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The authors and publisher have exerted every effort to ensure that drug selection and dosage set forth in this text are in accord with current recommendations and practice at the time of publication. However, in view of ongoing research, changes in government regulations, and the constant flow of information relating to drug therapy and drug reactions, the reader is urged to check the package insert for each drug for any change in indications and dosage and for added warnings and precautions. This is particularly important when the recommended agent is a new or infrequently employed drug. It is assumed that treatment is given under the supervision of a physician.

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Preface

The winds of change are dramatically affecting the kind and quality of health care being delivered. This is apparently a result of a number of concurrent happenings. The prime initiator has been governmental cutbacks introduced in 1984 with diagnostic-related groupings. Cost constraints have reduced hospital patient days and have extended the need for acute-care service into the community.

Another dramatic change has been the more widespread use of diagnostic and treatment aids that are markedly less invasive, less traumatic, and more accurate. Examples are imaging techniques (CT, PET, and MRI), fiberoptics, and lasers.

In addition, an ever-increasing awareness of health promotion, physical fitness, and the concept of self-care continues, while the numbers of persons living longer are increasing this more illness-vulnerable older age-group.

The purpose of *The Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice* is to help nurses keep abreast of these changes and to enhance clinical judgment, nursing practice, and high-level health care. The authors have sought to set forth nursing concepts and strategies commensurate with research findings, technological advances, different treatment modalities, and new knowledge and understanding from the behavioral, biological, and physical sciences.

The nursing process is incorporated widely throughout this volume. Nursing assessment, diagnosis, mutual goal-setting, planning and implementing nursing interventions, patient education, and evaluation are highlighted to present an organized approach. Not every problem could be addressed with this detail because of space limitations. The nurse practitioner is encouraged to focus on the individual patient's strengths and what can be done, while using the principles set forth to understand and manage complex care options.

The sections on health education have been extended to help the patient make informed decisions, minimize health-thwarting behaviors, and effect positive changes toward optimum health.

We thank those who have shared their knowledge and clinical expertise and express our admiration of and respect for our nursing colleagues who translate these principles into high-quality professional practice. Although perfection is elusive, the essence of nursing continues to be concern for and improvement of the human condition.

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