



Debra Kakuk's Consumer Health Book Talk

What are the different types of consumer health materials that are available in print? How do they help consumers?" There are two locations for "print" or physical material (videos or software) consumer health items in a library:

1. Reference shelves
2. General stacks

Part I: The Reference Collection

By their very nature, reference materials should be well indexed, organized, concise, and highly credible. They should provide overviews, definitions, specific information or addresses; depending on the type of data required by our patrons. Since our clients cannot normally take these materials home with them, remind them that they will have to photocopy, or write down the information that they need. Let's start by looking at Directory resources.

1. Directories

Do you ever get questions such as:

- "How do I find a pediatrician that's close to our new home?"
- "Is Dr. Johansen board-certified?"
- "What are the research interests or educational background of my physician?"

Print directories can help clients quickly find the information that they seek:

- **The Official ABMS Directory of Board Certified Medical Specialists**, 26th edition
26th edition, New Providence, NJ: Marquis Who's Who, 2005
- **Directory of Physicians in the United States**, 33rd edition
Chicago, IL: American Medical Association, 2005
- **Medical and Health Information Directory**
Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co., 2005

The **American Board of Medical Specialties** (ABMS) also provides a free Web search interface (www.abms.org/), as does the **American Medical Association** (AMA) (dbapps.ama-assn.org/aps/amahg.htm)

Many of the reference books highlighted in this book talk, like the directories and the encyclopedias in the next segment, are parts of multivolume works. It is important that you get a "look" and a "feel" for the books. After all, how many times do we hear "I want that physician book...you know...the RED one!"



2. Encyclopedias and Dictionaries:

The first two resources are sort of a hybrid between a directory and a dictionary. They help to identify and describe rare diseases or disorders that are often very difficult to research. I highly recommend Magalini's "**Dictionary of Medical Syndromes**"—its entries include excellent lists of alternative names (or synonyms) for conditions. "**The Complete Directory for People with Rare Disorders**" from NORD (National Organization for Rare Disorders) is also a great resource because it not only has disorder descriptions, but also lists the organizations and associations that support patients suffering from these conditions. NORD has a Web site at www.rarediseases.org/

- **Dictionary of Medical Syndromes**, 4th edition
Sergio Magalini
Philadelphia : Lippincott-Raven, 1997
- **The Complete Directory for People with Rare Disorders: A Comprehensive Guide to Over 1,000 Rare Disorders from the National Organization for Rare Disorders**
Lakeville, CT: Grey House Pub., 2002-03

What is a high-quality medical reference collection without encyclopedias and dictionaries?! There are many high quality medical dictionaries available. Two of my personal favorites are:

1. **Melloni's Illustrated Medical Dictionary**, 4th edition
Ida G. Dox, et al.
Boca Raton: Parthenon, 2002
2. **Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary**, 23rd edition
Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 2003

While each dictionary is illustrated, be warned those of you weak of stomach! Melloni includes great drawn illustrations and Dorland's often includes actual pictures. (Note: Some of these illustrations are quite graphic.)

Encyclopedias can range from general medicine or health to specific aspects or conditions, such as cancer, mental health, or alternative medicine. These examples are all published by the **Gale Group** and are designed for lay people. For those of you that have access to the Gale electronic databases (such as **Health Reference Center—Academic**), you can find full-text, online, the Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine. Many consortiums subscribe to Gale's health-related databases, and some of these resources (such as the Gale Encyclopedia of Internal Medicine) are available in both English and Spanish versions.

- **Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine**, 2nd edition
Jacqueline L. Longe, ed.
Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2005
- **Gale Encyclopedia of Cancer**
Ellen Thackery
Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2005



- **Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders**
Ellen Thackery and Madeline Harris, eds.
Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2003
- **Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, 2nd edition**
Jacqueline L. Longe, ed.
Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2001
- **Enciclopedia de las Medicinas Alternativas**
Kristine Krapp y Jacqueline L. Longe, ed.
Barcelona: Oceano, 2003

If the concise entries in the encyclopedias and dictionaries are not enough for your clients, you will have to turn to more in-depth reference resources.

3. Basic Health Books: Diseases and Conditions

If you don't want to access online internal medicine and disease texts, such as the **Merck Manuals** (available at www.merck.com/pubs/), consider directing your patrons to resources such as:

- **Mayo Clinic Family Health Book, 3rd edition**
Scott C. Litin, ed.
New York: HarperResource, 2003
- **The Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide**
Anthony L. Komaroff, ed.
New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999

Mayo provides online information via its Mayoclinic.com site (www.mayoclinic.com/index.cfm), and so does Harvard Medical School at www.intelihealth.com.

The previous two books were designed for lay people, family members of all ages. Whereas, these resources are Internal Medicine books designed for health professionals or individuals that are well-versed in medical terminology and concepts.

- **Cecil Textbook of Medicine, 22nd edition**
Lee Goldman and Dennis Ausiello, eds.
Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2004
- **Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, 15th edition**
Eugene Braunwald, et al.
New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001

While consumer-designed books often provide definitions and background information, Cecil and Harrison's assume that readers are familiar with terminology, tests, and physiology. They don't "candy coat" or "hand-hold" readers, so be careful to assess your consumers' information needs before leading them to these professional-level resources.



Harrison's is available as a paid subscription database (which is frequently updated), whereas the print versions are published about every three years.

A final resource that I would recommend in this category is "**The Patient's Guide to Medical Tests**;" everything you need to know about the tests your doctor orders.

- **The Patient's Guide to Medical Tests**, 2nd edition
Joseph C. Segen and Josie Wade
New York: Facts on File, 2002

Not only are patients curious about who they will be seeing (hence the Doctor directories), definitions of various terms and diseases and conditions (exemplified by the encyclopedias, dictionaries, and internal medicine books), but they also want to know:

- What diagnostic tests are used?
- What is involved in the tests?
- How to interpret the results?

Online diagnostic test resources are also available via the Web:

- **Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide: Diagnostic Tests**
<http://www.health.harvard.edu/fhg/diagnostics.shtml>
- **Lab Tests Online**
<http://www.labtestsonline.org/understanding/index.html>
- **Merck Manual, Appendix III, Common Medical Tests**
<http://www.merck.com/mmhe/index.html>

Finally....we can't have a complete medical reference collection until we review drug resources!

4. Drug Resources

There are so many high quality drug resources available for consumers and professionals!
A representative sampling includes:

- **Consumer Drug Reference**
Yonkers, NY: Consumer Report Books, 2001
- **Encyclopedia of Dietary Supplements**
Paul M. Coates, et al.
Boca Raton, FL: Marcel Dekker, 2005
- **Herbal Medicine**
Mark Blumental, et al., ed.
Newton, MA: Integrative Medicine Communications, 2000

Notice that the **PDR (Physicians' Desk Reference)** titles include the standard prescription drug reference (the original PDR) as well as separate volumes addressing nonprescription drugs and supplements, as well as herbal medicines.



- **Physicians' Desk Reference: PDR**
Oradell, NJ: Medical Economics, Co. 2005
- **PDR for Herbal Medicines**
Montvale, NJ: Medical Economics Co., 1998
- **Physician's Desk Reference for Nonprescription Drugs and Dietary Supplements**
Montvale, NJ: Medical Economics Co., 1999

The Internet also has several quality drug information sites:

- **MedlinePlus**
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html
- **RxList**
<http://www.rxlist.com/>

I hope that this overview has helped you to better understand the types of information available in a consumer health reference collection.

Part II: General Stacks Resources

Let's look at the types of current, quality general resources our clients can check out using their library cards...

1. Subject Specific Textbooks

In the reference collection, we reviewed comprehensive internal medicine and family health books. If we go to the general collection, we can often find more subject-specific, in-depth texts such as DeVita's "**Cancer: Principles and Practice of Oncology**," or comprehensive consumer health sourcebooks such as "**Medical Tests**," or perhaps an age-specific resource called "**Cancer Information for Teens**"

- **Cancer: Principles and Practice of Oncology**, 6th edition
Vincent DeVita
Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2001
- **Medical Tests Sourcebook**, 2nd edition
Joyce Brennfleck Shannon, ed.
Detroit, MI: Omnigraphics, 2004
- **Cancer Information for Teens**
Wilma, R. Caldwell
Detroit, MI: Omnigraphics, 2004



2. Biographies

Sometimes, when our clients are newly diagnosed with a disease or condition, they want to know what it is going to be like to live with that disease. One path to understanding is sharing the experiences of people living with a malady, or hearing from their caretakers. In the general collection you can often find biographies like Lance Armstrong's "**It's not about the bike: My journey back to life,**" or "**My book for kids with cansur: a child's autobiography of hope**" (note the spelling).

- **It's Not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life**
Lance Armstrong
New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2000
- **My Book for Kids with Cansur: A Child's Autobiography of Hope**
Jason Gaes
Aberdeen, SD: Melius & Peterson, 1987

There are so many interesting and candid biographical resources on the market today—be sure that your general collection has some of them!

Other biographies shown include:

- **Acquainted with the Night: A parent's Quest to Understand Depression and Bipolar Disorder in his Children**
Paul Raeburn
New York: Broadway Books, 2004
- **Detour: My Bipolar Road Trip in 4-D**
Lizzie Simon
New York: Atria Books, 2002
- **Everything in Its Place: My Trial and Triumphs with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**
Marc Summers
New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999
- **How Long Does It Hurt?**
Cynthia Mather
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004
- **Learning Sickness: A Year with Crohns Disease**
James M. Lange
Sterling, VA: Captial Books, 2004
- **Lupus novice: Toward Self-Healing**
Laura Chester
Barrytown, NY: Barrytown, 1999



3. "How- To" and "Everything You Need to Know"

How many times have you heard, "I need to know **everything** on fibromyalgia," or "diabetes," or "chronic pain?" Our reference collection offers us concise overviews of diseases and conditions, but they really don't address the "I really need to know everything" question. That's when we need to move to the **general collection**, where you can find "everything you need to know books" and comprehensive sourcebooks or videos on a wide range of diseases, disorders and conditions, be it a juvenile book explaining epilepsy, such as "**Lee, the Rabbit with Epilepsy**," or "**Straight Talk about Psychological Testing for Kids**."

- **Lee, the Rabbit with Epilepsy**
Deborah M. Moss
Kensington, MD: Woodbine House, 1989
- **Straight Talk about Psychological Testing for Kids**
Ellen Braaten and Gretchen Felopulos
New York: Guilford Press, 2004

Other resources from the general collection include:

- **The First Year—Lupus: An Essential Guide for the Newly Diagnosed**
Nancy C. Hanger
New York: Marlowe, 2003
- **Mayo Clinic on Osteoporosis**
Stephen Hodgson, ed.
Broomall, PA: Mason Crest, 2004
- **Menopause for Dummies**
Marcia L. Jones
New York: Wiley, 2003
- **The Thyroid Sourcebook for Women**, 2nd edition
M. Sara Rosenthal
New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005
- **Rheumatoid Arthritis: Everything You Need to Know**
Robert Lahita
New York: Avery, 2001
- **Sleep Like a Baby: What Every Parent Needs to Know about Babies & Sleep**
[videorecording]
Heart at Work Productions
Boulder, CO: InJoy Productions, 2000



4. Try Before You Buy!

Are your patrons tired of spending all their hard-earned cash on the latest “fad” books or videos? Why not encourage them to “try before they buy” and stop first at their local libraries! Libraries buy a variety of popular diet books, cookbooks, exercise videos, alternative medicine and self help resources that are designed for a variety of age levels. Notice that we have “**Babar’s Yoga for Elephants**” in addition to “**The New Yoga for People over Fifty.**”

- **Babar’s Yoga for Elephants**
Laurent de Brunhoff
New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002
- **The New Yoga for People over 50: A Comprehensive Guide for Midlife and Older Beginners**
Suza Francina
Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, 1997

Don’t be shy! Head to the stacks and grab these videos:

- **Acupressure: The Timeless Art of Self-Healing**
Wave Communications
Thousand Oaks, CA: Goldhi Video, 2000
- **Reflexology Massage**
Santa Monica, CA: Living Arts, 1999
- **Heart Rate Safe**
Jim Murray
Hollywood, FL: Heart Rate Safe, 1996

Also try some of these “Try before you buy” books:

- **Eating in the Raw: A Beginner’s Guide to Getting Slimmer, Feeling Healthier, and Living Longer the Raw-Food Way**
Carol Alt
New York: Clarkson Potter, 2004
- **Effortless Pain Relief: A Guide to Self-Healing from Chronic Pain**
Ingrid Bacci
New York: Free Press, 2005
- **Fat Wars: 45 Days to Transform Your Body**
Brad J. King
New York: Hungry Minds, 2002
- **The Male Biological Clock: The Startling News about Aging, Sexuality, and Fertility in Men**
Harry Fisch
New York: Free Press, 2005



- **Tai Chi: A Practical Introduction**, revised edition
Paul H. Crompton
Shaftesbury, Dorset; Rockport, MA: Element, 1998

As you can see, the general collection has a wide variety of resources in many different formats:

- Biographies
- Exercise videos and manuals
- Sourcebooks
- Textbooks

The best thing about the general collection is that our patrons can take these items home. So what are you waiting for? Take them to the general collection and help them to check these things out!