

and as a means of locating the existing literature on the subject.

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The Allergy and Asthma Cure: A Complete 8-Step Nutritional Program. Fred Pescatore MD MPH. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. 2003. Hard cover, 251 pages, \$24.95.

The book is intended for people who suffer from allergies and asthma. It does not directly target health care professionals, but may be useful to them as well. The title of the book is a bit misleading in that it advertises a “cure,” which is unrealistic. The word “cure” also appears several times in the book, including in chapter titles. In several sections, including the introduction, however, the author is more reasonable and acknowledges that his program does not cure allergies and asthma, but that it can help them “decrease significantly the amount of medication they use daily and be able to enjoy aspects of their lives they thought they would have to do without”—a more appropriate and realistic claim.

The book has 15 chapters organized into 4 parts. Part I covers diagnosis and treatment of asthma and allergies and includes guidelines and currently available medications. Part II discusses the author’s vision of and recommendations for a “complementary medical approach” to allergies and asthma, covering food sensitivities, and there is a whole chapter dedicated to the possible role of candida and yeast in allergies. In Part III, which contains Chapters 7–12, the author details his proposed nutritional program for the “cure.” Chapter 7 provides background, Chapter 8 talks about a specific diet for the “healing phase,” Chapter 9 aims at strategies for weight loss, Chapter 10 provides insights into breathing better, Chapter 11 discusses nutritional supplements, and Chapter 12 covers the use of nutritional supplements to treat asthma and allergies. Part IV contains 3 chapters, which give meal plans, recipes, and a resource

guide for general medical as well as “complementary medical” information.

In the first part of the book the author does an excellent job of providing useful background information about asthma diagnosis, treatment, etiologies, and triggers. That information will be very useful to patients who have asthma and allergies and want to better understand these diseases.

Chapter 3 covers the conventional treatment of allergies, including “allergy shots.” Chapter 4 covers the conventional treatment of asthma and includes an excellent overview of the currently available medications and their pros and cons. Chapter 4 also includes brief sections on the National Institutes of Health guidelines for asthma diagnosis and management, over-the-counter medications, and newer therapies being tested. The material in this section is well selected and organized. Most of the statements in this section are factual and based on current understanding, but some sections that present the author’s perspective and are given more weight, we believe, than the average health care professional in the field would give them. For example, we think there is undue emphasis on the role of candida in allergies.

The book lacks illustrations, which would have helped clarify certain of the book’s messages. Also, although most of the stated information is accurate, specific references to the information sources are not given. The index is useful and well organized. Despite the absence of illustrations and lack of citations to appropriate references, patients will find the information in this section accurate and useful.

In the second and third parts of the book the author describes his 8-step program, which he calls a “modern prescription for health.” The program includes proper nutrition, nutritional supplements, and cleaning up environmental allergens. The program is tailored to individuals, depending on whether they are overweight, have allergies, asthma, or any combination of the three. A very helpful feature, in addition to the useful appendix, is that the author summarizes the recommendations at the end of each chapter, making them easy to reference.

Step 1 of the program is to determine the patient’s food sensitivities via food sensitivity tests and to begin diets that eliminate dairy, wheat, corn, and salicylates. Step 2 is more controversial; it deals with candida and yeast, and this section includes an interesting discussion about “leaky gut”—a

hypothesis for which we know of no strong medical or nutritional evidence. Most of this chapter focuses on candidiasis and fungus, and an extensive candida questionnaire is included. Step 3 concerns an allergen and asthma trigger list, and this section provides a useful questionnaire and worksheet to determine what factors contribute to allergy or asthma reactions. Step 4 is the nutritional program, which is divided into a yeast-free diet, with or without weight loss. The “standard American diet” is discussed and the author concludes that that diet is detrimental. There is a discussion about fruit as a source of simple sugar. The given examples of fruit portion sizes seem questionable to us. It seems that some fruits are avoided because of sugar content when it may be more an issue of portion size. Overall, this is a 3–6-month elimination diet in which most foods seem reasonable to avoid except that the allowable grains on a yeast-free diet are restrictive and most people would have difficulty following this aspect of the program. This is a rigorous diet plan and our experience suggests most people would have a hard time sustaining the motivation necessary to follow it.

Step 5 is about weight loss. The author, Fred Pescatore, wrote a book on the subject of weight loss and recommends it for further weight-loss information. The discussion on fish fails to mention the caveat about heavy metals in fish. The no-cheese (because it contains yeast) aspect would be difficult for most people to follow. The recommendation to eliminate tomatoes is questionable as is the focus on counting sugar grams and not total carbohydrate grams in the yeast-free cereal component. Step 6 deals with the re-introduction of eliminated foods—a 16-week process. Steps 7 and 8 are about supplements. This is a highly individualized aspect of the plan. General recommendations are given for each category discussed. Again, there is undue focus on the anti-candida supplements and medications. The book recommends 10,000 international units 3 times a day of Vitamin A, which we believe is worrisome because of possible toxicity. Health care professionals should have substantial reservations regarding unknown information on some of the recommended supplements, such as Quercetin, active hexose correlated compounds (AHCC), pregnenolone, dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), licorice root, and grape seed extract.

Part IV gives detailed lists regarding meal plans and specific recipes and provides a medical resource guide. The meal plans and recipes are useful and relatively nutritionally sound. However, it would take a very highly motivated individual to stay on this meal plan. The author also provides a reasonable list of Web sites and addresses for foundations, societies, and institutions that can provide useful information on asthma and allergies. He also provides "complementary medical" information Web sites.

Overall, once you pass its misleading title and the undue emphasis on the role of candida in allergies, this book is an excellent overview for asthma and allergy patients. It provides very useful background information on etiology, diagnosis, and treatment. The basic principles of eliminating environmental irritants, getting exercise, losing weight, and following a low-carbohydrate diet are reasonable. Unfortunately, they are the most difficult lifestyle aspects to change. Almost anyone would have improved health if they followed the book's advice on those subjects. The rest of the book's advice should be evaluated on an individual basis, under the care of a licensed professional, especially aspects regarding some food supplements and the treatment of candida.

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20 Common Problems in Respiratory Disorders. William J Hueston MD, editor. (20 Common Problems series, Barry D Weiss MD, series editor). New York: McGraw-Hill. 2002. Soft cover, illustrated, 369 pages, \$45.

At the onset of the influenza epidemic in the winter of 2004, I spent a frustrating half hour searching online medical references for current influenza treatment guidelines, without success. Soon thereafter I settled down to review this book and was delighted to find a well referenced, clear, and directed chapter on influenza, which quickly answered my questions.

My experience in the practice of clinical medicine leads me to agree with the author's assertion that the 20 most common

problems in respiratory medicine are among the most common presenting patient complaints and are what primary care providers will want to read about. This textbook is an excellent introductory text for primary care providers in training, and a quick reference for those already in practice. Though written primarily for clinicians, respiratory therapists and nurses will probably also find this book useful.

The book is well organized and thoughtfully arranged into 20 chapters and 5 parts. Part 1 focuses on common presenting symptoms and their evaluation. Parts 2 through 5 cover upper respiratory infections, lower respiratory infections, noninfectious acute respiratory diseases, and chronic respiratory diseases and their prevention. This book's structure is logical and lends to its easy readability. In addition, highlighted and boxed outlines on the first page of each chapter help to make the information more transparent and quickly accessible. Though not advertised as a pediatrics text, most chapters contain sections on special considerations for children. Pediatric drug dosing and vaccine guidelines and dosing are provided in all chapters that provide that information for adults. In addition, Chapter 10 provides a dedicated discussion of the causes of pediatric cough. The chapter first introduces a framework for evaluating pediatric cough, then discusses croup, epiglottitis, bronchiolitis, and pertussis.

The initial section on respiratory symptoms and their evaluation consists of 3 chapters on cough, dyspnea, and pulmonary function testing. As cough and dyspnea are symptoms rather than disease entities, such a beginning may seem overly broad and basic for the more experienced provider and a sacrifice of an opportunity to discuss 3 other common respiratory disorders in more depth. However, these chapters do lay an important foundation for the novice clinician, as cough and dyspnea are common chief complaints with serious and life-threatening diagnostic considerations. The author's stated aim with these chapters is to offer a guide to the evaluation of these common complaints as well as an approach to pursue when the initial evaluation does not reveal the underlying cause. Each chapter provides a useful discussion of the pathophysiology, workup, and evidence-based treatment of these disorders, and concludes with a clear and succinct algorithmic flow chart.

For example, the chapter on cough briefly discusses the basic cough mechanism and then reviews the differential diagnosis for both acute and chronic cough. Numerous highlighted tables and charts summarize differential diagnoses and emphasize important points, such as red-flag signs and symptoms for potentially life-threatening causes of cough. The chapter includes an especially useful evidence-based review of treatment options for chronic cough.

The chapter on pulmonary function testing is also clearly written, providing important definitions and an introduction to key clinical concepts. The treatment is somewhat superficial, leaving the reader without enough information to interpret the cited studies independently, though a flow diagram at the end of the chapter presents a useful algorithm.

In Part 2 there is a chapter on pharyngitis, which, like the earlier chapters, is symptom-driven rather than focused on a specific disease entity. The result is brief, paragraph-long discussions on selected causes of pharyngitis, followed by a more satisfying discussion of group A streptococcus pharyngitis, which includes a table that highlights the modified Centor Strep score. This chapter may have been better had it focused instead on Group A streptococcus or perhaps mononucleosis, covering those topics in greater depth while limiting the discussion on influenza and rhinovirus, which have their own chapters.

The chapters that focus on specific diseases, including the common cold, sinusitis, otitis media, otitis externa, and influenza, are detailed and well written. The chapter on the common cold provides a lively discussion and literature review on the overuse of antibiotics for this viral illness—an important topic that is echoed in the chapter on acute bronchitis. Appropriate therapeutic alternatives are discussed, with reference to efficacy studies. Herbal and homeopathic options are also described, though not in great detail. The chapter on influenza is remarkable for its clarity and brevity while retaining clinically pertinent details. Tables highlight the characteristics that distinguish influenza from the common cold, differences in presentation by age group, and comparisons of the 4 antiviral agents available for influenza, including cost considerations. The thoughtful use of tables and graphs is consistent throughout these chapters. However, the coverage of clinical points is not as consistent. For example, the chapter on sinus-