

# The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians

BY GARY S. MARSHALL, MD

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Reviewed by  
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The third edition of *The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians*, published in 2010 and authored by Dr. Gary Marshall, is not only a handbook but a great reference book. The third edition is 48 pages longer than the second edition, contains moderate

revisions and reads better than the second edition.

The book contains 560 pages and individual information segments on basic vaccinology, vaccine infrastructure in the United States, vaccine practice and general recommendations. The section on vaccination in special circumstances is revised and updated and contains many helpful hints for successful vaccination.

Some of the special circumstances for vaccination include consideration for patients with impaired immunity due to exogenous or endogenous causes, pregnancy, pre-term and low birth weight infants, international adoptees and immigrants, health care personnel and travel.

Dr. Marshall, professor of pediatrics and director of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, devotes 49 pages to addressing concerns about vaccines. Despite the fact that vaccines have saved more lives than any other public health intervention, health care providers are challenged by misplaced concerns about vaccine safety. The first section on communicating risks and benefits is particularly important. The discussion on the meaning of "safety" is meaningful, as is the review of potential negative consequences of vaccines.

Dr. Marshall stresses communication strategies to mothers or patients. This communication includes the vaccines to be given and pertinent information in the VIS (Vaccine Information

Statements), which is an excellent informed consent. He recommends explaining why the vaccine is important, common side effects and how to manage them, and the place of today's vaccination in the context of the overall vaccine schedules.

Specific patient questions such as "Are vaccines still necessary? Can multiple vaccines overload the immune system? Are adjuvants dangerous? Are 'alternative schedules' a good idea? Do vaccines cause allergies and autoimmune disease?" are clearly discussed. This helps the provider respond to common and important concerns raised by mothers and patients.

Section 8 describes vaccine schedules in detail for patients of all ages. The vaccine schedule is followed by a brief explanation of the vaccine, which is similar to the CDC's footnotes on their vaccine schedules.

Sections 9-28 address specific bacteria, viruses and vaccines. Each chapter is presented in an analogous format. The pathogen, clinical features, epidemiology and transmission, immunization program, vaccines, efficacy and/or immunogenicity, safety, recommendations and bibliography follow in logical order. Each section is concisely written to give the reader the most information within the least number of pages. The information follows CDC and ACIP recommendations.

The third edition of Dr. Marshall's book is superior to the second edition. It is well-conceived and well-written. It addresses the issues raised by patients and providers. It is a paperback edition and a handy resource for medical students, residents and all providers. **LM**

*Note: Dr. Gall is a professor in the University of Louisville School of Medicine's Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women's Health. He practices Obstetrics and Gynecology with University OB/GYN Associates.*