

## Researching Prescription & Over-the-Counter Drugs at the Civic Center Library



### • Reference Sources

[\*The AARP Guide to Pills.\*](#) Hochadel, Maryanne, ed. Sterling Publishing Company (2005)  
This guide from the AARP provides basic information on “more than 1,200 prescription and nonprescription medications, including generics.” The profile of each drug includes photographs and answers to questions such as “What if I miss a dose?” and “Where can I keep my medicine?” **Ref 615.1**

[\*AHFS Drug Information.\*](#) American Society of Hospital Pharmacists (2005)  
“Widely used as a source of complete drug information by physicians, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, and other health-care professionals,” this book contains technical information on the usage, dosage, and possible side effects of specific drugs. Unlike the *Physician’s Desk Reference (PDR)*, contents do not derive from manufacturers; instead, this book provides information based on the latest medical research. **Ref 615**

[\*Complete Guide to Prescription & Nonprescription Drugs.\*](#) Griffith, H. Winter. Berkeley Publishing Group (2006)  
Edited by a family physician, this guide outlines the uses, recommended dosage, and possible side effects of hundreds of drugs. **Ref 615.7**

[\*Consumer Drug Reference.\*](#) Consumer Reports Books (2006)  
Designed for the layperson, this book from Consumer Reports lists “indications, proper usage, precautions, side effects, different dosage forms, and common brand names” for over 11,000 prescription and nonprescription drugs. It includes photographs of medicines, and a directory of poison control centers in the U.S. and Canada. **Ref 615.58**

[\*The Merck Index. 13<sup>th</sup> Edition.\*](#) Merck & Company (2001)  
“Designed primarily to serve the needs of chemists, biochemists, pharmacists, and those in related professions,” this encyclopedia provides technical information on chemicals and drugs. **Ref 615**

[\*Physicians Desk Reference \(PDR\).\*](#) Thomson PDR (2006)  
This book contains “[U.S.] Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved labeling for drugs as well as prescription information provided by manufacturers for grandfathered drugs and other drugs marketed without FDA approval under current FDA policies.” It also includes a

Product Identification Guide, featuring “full-color, actual-sized photographs of tablets and capsules.” **Ref 615**

[PDR for Nonprescription Drugs, Dietary Supplements, and Herbs: The Definitive Guide to OTC Medications.](#) Thomson PDR (2005)

Designed “to aid healthcare professionals in providing safe drug management,” this book is organized by system of the body (such as central nervous system) and condition (such as diabetes), with listings of suggested over-the-counter medications. **Ref 615.7**



- **Reference Databases at the Library and from Home**

[Health & Wellness Resource Center](#) contains information on specific drugs, and full-text articles from journals such as *FDA Consumer* and *Pharmaceutical Discovery*. Home access to this database is generally available to Marin County Free Library card holders from <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/lb/main/databases.cfm>. More information on home access is available at <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/LB/main/authentication.cfm>.

[InfoTrac](#) features full-text articles from popular magazines (e.g., *Child Health Alert*, *Men’s Health*) and [ProQuest](#) offers full-text newspaper (e.g., *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*) articles. Home access to these databases is available to all Marin County library card holders at <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/lb/marin/databases.cfm>.



- **Websites**

Consumer Reports: Best Buy Drugs

<http://www.crbestbuydrugs.org/>

The publishers of Consumer Reports magazine maintain this website designed “to provide consumers and their doctors with information to help guide prescription drug choices—based on effectiveness, a drug’s track record, safety and price.” The site includes safety alerts, “basic information on prescription drugs, their safe use, and the importance of talking with your doctor,” and reports on drugs for Alzheimer’s disease, menopause, migraine headaches, depression, and other conditions. Parts of this website are available in Spanish.

MedlinePlus: Drugs, Supplements, and Herbal Information

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html>

This website from the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health provides information on specific prescription and over-the-counter medications, including proper usage, precautions, dietary instructions, side effects, and what to do in case of an emergency/overdose.

MayoClinic.com: Drugs and Supplements

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/drug-information/DrugHerbIndex>

This website profiles thousands of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, providing information on proper use, precautions, and possible side effects. Also features news on important drug developments, and tips on talking to your doctor, choosing store medicines, and identifying the potential tampering of over-the-counter medicines. From the Mayo Clinic, a health organization comprised of “more than 2,000 physicians and scientists.”

PDRhealth: Drug Information

[http://www.pdrhealth.com/drug\\_info/index.html](http://www.pdrhealth.com/drug_info/index.html)

The online edition of the Physicians Desk Reference (PDR) “gives consumers plain-English explanations for the safe and effective use of prescription and nonprescription drugs,” including “side effects, drug interactions, and other important information.”

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Center for Drug Evaluation and Research

<http://www.fda.gov/cder/index.html>

The website of this federal government research center contains consumer information on specific drugs, safety alerts, tips for buying drugs online, reports and publications, and more.

WorstPills.org

<http://www.worstpills.org/>

This website provides information on “top selling drugs including [nearly 200 drugs] we recommend you do not use under any circumstances.” It also features articles for consumers, including “Myths and Facts About Generic Drugs,” “Ten Rules for Safer Drug Use,” and “Protecting Yourself and Your Family from Preventable Drug-Induced Injury.” The site is maintained by Public Citizen, “a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest group founded in 1971.”



- **Further Research**

For more websites containing information on prescription drugs, check the **Health** category of the Marin County Free Library’s list of Recommended Web Resources at <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/lb/main/reference.cfm>. This list also features a collection of recommended websites related to **Medicare**.

Locate additional materials under the following subject headings in the Marinnet catalog.

- [Drugs](#)
- [Pharmaceutical industry](#)
- [Pharmaceutical policy](#)

Also, search for a particular medical condition. For example:

- [Depression, Mental -- Treatment](#)



You may also visit these other libraries for additional information:

The [Novato Community Hospital Health Education Resource Center](#) provides books, newsletters, computers, and other health resources for the public. Staff is also available “to ensure that you get information from timely current, reliable and professional sources that answers your health concerns.” Located at 165 Rowland Way, Novato. Phone # (415) 209-1498.

[PlaneTree Health Library](#) is “one of the largest, free, public medical/health libraries in the country.” The collection includes thousands of books, articles, audiotapes and videotapes, journals, and more. The library also offers access to medical and consumer health databases. Located at 2040 Webster Street, San Francisco. Phone # (415) 600-3681.



For further assistance, please ask a Reference Librarian for help!

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