

the price or prices at which the warrants will be issued;

the aggregate number of warrants;

any provisions for adjustment of the number or amount of securities receivable upon exercise of the warrants or the exercise price of the warrants;

the price or prices at which the securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants may be purchased;

if applicable, the date on and after which the warrants and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants will be separately transferable;

if applicable, a discussion of the material United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the exercise of the warrants;

any other terms of the warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the warrants;

the date on which the right to exercise the warrants shall commence, and the date on which the right shall expire;

the currency or currencies in which the warrants are exercisable;

the terms of any mandatory or optional redemption or call provisions;

the identity of the warrant agent;

if applicable, the maximum or minimum number of warrants which may be exercised at any time; and

information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any.

Exercise of Warrants

Each warrant will entitle the holder of warrants to purchase for cash the amount of debt or equity securities, at the exercise price as shall be set forth in, or be determinable as set forth in, the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants. Warrants may be exercised at any time up to the close of business on the expiration date set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void.

Warrants may be exercised as set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants. When the warrant holder makes the payment and properly completes and signs the warrant certificate at the corporate trust

Table of Contents

office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the prospectus supplement, we will, as soon as possible, forward the debt or equity securities which the warrant holder has purchased. If the warrant holder exercises the warrant for less than all of the warrants represented by the warrant certificates, we will issue a new warrant certificate for the remaining warrants.

Until the exercise of their warrants for debt or equity securities, holders of warrants will not have rights as a holder of the debt or equity securities, as the case may be, by virtue of such holder's ownership of warrants.

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

General

We may offer fractional shares of preferred stock, rather than full shares of preferred stock. If we do so, we may issue receipts for depositary shares that each represent a fraction of a share of a particular series of preferred stock. The prospectus supplement will indicate that fraction. The shares of preferred stock represented by depositary shares will be deposited under a depositary agreement between us and a bank or trust company that meets certain requirements and is selected by us (the "Bank Depositary"). Each owner of a depositary share will be entitled to all the rights and preferences of the preferred stock represented by the depositary share. The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the depositary agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to those persons purchasing the fractional shares of preferred stock in accordance with the terms of the offering.

We have summarized some common provisions of a depositary agreement and the related depositary receipts. The forms of the depositary agreement and the depositary receipts relating to any particular issue of depositary shares will be filed with the SEC each time we issue depositary shares, and you should read those documents for provisions that may be important to you. The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any depositary shares.

Dividends and Other Distributions

If we pay a cash distribution or dividend on a series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares, the Bank Depositary will distribute such dividends to the record holders of such depositary shares. If the distributions are in property other than cash, the Bank Depositary will distribute the property to the record holders of the depositary shares. However, if the Bank Depositary determines that it is not feasible to make the distribution of property, the Bank Depositary may, with our approval, sell such property and distribute the net proceeds from such sale to the record holders of the depositary shares.

Redemption of Depositary Shares

If we redeem a series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares, the Bank Depositary will redeem the depositary shares from the proceeds received by the Bank Depositary in connection with the redemption. The redemption price per depositary share will equal the applicable fraction of the redemption price per share of the preferred stock. If fewer than all the depositary shares are redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by lot or pro rata as the Bank Depositary may determine.

Voting the Preferred Stock

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which the holders of the preferred stock represented by depositary shares are entitled to vote, the Bank Depositary will mail the notice to the record holders of the depositary shares relating to such preferred stock. Each record holder of these depositary shares on the record date, which will be the same date as the record date for the preferred stock, may instruct the Bank Depositary as to how to vote the preferred stock represented by such holder's depositary shares. The Bank Depositary will endeavor, insofar as

Table of Contents

practicable, to vote the amount of the preferred stock represented by such depositary shares in accordance with such instructions, and we will take all action which the Bank Depositary deems necessary in order to enable the Bank Depositary to do so. The Bank Depositary will abstain from voting shares of the preferred stock to the extent it does not receive specific instructions from the holders of depositary shares representing such preferred stock.

Amendment and Termination of the Depositary Agreement

The form of depositary receipt evidencing the depositary shares and any provision of the depositary agreement may be amended by agreement between the Bank Depositary and us. However, any amendment that materially and adversely alters the rights of the holders of depositary shares will not be effective unless such amendment has been approved by the holders of at least a majority of the depositary shares then outstanding. The depositary agreement may be terminated by the Bank Depositary or us only if (1) all outstanding depositary shares have been redeemed or (2) there has been a final distribution in respect of the preferred stock in connection with any liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our company and such distribution has been distributed to the holders of depositary receipts.

Charges of Bank Depositary

We will pay all transfer and other taxes and governmental charges arising solely from the existence of the depositary arrangements. We will pay charges of the Bank Depositary in connection with the initial deposit of the preferred stock and any redemption of the preferred stock. Holders of depositary receipts will pay other transfer and other taxes and governmental charges and any other charges, including a fee for the withdrawal of shares of preferred stock upon surrender of depositary receipts, as are expressly provided in the depositary agreement to be for their accounts.

Withdrawal of Preferred Stock

Except as may be provided otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, upon surrender of depositary receipts at the principal office of the Bank Depositary, subject to the terms of the depositary agreement, the owner of the depositary shares may demand delivery of the number of whole shares of preferred stock and all money and other property, if any, represented by those depositary shares. Partial shares of preferred stock will not be issued. If the depositary receipts delivered by the holder evidence a number of depositary shares in excess of the number of depositary shares representing the number of whole shares of preferred stock to be withdrawn, the Bank Depositary will deliver to such holder at the same time a new depositary receipt evidencing the excess number of depositary shares. Holders of preferred stock thus withdrawn may not thereafter deposit those shares under the depositary agreement or receive depositary receipts evidencing depositary shares therefor.

Miscellaneous

The Bank Depositary will forward to holders of depositary receipts all reports and communications from us that are delivered to the Bank Depositary and that we are required to furnish to the holders of the preferred stock.

Neither the Bank Depositary nor we will be liable if we are prevented or delayed by law or any circumstance beyond our control in performing our obligations under the depositary agreement. The obligations of the Bank Depositary and us under the depositary agreement will be limited to performance in good faith of our duties thereunder, and we will not be obligated to prosecute or defend any legal proceeding in respect of any depositary shares or preferred stock unless satisfactory indemnity is furnished. We may rely upon written advice of counsel or accountants, or upon information provided by persons presenting preferred stock for deposit, holders of depositary receipts or other persons believed to be competent and on documents believed to be genuine.

Table of Contents

Resignation and Removal of Bank Depositary

The Bank Depositary may resign at any time by delivering to us notice of its election to do so, and we may at any time remove the Bank Depositary. Any such resignation or removal will take effect upon the appointment of a successor Bank Depositary and its acceptance of such appointment. The successor Bank Depositary must be appointed within 60 days after delivery of the notice of resignation or removal and must be a bank or trust company meeting the requirements of the depositary agreement.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PURCHASE CONTRACTS

AND UNITS

We may issue purchase contracts, including contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and obligating us to sell to the holders, a specified number of shares of common stock or other securities at a future date or dates, which we refer to in this prospectus as purchase contracts. The price per share of the securities and the number of shares of the securities may be fixed at the time the purchase contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula set forth in the purchase contracts. The purchase contracts may be issued separately or as part of units consisting of a purchase contract and debt securities, preferred securities, warrants or debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. treasury securities, securing the holders' obligations to purchase the securities under the purchase contracts, which we refer to herein as units. The purchase contracts may require holders to secure their obligations under the purchase contracts in a specified manner. The purchase contracts also may require us to make periodic payments to the holders of the units or vice versa, and those payments may be unsecured or refunded on some basis.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the purchase contracts or units. The description in the prospectus supplement will not necessarily be complete, and reference will be made to the purchase contracts, and, if applicable, collateral or depositary arrangements relating to the purchase contracts or units, which will be filed with the SEC each time we issue purchase contracts or units. Material United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the units and the purchase contracts will also be discussed in the applicable prospectus supplement.

FORMS OF SECURITIES

Each debt security, depositary share, purchase contract, unit and warrant will be represented either by a certificate issued in definitive form to a particular investor or by one or more global securities representing the entire issuance of securities. Certificated securities in definitive form and global securities will be issued in registered form. Definitive securities name you or your nominee as the owner of the security, and in order to transfer or exchange these securities or to receive payments other than interest or other interim payments, you or your nominee must physically deliver the securities to the trustee, registrar, paying agent or other agent, as applicable. Global securities name a depositary or its nominee as the owner of the debt securities, depositary shares, purchase contracts, units or warrants represented by these global securities. The depositary maintains a computerized system that will reflect each investor's beneficial ownership of the securities through an account maintained by the investor with its broker/dealer, bank, trust company or other representative, as we explain more fully below.

Global Securities

The Company may issue the registered debt securities, depositary shares, purchase contracts, purchase units and warrants in the form of one or more fully registered global securities that will be deposited with a depositary or its nominee identified in the applicable prospectus supplement and registered in the name of that depositary or nominee. In those cases, one or more registered global securities will be issued in a denomination or aggregate denominations equal to the portion of the aggregate principal or face amount of the securities to be represented

Table of Contents

by registered global securities. Unless and until it is exchanged in whole for securities in definitive registered form, a registered global security may not be transferred except as a whole by and among the depository for the registered global security, the nominees of the depository or any successors of the depository or those nominees.

If not described below, any specific terms of the depository arrangement with respect to any securities to be represented by a registered global security will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to those securities. We anticipate that the following provisions will apply to all depository arrangements.

Ownership of beneficial interests in a registered global security will be limited to persons, called participants, that have accounts with the depository or persons that may hold interests through participants. Upon the issuance of a registered global security, the depository will credit, on its book-entry registration and transfer system, the participants' accounts with the respective principal or face amounts of the securities beneficially owned by the participants. Any dealers, underwriters or agents participating in the distribution of the securities will designate the accounts to be credited. Ownership of beneficial interests in a registered global security will be shown on, and the transfer of ownership interests will be effected only through, records maintained by the depository, with respect to interests of participants, and on the records of participants, with respect to interests of persons holding through participants. The laws of some states may require that some purchasers of securities take physical delivery of these securities in definitive form. These laws may impair your ability to own, transfer or pledge beneficial interests in registered global securities.

So long as the depository, or its nominee, is the registered owner of a registered global security, that depository or its nominee, as the case may be, will be considered the sole owner or holder of the securities represented by the registered global security for all purposes under the applicable indenture, purchase contract, unit agreement or warrant agreement. Except as described below, owners of beneficial interests in a registered global security will not be entitled to have the securities represented by the registered global security registered in their names, will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of the securities in definitive form and will not be considered the owners or holders of the securities under the applicable indenture, purchase contract, unit agreement or warrant agreement. Accordingly, each person owning a beneficial interest in a registered global security must rely on the procedures of the depository for that registered global security and, if that person is not a participant, on the procedures of the participant through which the person owns its interest, to exercise any rights of a holder under the applicable indenture, purchase contract, unit agreement or warrant agreement. We understand that under existing industry practices, if we request any action of holders or if an owner of a beneficial interest in a registered global security desires to give or take any action that a holder is entitled to give or take under the applicable indenture, purchase contract, unit agreement or warrant agreement, the depository for the registered global security would authorize the participants holding the relevant beneficial interests to give or take that action, and the participants would authorize beneficial owners owning through them to give or take that action or would otherwise act upon the instructions of beneficial owners holding through them.

Principal or premium, if any, and interest payments on debt securities, and any payments to holders with respect to warrants, purchase contracts or units, represented by a registered global security registered in the name of a depository or its nominee will be made to the depository or its nominee, as the case may be, as the registered owner of the registered global security. None of the Company, the trustees, any warrant agent, unit agent or any other agent of the Company, the trustees or any such warrant agent or unit agent will have any responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records relating to payments made on account of beneficial ownership interests in the registered global security or for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to those beneficial ownership interests.

We expect that the depository for any of the securities represented by a registered global security, upon receipt of any payment of principal, premium, interest or other distribution of underlying securities or other property to holders of that registered global security, will immediately credit participants' accounts in amounts proportionate to their respective beneficial interests in that registered global security as shown on the records of the depository. We also expect that payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in a registered

Table of Contents

global security held through participants will be governed by standing customer instructions and customary practices, as is now the case with the securities held for the accounts of customers in bearer form or registered in street name, and will be the responsibility of those participants.

If the depository for any of these securities represented by a registered global security is at any time unwilling or unable to continue as depository or ceases to be a clearing agency registered under the Exchange Act, and a successor depository registered as a clearing agency under the Exchange Act is not appointed by us within 90 days, we will issue securities in definitive form in exchange for the registered global security that had been held by the depository. Any securities issued in definitive form in exchange for a registered global security will be registered in the name or names that the depository gives to the relevant trustee, warrant agent, unit agent or other relevant agent of ours or theirs. It is expected that the depository's instructions will be based on directions received by the depository from participants with respect to ownership of beneficial interests in the registered global security that had been held by the depository.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

General

Any of the securities being offered hereby and pursuant to any accompanying prospectus supplement may be sold in any one or more of the following ways from time to time:

directly to purchasers;

through agents;

to or through underwriters;

through dealers;

directly to our stockholders; or

through a combination of any such methods of sale.

We may also issue the securities as a dividend or distribution to our stockholders.

In addition, we may enter into derivative transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. If the applicable prospectus supplement indicates, in connection with such a transaction, the third parties may, pursuant to this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, sell securities covered by this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement. If so, the third party may use securities borrowed from us or others to settle such sales and may use securities received from us to close out any related short positions. We may also loan or pledge securities covered by this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement to third parties, who may sell the loaned securities or, in an event of default in the case of a pledge, sell the pledged securities pursuant to this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement.

The distribution of the securities may be effected from time to time in one or more transactions at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to such prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices.

We may solicit offers to purchase directly. Offers to purchase securities also may be solicited by agents designated by us from time to time. Any such agent involved in the offer or sale of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is delivered will be named, and any commissions payable by us to such agent will be set forth, in the applicable prospectus supplement. Unless otherwise indicated in such prospectus supplement, any such agent will be acting on a reasonable best efforts basis for the period of its appointment. Any such agent may be deemed to be an underwriter, as that term is defined in the Securities Act, of the securities so offered and sold.

Table of Contents

If securities are sold by means of an underwritten offering, we will execute an underwriting agreement with an underwriter or underwriters at the time an agreement for such sale is reached, and the names of the specific managing underwriter or underwriters, as well as any other underwriters, the respective amounts underwritten and the terms of the transaction, including commissions, discounts and any other compensation of the underwriters and dealers, if any, will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement which will be used by the underwriters to make resales of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is being delivered to the public. If underwriters are utilized in the sale of any securities in respect of which this prospectus is being delivered, such securities will be acquired by the underwriters for their own account and may be resold from time to time in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions, at fixed public offering prices or at varying prices determined by the underwriters at the time of sale. Securities may be offered to the public either through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters or directly by one or more underwriters. If any underwriter or underwriters are utilized in the sale of securities, unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, the underwriting agreement will provide that the obligations of the underwriters are subject to certain conditions precedent and that the underwriters with respect to a sale of such securities will be obligated to purchase all such securities if any are purchased.

We may grant to the underwriters options to purchase additional securities, to cover over-allotments, if any, at the initial public offering price (with additional underwriting commissions or discounts), as may be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating thereto. If we grant any over-allotment option, the terms of such over-allotment option will be set forth in the prospectus supplement for such securities.

If a dealer is used in the sale of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is delivered, we will sell such securities to the dealer, as principal. The dealer may then resell such securities to the public at varying prices to be determined by such dealer at the time of resale. Any such dealer may be deemed to be an underwriter, as such term is defined in the Securities Act, of the securities so offered and sold. The name of the dealer and the terms of the transaction will be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating thereto.

Offers to purchase securities may be solicited directly by us and the sale thereof may be made by us directly to institutional investors or others, who may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act with respect to any resale thereof. We may also offer securities through agents in connection with a distribution to our stockholders of rights to purchase such securities. The terms of any such sales will be described in the prospectus supplement relating thereto.

We may offer our equity securities into an existing trading market on the terms described in the applicable prospectus supplement. Underwriters and dealers who may participate in any at-the-market offerings will be described in the prospectus supplement relating thereto.

Pursuant to any standby underwriting agreement entered into in connection with a subscription rights offering to our stockholders, persons acting as standby underwriters may receive a commitment fee for all securities underlying the subscription rights that the underwriter commits to purchase on a standby basis. Additionally, prior to the expiration date with respect to any subscription rights, any standby underwriters in a subscription rights offering to our stockholders may offer such securities on a when-issued basis, including securities to be acquired through the purchase and exercise of subscription rights, at prices set from time to time by the standby underwriters. After the expiration date with respect to such subscription rights, the underwriters may offer securities of the type underlying the subscription rights, whether acquired pursuant to a standby underwriting agreement, the exercise of the subscription rights or the purchase of such securities in the market, to the public at a price or prices to be determined by the underwriters. The standby underwriters may thus realize profits or losses independent of the underwriting discounts or commissions paid by us. If we do not enter into a standby underwriting arrangement in connection with a subscription rights offering to our stockholders, we may elect to retain a dealer-manager to manage such a subscription rights offering for us. Any such dealer-manager may offer securities of the type underlying the subscription rights acquired or to be acquired pursuant to the purchase and exercise of subscription rights and may thus realize profits or losses independent of any dealer-manager fee paid by us.

Table of Contents

Securities may also be offered and sold, if so indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, in connection with a remarketing upon their purchase, in accordance with a redemption or repayment pursuant to their terms, or otherwise, by one or more firms (remarketing firms) acting as principals for their own accounts or as agents for us. Any remarketing firm will be identified and the terms of its agreement, if any, with us and its compensation will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement. Remarketing firms may be deemed to be underwriters, as that term is defined in the Securities Act, in connection with the securities remarketed thereby.

If so indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may authorize agents, dealers or underwriters to solicit offers by certain institutions to purchase securities from us at the public offering price set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on the date or dates stated in the applicable prospectus supplement. Such delayed delivery contracts will be subject to only those conditions set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. A commission indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement will be paid to underwriters and agents soliciting purchases of securities pursuant to delayed delivery contracts accepted by us.

Agents, underwriters, dealers and remarketing firms may be entitled under relevant agreements to indemnification by us or selling securityholders against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribution with respect to payments which such agents, underwriters, dealers and remarketing firms may be required to make in respect thereof.

In order to facilitate the offering of the securities, any underwriters may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of the securities or any other securities the prices of which may be used to determine payments on such securities. Specifically, any underwriters may overallocate in connection with the offering, creating a short position for their own accounts. In addition, to cover overallocations or to stabilize the price of the securities or of any such other securities, the underwriters may bid for, and purchase, the securities or any such other securities in the open market. Finally, in any offering of the securities through a syndicate of underwriters, the underwriting syndicate may reclaim selling concessions allowed to an underwriter or a dealer for distributing the securities in the offering if the syndicate repurchases previously distributed securities in transactions to cover syndicate short positions, in stabilization transactions or otherwise. Any of these activities may stabilize or maintain the market price of the securities above independent market levels. Any such underwriters are not required to engage in these activities and may end any of these activities at any time.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, each series of securities, other than our common stock that is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, will be a new issue and will have no established trading market. We may elect to list any series of securities on an exchange but, unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, we shall not be obligated to do so. In addition, underwriters will not be obligated to make a market in any securities. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity of, or activity in, the trading market for any of the securities.

Agents, underwriters, dealers and remarketing firms may be customers of, engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us, our subsidiaries and/or the selling securityholders in the ordinary course of business.

The anticipated date of delivery of securities will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement and/or free writing prospectus relating to each offer.

Sales by Selling Securityholders

Selling securityholders may use this prospectus in connection with resales of securities. The applicable prospectus supplement will identify the selling securityholders and the terms of the securities. Selling securityholders may be deemed to be underwriters in connection with the securities they resell and any profits on the sales may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. The selling securityholders will receive all the proceeds from the sale of the securities. We will not receive any proceeds from sales by selling securityholders.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, the validity of our debt securities, common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, warrants, purchase contracts and units will be passed upon for us by James F. O'Reilly, our Associate General Counsel and Secretary, and for any underwriters or agents by counsel named in the applicable prospectus supplement. Mr. O'Reilly is paid a salary by Danaher, is a participant in various employee benefit plans and incentive plans offered by us and owns or has rights to acquire an aggregate of less than 0.01% of Danaher's common stock.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our consolidated financial statements and schedule included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008, and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2008, as set forth in their reports, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements and schedule are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's reports, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

Table of Contents

\$

\$ % Senior Notes Due

\$ % Senior Notes Due

\$ % Senior Notes Due

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

BofA Merrill Lynch

Deutsche Bank Securities

BNP PARIBAS

HSBC

Wells Fargo Securities

Banca IMI

Mitsubishi UFJ Securities

Scotia Capital

SunTrust Robinson Humphrey

SMBC Nikko

, 2011