



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 (2008)
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 (2008)
Designed for the layperson, this book from Consumer Reports explains “important considerations about taking your medicine, how to manage your medications, off-label use of medications, information about generic and brand-name drugs, safety issues, and how to store your medications.” Ref 615.58

[*The Merck Index*](#). Merck & Company (2006)
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 (2008)

This book contains “[U.S.] Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved labeling for drugs as well as prescription information provided by manufacturers for drugs historically marketed without FDA approval.” 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 (2008)

Designed for healthcare professions, this guide to nonprescription drugs contains “manufacturer contact information, product names, prescribing categories, active ingredients, and a listing of ‘companion’ OTC [over-the-counter] drugs that may be recommended to relieve symptoms caused by prescription drug therapy.” Ref 615.704

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

[EBSCO Consumer Health Complete](#) is designed to support patients' information needs and foster an overall understanding of health-related topics. The database covers all areas of health and wellness from mainstream medicine to alternative, holistic and integrated medicine.

[EBSCO Magazines and Newspapers](#) features full-text articles from popular magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, and dozens of health related journals, including *Harvard Women's Health Watch*, *Journal of Environmental Health*, and *JAMA (The Journal of the American Medical Association)*.

Home access to these databases is available to all MARINet library card holders. More information on home access is available at:

<http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/LB/main/authentication.cfm>



Websites

Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs

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

The publishers of *Consumer Reports* magazine maintain this website designed to “help you talk to your doctor about prescription drugs, and find the most effective and safe drugs that also give you the best value for your health care dollar.” 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. It also features news on important drug developments, and tips on how to talk to your doctor, how to read medication labels, and how to recognize tampering of over-the-counter medicines. The Mayo Clinic is a health organization comprised of over 3,000 physicians and scientists.

PDRhealth: Drugs and Supplements

http://www.pdrhealth.com/drug_info/index.html

The online edition of the Physicians’ Desk Reference (PDR) “offers consumer-friendly explanations of disease states and conditions as well as the safe and effective use of prescription and non-prescription drugs as well as herbal medicines.”

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.



- **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 MARINet catalog.

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

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

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



You may also visit these other local libraries for additional information:

The [Marin General Hospital Medical Library and Cancer Resource & Recovery Center](#) exists “to assist the medical staff, nursing and allied health staff, non-medical employees, students, patients and their families and the general public in finding the medical and wellness information they need.” Located at 250 Bon Air Road, Greenbrae. Phone # (415) 925-7393.

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.



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

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