
Guide For Readers

The **Contents** (p. vii) shows the pages on which readers can find the Editors and Editorial Board members, consultants, additional reviewers, and contributors, as well as titles of sections, appendixes, and the index. Thumb tabs with appropriate abbreviations and section numbers mark each section and the index.

Each **Section** begins with its own table of contents, listing chapters and topics in that section. Chapters are numbered serially from the beginning to the end of the book.

The **Index** is highly detailed and contains many cross-entries. In addition, readers will find many **cross-references** throughout the text to specific pages where additional or related information can be found.

Running heads carry the section number and title on left-hand pages and the chapter number and title on right-hand pages.

Abbreviations and symbols, used throughout the text as essential space savers, are listed on pages ix and x. Other abbreviations in the text are expanded at first mention in the chapter or topic.

Tables and figures are referenced in the index but are not listed in a separate table of contents. An insert of color plates contains photographs of many eye, ear, endocrine, skin, and gynecologic disorders as well as infectious diseases.

Laboratory values in the book are given in conventional units. In most cases, SI units follow in parentheses. Appendix II contains several tables listing normal laboratory values for many tests conducted on blood, plasma, serum, urine, CSF, and stool.

Drugs are designated in the text by generic (nonproprietary) names. In Appendix III, many of the drugs mentioned in the book are listed alphabetically, with each generic name followed by one or more trade names.

Section 23, **Special Subjects**, has discussions on clinical decision making, radiologic imaging, complementary and alternative medicine, dietary supplements, genetics, smoking cessation, rehabilitation, care of the surgical patient, financial issues in health care, and care of the dying patient, among others.

Important: The authors, reviewers, and editors of this book have made extensive efforts to ensure that treatments, drugs, and dosage regimens are accurate and conform to the standards accepted at the time of publication. However, constant changes in information resulting from continuing research and clinical experience, reasonable differences in opinions among authorities, unique aspects of individual clinical situations, and the possibility of human error in preparing such an extensive text require that the reader exercise individual judgment when making a clinical decision and, if necessary, consult and compare information from other sources. In particular, the reader is advised to check the product information provided by the manufacturer of a drug product before prescribing or administering it, especially if the drug is unfamiliar or is used infrequently.

Note: Readers can find up-to-date information, additional tables and figures, as well as multimedia enhancements at www.merckmanuals.com. Visit the web site frequently for new enhancements and the latest information on clinical developments.