

Dr. Schmitt's book is targeted for parents of pediatric patients, but it will be equally useful to residents and practicing physicians. Residents will benefit from the wealth of sound pediatric advice, the type that is not taught in medical school and is often neglected in residency. What foods are most allergenic? How can I stop bedtime resistance in my two year old? Is sugar really bad for my child? Should I make my child stop sucking her thumb? Should I help my child with homework? Practicing physicians will benefit from not having to make up so many educational handouts themselves. The advantage of this book is that the handouts are ready to distribute, cover a wide range of topics, and contain up-to-date medical information and sensible suggestions. Since I received this book for review, not only have I been distributing relevant pages to my patients, I have also been reading it for my own education.

Dr. Schmitt recognizes that there are many different "correct" approaches to pediatric care and that not everyone will agree with 100 percent of what is in the book. He suggests that practitioners use white correction fluid on portions of the master copy that they disagree with and add other suggestions and comments as desired. He also recommends that practitioners put their names and office numbers on each handout.

This is a well-organized book with no serious weaknesses. Almost every common pediatric health issue is covered, with the only noticeable exception being HIV disease. I rarely have a pediatric encounter in the office for which I cannot find good use for one of the handouts in this book. An excellent index makes finding the right handout easy. The introduction gives ideas on how to best distribute the handouts in the office.

Unlike many pediatric texts, this one will not help with the treatment of retinoblastoma or give the differential diagnoses for abdominal mass in a 4-month-old child. For most family physicians and pediatricians, however, it will be useful every day in educating parents and improving health care delivery to children.

Tillman F. Farley, MD
Palmyra, NY

Medical Management of the Surgical Patient. By Geno J. Merli, and Howard H. Weitz. 480 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1992. \$29.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7216-3485-0.

This soft-cover book fits into the pocket of a laboratory coat. It is inexpensive and very handy to have when caring for the surgical patient. It is written by clinicians for clinicians, and it succeeds nicely in doing what it intends to do: assist the physician in evaluating and preparing patients for surgery and in providing answers to questions that commonly come up in surgical patient management. Its 19 chapters and eight appendices discuss, in a pragmatic and straightforward fashion, the problems that arise, such as preoperative evaluation recommendations, antibiotic prophylaxis, nutritional needs, deep venous thrombosis and embolus prevention, and perioperative and intraoperative diabetes care.

The index works well, and answers are easy to find. In the orthopedic surgery appendix, for example, there is an easy-to-follow outline of what to expect from a total knee replacement procedure: duration of surgery, anesthesia requirements, expected blood loss and transfusion needs, possible postoperative complications, and procedure-specific medical recommendations. Its purpose is not to teach nonsurgeons how to be surgeons but to help those physicians who participate in the medical care of surgical patients to prepare patients for surgery, anticipate problems, recognize complications, and deal with those that arise.

Family physicians, resident physicians, and medical students are all well served by this book. It is detailed enough to be thorough, yet it is readable and economical in its presentation. The tables are numerous and well organized. I could not think of any problem or question that was not easily found and answered in the book. I highly recommend it for those physicians who care for surgical patients.

Lee A. Norman, MD
Swedish Hospital Medical Center
Seattle, WA