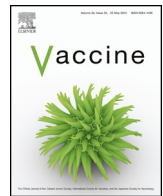


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# Vaccine

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## Book review

### The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians

I initially evaluated the new fifth edition of *The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians*, or “The Purple Book” as it is called by those most familiar with it, when the publisher asked me to write a foreword. Its author is Gary S. Marshall, MD, professor of pediatrics and chief of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. I found the updates and additions in the new edition to be every bit as clear, concise, and complete as the material in previous editions.

This compact, 560-page handbook, covering vaccines for children, teens, and adults, is divided into two sections, “General Principles of Vaccinology and Vaccine Practice” and “Diseases and Vaccines.” The first of these comprises eight chapters covering Introduction to Vaccinology; Vaccine Infrastructure in the United States; Standards, Principles and Regulations; Vaccine Practice; General Recommendations; Vaccination in Special Circumstances; Addressing Concerns About Vaccines; and Routine Schedules. In short, you’ll find just about everything you might want to know about vaccines.

Occupying a middle ground between a scientific textbook and a compilation of facts and recommendations, the content is expansive, yet the book is small enough to fit into a lab-coat pocket. Most important, the book uses plain, simple, and accessible language to give in-depth explanations of complex information.

This handbook is unusual in that every paragraph is engrossing and self-contained, offering a definition, a bit of history, results from the latest study, a quantitative fact, references, or an important conclusion. There are several topics worth highlighting. In Chapter 2, which covers the U.S. vaccine infrastructure, Dr. Marshall provides a detailed description of the process by which vaccines are developed and brought to licensure in the United States. He describes how a candidate vaccine progresses through the three phases of the pre-licensure trials and is then submitted to the Food and Drug Administration for evaluation leading to possible licensure.

In Chapter 5, Dr. Marshall opens with several pages devoted to “Ten Simple Rules by Which to Vaccinate,” a splendid guide for frontline vaccinators. Also in this chapter, there is a handy table listing vaccine administration errors and what to do when they happen.

Chapter 6 contains many pages on vaccinating patients who are immunosuppressed due to a variety of causes such as HIV, other immune deficiency conditions, and medications.

In today’s public environment of vaccine hesitancy, the 62 pages and more than 200 references in Chapter 7 (“Addressing Concerns About Vaccines”) provide a needed guide to dealing with patients’ and parents’ questions. After background narratives on communicating risks and benefits, vaccine refusal, antivaccinationism, and the costs of public concerns, Marshall gives comprehensive answers to 24 commonly asked questions. These questions address why vaccines are still necessary, natural immunity, vaccine overload, adjuvants, additives, alternative schedules, and much more.

The first eight chapters are followed by 21 more, covering each vaccine-preventable disease, including the pathogen, clinical features, epidemiology and transmission, immunization program, vaccines, immunogenicity, efficacy, effectiveness, safety, and recommendations.

On a personal note, I would find it useful if the Table of Contents for the first section included chapter subheadings so that the important topics in each chapter could more easily be located.

In summary, *The Vaccine Handbook* is a superb and highly recommended way for clinicians, as well as medical students, residents, and nurses, to make sure they have all the resources needed to keep up with the increasingly complex world of immunization.

*The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians* is available (\$29.95 plus shipping) from the Immunization Action Coalition at [www.immunize.org/vaccine-handbook](http://www.immunize.org/vaccine-handbook). The book can also be purchased from the publisher, Professional Communications, at [www.pcibooks.com/books/view/49](http://www.pcibooks.com/books/view/49), as well as from many online bookstores.

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