



# BOOKS, ETC.

**McGraw-Hill's I.V. Drug Handbook**, Patricia Dwyer Schull, RN, MSN. 734 pages, \$42.95, McGraw-Hill, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-07-154863-2.

This first edition handbook focuses exclusively on intravenous (IV) drug therapy and is separated into 3 parts, the first encompassing an A-Z listing of more than 300 IV drugs and a supplemental insert devoted to guidelines for the safe preparation, administration, and monitoring of IV medications. Part 2 includes brief coverage of “less commonly used drugs.” The appendices, selected references, and index comprise Part 3.

The drug monographs in Part 1 can be extensive; in addition to what would be expected in a drug handbook, information is provided on US Food and Drug Administration boxed warnings, off-label uses, and patient teaching. This text includes special icons to alert the reader to *high-alert* drugs deserving of extra notice and safeguards, *hazardous* drugs, such as chemotherapy agents, and clinical alerts for consideration when administering a particular agent. While the drug list is substan-

tial, notable absences include rocuronium and ephedrine, and dexmedetomidine is mentioned only in Part 2. The “Safe IV drug administration” section, a supplemental 32-page color insert within Part 1, provides useful information regarding drug compatibilities, conversions, calculations, infusion rates, abbreviations, therapeutic and toxic drug levels, and sound-alike drug names. It also includes guidelines for peripheral IV access, prevention and treatment of extravasation, and handling of hazardous drugs.

A full-text download for your personal digital assistant (PDA) is included with this handbook. Instructions and an access code for downloading the software are provided on the first page. It is not immediately evident that this software is compatible for direct download only with a palm operating system. Instead I tried visiting the website listed in the preface and user's guide on page xvi to access the full text version of the handbook on my computer. I was unsuccessful, called technical support, and was instructed to download Mobipocket Reader onto my computer, open the eBook, and

then synchronize it with my smartphone, which has a Windows-based operating system. I can now access the handbook on my smartphone; navigation is straightforward and I can obtain the information I desire in a reasonable amount of time.

The intended audience of this handbook appears to be registered nurses in the acute and possibly home care settings who are responsible for administration of IV agents. For the practicing or student anesthesiologist, this text may be a useful resource for IV drugs not used on a regular basis and the supplemental information mentioned above, particularly in the convenient PDA format. However, for drugs routinely used in the anesthesia setting, the anesthesiologist may note differences in the dosing and administration guidelines in this handbook and his or her personal practice.

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