

# KNOWLEDGE CENTRAL

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## B O O K S

**Surgery: A Patient's Guide From Diagnosis to Recovery.** Claire Mailhot, Melinda Brubaker, and Linda Garratt Slezak. San Francisco: University of California, San Francisco, Nursing Press, 1999, 272 pages, \$20.



With an estimated 50 million surgical procedures performed each year in the United States, consumers need to know what they can do to ensure the best possible outcome. Three RNs who are experienced in the care of surgical patients compiled a consumer guide to meet this need. Their purpose for writing the book, *Surgery: A Patient's Guide From Diagnosis to Recovery*, is to provide consumers with a comprehensive description of the entire surgical experience to lessen their anxiety and encourage a positive outcome. Through their concise chapters and summary worksheets, the authors have achieved their goal in an exceptional manner.

The book is comprised of 14 chapters, covering everything from how to select a surgeon and what actually goes on in the operating room to how to review a hospital bill. Each chapter begins with a patient scenario to introduce the topic through the patient's view, which adds a personal connection for readers. The entire trajectory of the patient's experience with a surgical procedure is well outlined. The descriptions of how to prepare for surgery, questions that should be asked, and what to expect during recovery on a hospital unit provide readers with a clear picture of these experiences.

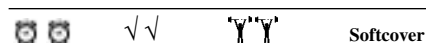
The financial aspects of a surgical treatment are particularly well summarized. The chapter titled "Understanding Your Health Plan" summarizes health insurance and explains the background of healthcare costs in the United

States. The last chapter includes an informative description regarding interpreting a hospital bill and challenging erroneous charges.

As a reviewer, I found that each topic was covered thoroughly yet concisely with helpful attention to detail. Several chapters include a summary checklist or worksheet about the key points. An extensive glossary and reference list complete this informative handbook. The book's length might appear intimidating for some readers; however, many readers will find the explanation and detail very helpful in providing them with confidence as they approach their surgical experience. Most patient education books address specific diseases or treatment. *Surgery: A Patient's Guide From Diagnosis to Recovery* is unique in its broad application to any type of surgical procedure. Oncology surgical nurses will find it a helpful addition to their preoperative patient education libraries.

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**Hospice and Palliative Care: Concepts and Practice (Second Edition).** Walter B. Forman, Judith A. Kitzes, Robert P. Anderson, and Denise Kopchak Sheehan (Eds.). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2003, 288 pages, \$42.95.



*Hospice and Palliative Care: Concepts and Practice* is unique in that the editors and contributors represent disciplines such as pharmacy, nursing, medicine, law, and social work, which provides interesting perspectives on this important topic. The main difference between the first edition and the second is that the new edition incorporates developments from the field of palliative care since the

late 1990s and includes contributions from advanced practice nursing.

The text's primary focus is the hospice setting, although the content is also appropriate for those working in palliative care. The book begins with the historical development of hospice and palliative care, the interdisciplinary team, eligibility and reimbursement issues, clinical settings, and quality improvement. Chapters cover information about common symptoms, grief, family support, and death education, as well as communication, ethical, and legal issues. The chapter about legal issues gives a clear overview of common law and patient rights and lists a number of documents that may be beneficial to patients, families, and healthcare providers. The text concludes with a unique chapter of case studies that illustrate familiar issues in end-of-life care and a helpful update on informatics and Internet resources.

Both practicing healthcare professionals and students will find an excellent overview of end-of-life care in this text. In fact, because of its range of topics with theoretical and practical content, *Hospice and Palliative Care* could be used as a textbook or in a continuing education program for practicing healthcare professionals or a graduate interdisciplinary course. However, clinicians who need in-depth information about daily management strategies involved in palliative and hospice care patients should refer to other resources such as the End-of-Life Nursing Consortium curriculum.

The major strengths of the text are its detailed table of contents and tabular data. Several tables synthesize important information and serve as quick references for readers. In addition, each chapter includes suggestions for further reading and/or references. The short chapter length makes the book easily readable despite its small print.

The weaknesses of this text focus on three main areas. First, the role of the spiritual care professional, a core member of palliative care and hospice teams, is not addressed adequately. Second, the use of complementary therapies in palliative care is discussed only in the context of pain management. Third, information about the challenges and current state of quality improvement in end-of-life care is not included.

Overall, *Hospice and Palliative Care* presents the complexity and range of end-of-life care in the United States today. The

Ease of Reference and Usability	Content Level	Book Size
Quick, on-the-spot resource	✓ Basic	Pocket size
Moderate time requirement	✓ ✓ Intermediate	Intermediate
In-depth study	✓ ✓ ✓ Advanced and complex, pre-requisite reading required	Desk reference

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