

GUIDE FOR READERS

The **Contents** (p. ix) shows the pages on which readers will find listed the Editors and Editorial Board members, consultants, additional reviewers, and contributors, as well as abbreviations, titles of sections, appendixes, and the index. **Thumb tabs** with appropriate abbreviations and section numbers mark each section and the index.

Each **Section** begins with its own table of contents, listing chapters and subchapters in that section. **Chapters** are numbered serially from the beginning to the end of the book.

The **Index** contains many cross-entries; page numbers in boldface signify major discussions of the topics. In addition, readers will find many cross-references throughout the text to specific pages where additional or related information can be found.

Running heads carry the section number and title on left-hand pages and the chapter number and title on right-hand pages.

Abbreviations and symbols, used throughout the text as essential space savers, are listed on pages xi and xii. Other abbreviations in the text are expanded at first mention in the chapter or subchapter.

Tables and figures are referenced appropriately in the index but are not listed in a table of contents.

Section 22, **Special Subjects**, has discussions on complementary and alternative medicine, dietary supplements, genetics, smoking cessation, rehabilitation, geriatric medicine, care of the surgical patient, care of the dying patient, and clinical decision making, among others.

Laboratory values in the book are given in conventional units. In most cases, however, SI units follow in parentheses.

Drugs are designated in the text by generic (nonproprietary) names. In Appendix II, many of the drugs mentioned in the book are listed alphabetically, with each generic term followed by one or more trade names.

Important: The authors, reviewers, and editors of this book have made extensive efforts to ensure that treatments, drugs, and dosage regimens are accurate and conform to the standards accepted at the time of publication. However, constant changes in information resulting from continuing research and clinical experience, reasonable differences in opinions among authorities, unique aspects of individual clinical situations, and the possibility of human error in preparing such an extensive text require that the reader exercise individual judgment when making a clinical decision and, if necessary, consult and compare information from other sources. In particular, the reader is advised to check the product information provided by the manufacturer of a drug product before prescribing or administering it, especially if the drug is unfamiliar or is used infrequently.

Note: Readers can find up-to-date information, additional tables and figures, as well as multimedia enhancements at www.merckmanuals.com. Visit the web site frequently for new enhancements and the latest information on clinical developments.