

the platelets are depleted, control of bleeding becomes very challenging. Thus, any patient receiving chemotherapy requires close supervision of the hematological system to prevent serious complications. Any patient taking an anticoagulant such as warfarin (Coumadin) to decrease clotting should be carefully monitored for signs of bleeding, including dark, tarry stool. Warfarin levels should be monitored to ensure that the drug level is therapeutic but not toxic.

As a health-care professional, you should always check a drug resource guide for the side effects of the medications your patient is taking so you can be aware of them and counsel the patient accordingly. Even though a side effect may not be listed, a patient can have a unique, or **idiosyncratic**, reaction to any drug. The effect may not have occurred in clinical trials because it is so rare, but it must be managed.

■ DRUG RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION

Several medication resources are available to health-care professionals to help with safe administration of drugs to patients. These resources are divided into two categories: comprehensive and clinical. Both types are available in print and online.

Comprehensive Resources

Comprehensive resources cover medications in depth and are usually available only in print. The government produces two major comprehensive resources:

- *United States Pharmacopoeial/National Formulary (USP/NF)*
- *United States Pharmacopoeial/Dispensing Information (USP/DI)*

The *USP/NF* is the official source of medication information for drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is updated every 5 years, with frequent supplements. This publication provides standards for identification, quality, strength, and purity of substances. The *USP/DI* has two volumes; the first is written primarily for the prescriber, and the second is written in lay terms to make it easy for patients to understand.

A more widely used comprehensive resource is the *Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR)*, which is available in most health-care settings. This text contains information about thousands of drugs and is indexed by trade name, generic name, classification, and manufacturer. Color photographs of most common drugs are included to help identify medications when patients are unsure about what they are taking.

A CLOSER LOOK: Organization of the *Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR)*

The *PDR* is organized as follows:

- Section 1 (white): Manufacturer's Index. This is an alphabetical listing of manufacturers with their addresses and phone numbers.
- Section 2 (pink): Brand and Generic Name Index. This is an alphabetical listing of medications by generic and trade names.
- Section 3 (blue): Classification Index. This section lists drugs by classification (e.g., antibiotics, analgesics).
- Section 4 (gray): Product Identification Guide. Manufacturers display photographs of medications. The drugs are listed by manufacturer.
- Section 5 (white): Product Information Section. This section contains the detailed information you would find on package inserts, alphabetized by manufacturer and then product.
- Section 6 (white): This is a catch-all section that includes the following: controlled substances categories; FDA use-in-pregnancy ratings; FDA telephone directory; poison control centers; drug information centers; and look-alike/sound-alike drug names.