



*Textbook of*  
**MEDICAL PHYSIOLOGY**

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*Dedicated to*

**MY FATHER**

for the uncompromising principles that have guided his life

**MY MOTHER**

for leading her children into intellectual pursuits

**MY WIFE**

for her magnificent devotion to her family

**MY CHILDREN**

for making everything worthwhile

# PREFACE

When I wrote the first edition of this textbook, I had the naïve belief that once the book was completed, subsequent revisions would require only simple changes. However, with each new edition I find that continuing strides in the field of physiology belie this belief, so much so that large proportions of the text must be completely recast and rewritten, and even the emphasis of the subject matter must often be changed as our knowledge becomes more penetrating. Therefore, the reader will find hardly a chapter in this edition that has not been significantly altered. Also, many of the figures have been either changed in at least some feature or completely replaced, and over 50 new figures have been added.

If I should characterize the major change in both this and the last edition, it would be a striking trend toward more fundamental physiology. The reason for this is mainly the greater success of the research physiologist in probing more basic mechanisms of function than was true a few years ago. Yet I have still attempted to present physiology as an integrated study of the body's functional systems, attempting to utilize the new fundamental knowledge to build a better understanding of the mechanisms upon which life depends.

I have also made a serious attempt to devise and achieve techniques of expression that will help bring the physical and chemical principles of the body's complexities into the medical student's realm of understanding. In pursuit of this goal, I have kept records of those types of material with which the student has difficulty; I have quizzed students in detail to determine their levels of comprehension; and I have attempted to note inconsistencies in logic that might appear in student discussions. All these data have been used to help choose the material and methods of presentation.

Thus, it has been my desire to make this book a "teaching" text as well as one that covers essentially all the basic physiology required of a student of medicine.

A special emphasis of the book is a more detailed attention than is given in other textbooks of physiology to the body's many regulatory systems. It is these that provide what physiologists call *homeostasis*. The reason for this special emphasis is that most disease conditions of the body are made manifest by abnormal function of one or more of the regulatory systems. Therefore, the student's comprehension of "medical" physiology depends perhaps more on a knowledge of these systems than on any other facet of physiology.

Another goal in the preparation of this text has been to make the text as accurate as possible. To help attain this, suggestions and critiques from many physiologists, students, and clinicians throughout the United States and other parts of the world have been received and utilized in checking the factual accuracy of the text. Yet, even so, because of the likelihood of error in sorting through many thousands of bits of information, I wish to issue an invitation—in fact, much more than merely an invitation, actually a request—to all readers to send along criticisms of error or inaccuracy. Indeed, physiologists understand how important feedback is to proper function of the human body; so, too, is feedback equally important for progressive development of a textbook of medical physiology. I hope also that those many persons who have already helped will accept my sincerest appreciation for their efforts.

A word of explanation is needed about two features of the text—first, the references, and, second, the two print sizes. The references have been chosen primarily for their up-to-

dateness and for the quality of their own bibliographies. Use of these references as well as of cross-references from them can give the student almost complete coverage of the entire field of physiology.

The print is set in two sizes. The material presented in small print is of several different kinds: first, anatomical, chemical, and other information that is needed for the immediate discussion but that most students will learn in more detail in other courses; second, information that is of special importance to certain clinical fields of medicine but that is not necessary to fundamental understanding of the body's basic physiologic mechanisms; and, third, information that will be of value to those students who wish to pursue a subject more deeply than does the average medical student. On the other hand, the material in large print, which represents about two-thirds of the text,

constitutes the major bulk of physiological information that the student will require in his medical studies and that he will not obtain in other courses. For those teachers who would like to present a more limited course of physiology, the student's study can be restricted primarily to the large type.

Again, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to many others who have helped in the preparation of this book. I am particularly grateful to Mrs. Billie Howard and Mrs. Judy Bass for their secretarial services, to Mrs. Carolyn Hull for the new illustrations, and to the staff of the W. B. Saunders Company for its continued editorial and production excellence.

ARTHUR C. GUYTON  
*Jackson, Mississippi*

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## PART V

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