

Foreword

As I begin writing, I am struck by the irony of writing the *Foreword* to a book that attempts to capture an area that is moving *forward* so rapidly. Since the Fourth Edition of *The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians*—more widely known as *The Purple Book*—was published in 2012, new vaccines have been licensed, administration guidance for some existing vaccines has been refined, and recommended schedules have been revised. While all of us are gratified that these changes have improved our ability to protect patients and loved ones from a growing number of diseases, the constantly evolving vaccine environment can leave one feeling like the physician who, exasperated, stood up at an educational conference and declared, “This is just too much to know!”

Thankfully, Gary S. Marshall, MD, who is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, has transformed this “too much to know” scenario into the superb reference guide you’re holding in your hands. Dr. Marshall draws on the best features of highly regarded resources—the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s *Pink Book*, and the American Academy of Pediatrics’ *Red Book*, to name just a few—as well as personal conversations with experts and independent assessment of the scientific literature, to provide clinicians with a wealth of practical immunization information in an easily accessible format. In striving to be comprehensive and up-to-date, *The Purple Book* also endeavors to “get it right” and “make it understandable”.

I invite you to explore and use this pocket-sized “everything-you-ever-could-think-to-ask-about-vaccines” resource in the following ways.

First, keep at least one copy in an accessible location in your office so your staff can find it when a question arises. Need to know who should get a second dose of influenza vaccine? Or what to do if you accidentally give Tdap to a 15-month-old? How about when to administer meningococcal and HPV vaccines to an adolescent? Check *The Purple Book*’s Table of Contents tabs to find concise information on individual diseases and the vaccines that prevent them. In addition to offering information on the pathogens, clinical features, epidemiology and transmission, and history of disease-specific immunization programs, each of the chapters in the second half of the book (*Diseases and Vaccines*) covers available vaccines, efficacy and/or immunogenicity, safety (including contraindications and precautions), and recommendations for use. An extensive and comprehensive index also is available at the back of the book to help you easily locate answers to specific questions.

But *The Purple Book* is much more than a quick reference. I urge you to take the time to look over the first section, *General Principles of Vaccinology and Vaccine Practice*, in depth. Sit down, dig in, and see the wealth of information that is there. Because, like you, I have to answer many questions about vaccines, I am thrilled to have this enormous amount of practical information compiled in one place, at my fingertips. *The Purple Book* introduces you to vaccine immunology and describes the evolving world of vaccine infrastructure, including federal financing and policy and how the safety of vaccines is assured. Chapter 4 details the gamut of activities involved in administering vaccinations in practice, with emphasis on storage and handling, technique, strategies to improve coverage, coding and billing information, and much more.

Several of these chapters are “must reading.” Everyone involved in vaccinating patients in a medical practice—including nurses, medical assistants and receptionists—would benefit from reading Chapter 7, *Addressing Concerns About Vaccines*. The emphasis there on effective communication reflects the growing amount of time clinicians must spend in discussions with vaccine-hesitant parents. This key chapter provides answers to more than a dozen commonly asked questions that vaccine-hesitant parents and patients might ask, such as “Can too many vaccines overload the immune system?” and “Isn’t natural immunity better than vaccine-induced immunity?” and “Are alternative schedules a good idea?”

I have dedicated most of my professional life to helping health care providers “get it right”—that is, give the *right* patient the *right* vaccine, at the *right* time, in the *right* dosage, using the *right* technique, and completing the *right* documentation. Having founded and fostered one of the most relied-upon immunization

education organizations in the United States, I have fielded many questions and have developed a deep appreciation for the complexity of managing all the actions that go into a quality immunization program. During my more than 20 years in the field of immunization education, I have not seen another book that is so brimming with state-of-the-science information.

The Purple Book belongs in the hands of every medical student, physician-in-training, doctor, nursing student, and nurse who provides vaccines to patients, regardless of patient age or medical specialty. It is my honor to introduce the Fifth Edition to you. This essential reference beautifully supports all of us in our efforts to move *forward* in protecting our patients from the consequences of *preventable* diseases.

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