

Drugs in Pregnancy and Lactation, 8th edition

Briggs GG, Freeman RK, Yaffe SJ, editors. Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, Philadelphia (PA), 2008. 2117 pages. ISBN 978-0-7817-7876-3. US\$129.00.

Now in its eighth edition, *Drugs in Pregnancy and Lactation* remains one of the most internationally recognized texts in the field. It is a mainstay resource for health care practitioners who encounter pregnant or lactating women as part of their daily practice. The editors' combined clinical and research expertise in pharmacy, obstetrics, and pediatrics make them ideal partners to present a well-rounded text that communicates the data relevant to both mother and child. This edition follows the format and design of its predecessor, with the addition of more than 100 new drug monographs and a greater number of herbal therapy summaries.

The text reads like a drug dictionary, with the drug monographs arranged alphabetically by generic name. At the beginning of each monograph is a highlighted, full-colour box presenting the drug name, its pharmacologic class, a one-line summary of fetal and breast-feeding recommendations, and risk factors. The addition of colour improves readability and allows readers to more readily identify the summaries on a given page. Should a comparison with similar drugs be required, the appendix lists all drugs by therapeutic class. The agents can then be located by referring to the exhaustive index, which lists both generic and trade names of all agents summarized in the text.

This is not a small text or a quick reference guide to the risks in pregnancy and lactation. Instead, the book's more than 2000 pages present comprehensive drug summaries. The information for each drug is supported by an extensive reference list, which is truly a complete summary of the literature. The monographs include available animal data, and, when possible, the authors attempt to highlight the relevance of such data to humans. This is followed by a thorough description of the human literature. The pregnancy summaries are not limited to a discussion of malformations, but rather address fetal effects at all stages of pregnancy and include descriptions of long-term outcomes when available. With such extensive coverage, it is easy to appreciate why some of the monographs span several pages. The length of some monographs may limit the usability of this book in emergent or acute situations, when clinicians are attempting to make immediate treatment choices while the patient waits. Fortunately, in most monographs, both the pregnancy and breastfeeding sections conclude with a one-paragraph summary highlighting the most pertinent evidence.

While there remains much more to investigate, the myth that there is no research about drugs in pregnancy and lactation can cer-

tainly be dispelled by this immense in-depth book. It is the most comprehensive text of its kind and is a necessity for health care professionals caring for women in their reproductive years.

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Concise Cardiology: An Evidence-Based Handbook

Daniels DV, editor; Rockson SG, Vagelos R, associate editors. Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, Philadelphia (PA), 2008. Softcover, 271 pages. ISBN 978-0-7817-8509-9. US\$42.95.

The field of cardiovascular therapeutics is evolving at a staggering pace, with a myriad of trials dealing with cardiovascular disease management published each month. Practitioners are challenged to engage in optimal evidence-based decision-making in this rapidly changing environment. *Concise Cardiology* is meant to serve as a comprehensive, quick-access information handbook for those involved in caring for patients with cardiovascular disease.

This handbook covers a broad array of topics. Its chapters are entitled Physical Examination of the Cardiovascular System, Stress Testing, Chest Pain and Acute Coronary Syndromes, Cardiogenic Shock, Bradyarrhythmias and Pacing, Wide and Narrow Complex Tachyarrhythmias, Sudden Cardiac Death and ICD [implantable cardioverter defibrillator] Therapy, Atrial Fibrillation, Heart Failure, Pulmonary Hypertension, Transplant Medicine, Valvular Disease, Endocarditis, and Pericardial Disease. The book's 2 appendices deal with central vascular access techniques and clinical pharmacology.

Each chapter begins with a concise and clinically relevant discussion of the clinical problem, including the history and physical findings that are necessary to make the diagnosis. In many cases, the key points are presented in bullet format. Management strategies are typically provided in tabular format and cover presenting indications, patient selection, and side effects. The handbook is formatted to provide clear reference to recommendations from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association, as well as brief reviews of important clinical trials. Information from trials is characterized by level of evidence, patient population studied, intervention, concurrent therapy, outcomes, and numbers needed to treat.