

PREFACE

In an age of information overload it is often difficult to know what information is most relevant to you. This is particularly true for medications, as drugs become more sophisticated and manufacturers are required to produce an increasing amount of information detailing side effects, warnings, and interactions with other drugs, including over-the-counter medicines and complementary remedies. There is also a bewildering array of drugs available, and more drugs, previously only available on prescription, can now be purchased over the counter at a pharmacy or supermarket. Moreover, many people also use the internet for information or to buy medications. While some pharmacies operate approved online retail operations, others are not registered or regulated and could supply drugs that are dangerous to your health. For this reason, it is always advisable to consult a health professional before taking any medication, including any complementary remedy. With detailed profiles of 278 drugs, this revised and updated edition of the *BMA New Guide to Medicines and Drugs* guides you through this maze, helping you to prioritise the information that is important in your particular case so that you can use medicines safely and sensibly.

The information in this book has been thoroughly researched and reflects evidence-based medical knowledge. There have been many changes to drug profiles, with revised warnings, dosages, and formulations since the last edition. You can look up an individual drug and easily find the important information you need, for example adverse effects, whether it is safe to take with other medications or in pregnancy, how much to take and when, and whether long-term use causes any problems. It will also inform you whether there is any problem, caution, or dosage issue in someone over 60 years old using the drug. Parts 1 and 2 of the guide can be used in conjunction with the main drug profiles to give more in-depth information about how groups of drugs work and how to use them. There are also updated sections on vitamins and minerals, drugs of abuse, complementary and alternative medicine, drugs in sport, and travel medicine.

As in other areas of medicine, information about drugs changes rapidly as new discoveries are made about existing drugs or new medications are introduced and so this guide is not meant to replace advice given by your doctor, pharmacist, or other health professional. We feel, however, that the information provided here will help you to work in partnership with your health advisors to use medicines and look after your health both safely and effectively.



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