MAYO CLINIC ON MANAGING DIABETES, M. Collazo-Clavell, Ed. Rochester, Minnesota: Mayo Clinic, 2001. Paper. Pp. 184. Price $14.95.

This is the eighth book in the series from the Mayo Clinic Health Information series. The goal of the Mayo Clinic is to provide reliable answers to everyday health questions. This is accomplished very successfully in this publication addressing diabetes mellitus, both type I and type II. It is intended for the general public and is definitely written for this audience.

The book has four parts: the facts, taking control, medical therapies and living well. Each part is broken down further into chapters with very specific topics and each chapter has sections with specific headings. Therefore, as a consumer interested in reading further on an issue, it is very easy to find a specific topic. All aspects of diabetes mellitus are covered including the disease process and complications. Diet, exercise and medications, the cornerstones of management, are presented clearly and concisely. The medications are very current. The editors include the newest long-acting insulin, glargine, and discuss rezulin, an oral agent, taken off the market due to complications. Each chapter ends with a question-and-answer section. The only concern I have, as a professional, is the text sections are not referenced and the weight table on page 87 does not indicate the source of the data. It is unlikely a consumer would notice this lack of referencing.

When indicated, there are complimentary diagrams to explain the text explanations more visually. This is especially beneficial to the lay public trying to understand more complex topics, such as blood glucose monitoring. Recommended exercises have pictures to help the reader visualize the specific movement. The chapter describing the insulin
pump could have a diagram of the pump to supplement the text. This is especially useful to geriatric clients. In addition, there are bulleted tables to emphasize/clarify important facts. Diagrams of specific insulin action are very clearly presented. This data is very important for a patient with diabetes mellitus on insulin management.

Individual issues for the male and female gender are addressed in a simplistic explanation. This included a section on the influences of hormonal changes on insulin levels.

The book concludes with living well and overall prevention. The individual contributors include a variety of health professionals, including a registered dietitian. When appropriate, referencing to Internet resources are cited in the chapters. Additional resources are a concluding section.

Overall I recommend this book as a clear, concise easy-to-read book with current information on all aspects of diabetes mellitus, type I and type II. The publishers are well respected for their long history of promoting prevention and treatment of disease for all consumers. This reputation continues in this publication.

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MAYO CLINIC ON HEALTHY AGING, E. T. Creagan, MD New York, NY: Kensington Publishing Company, 2001, Pp 241, Price $14.95

Everyone is aging and, through this guide, the Mayo Clinic hopes to make sure the process is as healthy as possible.

The Mayo Clinic on Healthy Aging is a paperback with eight chapters organized by topic. Each section focuses on a particular aspect of life that the author believes should be explored as the reader approaches retirement. The book is not a guide to retirement, however. Rather, it is a blueprint for taking care of oneself so that retirement, if chosen, can be enjoyed to the fullest extent.

In the first chapter, the author includes definitions and explains the purpose of the guide, which is to offer advice intended to help the reader
age well and maintain good health. Other chapters focus on taking care of the body, mind, and spirit. Two chapters about relationships and maintaining independence are especially well written and include useful references to community organizations. Also of note is the health care section that lists practical tips for selecting a physician.

Unfortunately, nutrition is mentioned only briefly in the guide. Several references are made to eating healthy, but these points are not covered in sufficient detail. Still, the advice provided is simple, straightforward and sensible, and is consistent with messages promoted by modern dieticians.

Finances are addressed in a chapter that includes a brief explanation of the most common questions individuals should ask themselves in order to ensure a healthy financial future. Although it is never too late to start saving for the “golden years,” this section strays somewhat from the intended target audience since the information is actually more useful for readers in their 30s and 40s rather than those in their 50s or 60s. For this reason, the guide could be recommended for younger readers whose retirement is still a relatively distant prospect. In addition, the subject matter could serve as a valuable educational tool for younger readers with aging parents since it would provide a springboard for family discussions about caregiving and end-of-life issues.

Finally, the guide contains personal anecdotes that add zest to the content and entertain the reader. The only improvement that could be made here involves the formatting, which is somewhat distracting. The stories appear in the middle of chapters, often inserted between paragraphs of normal text. The separation is not apparent in some instances, which could prove confusing and cause some readers to lose their place or miss an important point. Placing the anecdotes in bordered, shaded boxes may have helped to avoid this problem.

The Mayo Clinic on Healthy Aging is a primer on what to expect as one transitions from caretaker to care receiver. The variety of information provided and the numerous resources listed make it a useful handbook for individuals who envision an active life in their later years. The many websites referenced offer additional opportunities to obtain more detailed information about certain topics. With the growing number of seniors on the Internet, the guide could generate hours of exploration for those who are already retired and seeking ways to get connected.

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The American Dietetic Association has put together a very comprehensive text that brings to the table the nutritional problems and needs of the elderly. Nutrition Management & Restorative Dining for Older Adults presents the latest technologies and practical interventions to meet the difficult challenge in caring for the eating-disabled older adult.

As we all realize the elderly are the fastest growing demographic group in the United States and there is much scientific proof of the vital role that nutrition has in health maintenance and disease prevention. Individuals have their own special nutritional needs and the whole person must be evaluated. Improved management of nutrition care can maintain dignity and improve the quality of life.

Topics covered in this book include aging, the health care team and its responsibility in nutrition management, the eating environment, assessment of nutritional health, the importance of ongoing evaluation of eating skills, eating rehabilitation, impaired swallowing and dysphagia, cognitive and perceptual deficits, acute and chronic disease conditions and how they affect nutritional needs, and parenteral and enteral nutrition.

I found the presentation of information, the forms, guidelines and tools for evaluation to be very useful. The step-by-step explanation of restorative feeding is excellent and well organized with an extensive section on feeding aids. I would recommend it as an invaluable resource for health care professionals who care for the elderly.

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For almost 100 years, scientists have studied the relationships between nutrients and brain function. While early studies focused on nutrient deficiency diseases such as pellagra and kwashiorkor, current studies are examining relationships of nutrients to brain chemistry. This volume is the result of an international meeting which explored the role of nutrients in such areas as brain function, hunger and appetite, sleep, mood and food intake, anorexia nervosa and bulimia, and cognitive function.

Chapters on the latter topic are particularly relevant to those practitioners who work with elderly clients. The chapter by Rosenberg, for example, reviews the literature on B6, B12, folate, homocytotanine, and cognitive function. A chapter by Nicolas and Vellas reviews research on Vitamin E, aluminum, and hyperhomocytotainemia in relation to Alzheimer’s disease. A third chapter by Rotilio discusses deficits and excesses of trace minerals, such as copper and zinc, and brain function. These researchers present interesting hypotheses but all of them indicate that a great deal of additional research needs to be done before we prescribe substances or rely on such markers as plasma homocytotain levels in our attempt to improve or maintain cognitive function in the aging adult.

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This second edition of Preventive Nutrition: The Comprehensive Guide for Health Professionals updates most of the original chapters in the first edition. According to the editors, the book provides the newest nutrition related research on abating risks of many major diseases affecting middle-aged adults through preventive nutrition and cites the link between
nutritional status and prevention of birth defects and the optimization of birth outcomes. The book is intended to “serve as the critical resource for health professionals interested in enhancing their ability to utilize nutrition to improve health outcomes of individuals, and assist in the planning of national disease prevention programs for enhancing the health status of populations.” Divided into six parts, most of the 21 chapters are organized with an overview of the field and incorporates research by the author(s) and other related research studies. Many chapters contain extensive review tables of relevant research studies, and all chapters conclude with an extensive list of current references.

Part One, Cancer Prevention, has five chapters presenting nutritional implications related to childhood cancer, upper gastrointestinal tract cancers, colon cancer, lung cancer, and a particularly informative chapter titled ‘Nonnutritive Components in Foods as Modifiers of the Cancer Process.’ This chapter discusses the relationship between cancer and cinnamic acid, flavonoids, indoles, isothiocyanates, organosulfur compounds, and terpenes. The four chapters in Part Two discuss nutrition intervention in relation to cardiovascular disease. Individual chapters include dietary fat, iron, homocysteine and folic acid, and n-3 fatty acids.

Part Three relates to the prevention of major disabilities through nutrition intervention. This especially interesting section of five chapters presents timely topics of particular interest to those working with the aged. Chapter 10, ‘The Relationship Between Nutritional Factors and Age-Related Macular Degeneration,’ reviews current theories about AMD, findings in animal research, and a review of epidemiological studies on diet and AMD. The authors are cautious not to overstate nor simplify the role of nutrition and recognize the need for continued research. The chapter on osteoporosis (chapter 11) is very well written and provides an in-depth discussion of calcium, from requirements to factors impacting calcium within the bones. Chapter 12 is a short chapter on antioxidant nutrients and prevention of oxidant-mediated diseases. The author addresses cigarette smoking, the harmful activities of oxidants, the relationship between antioxidants and smoking-related diseases, predictors of oxidant-mediated disease, and recommendations for Vitamins C and E and beta carotene. Chapter 13 discusses from a technical perspective the impact of micronutrients on the immunity of older people and provides good information on the effect of specific nutrients on immunity of older adults. ‘Impact of Vitamin A on Immunity and Infection in Developing Countries’ (chapter 14) is an excellent, well written, easily understood chapter. The author provides a thorough background about vitamin A metabolism, effects of deficiency, diagno-
sis of deficiency, and the intervention of disease and mortality in developing countries through supplementation.

The four chapters in Part Four discuss pregnancy and infant outcomes in relation to nutritional status and the addition or inadequacy of specific nutrients. Part Five looks at nutrition from a global perspective, focusing mainly on the United States and Asia. The chapter on ‘Potential Benefits of Preventive Nutrition Strategies’ (chapter 20) discusses some similar materials addressed in previous chapters plus the health aspects of body weight, alcohol, and vitamin supplements. A list of preventive nutrition related books and relevant Web sites can be found in Part Six.

Individual reader interests will determine the appeal of specific chapters. Because of divergent authors, the flow and readability of chapters vary, but readers will find a wealth of information. Tables within chapters are excellent and provide either a summary of research studies or specific information related to the topic. A strong background in chemistry may help in interpreting those chapters weighted with chemistry. Closer editing would enhance readability by avoiding distractions from typographical, spelling, and/or grammatical errors. Generally, health professionals will find this book helpful and useful in acquiring the most recent information and locating varied research studies in health related areas impacted by preventive nutrition.

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OBESITY SOURCEBOOK, W. C. Caldwell and C. T. Kimball, editors. Detroit, Michigan: Omnigraphics, 2001. Hardcover. Pp. 376. Price $48.00.

Americans of all ages are gaining weight at epidemic proportions. Increasing weight carries profound negative health consequences and exerts an increasing impact on virtually every aspect of health care. Obesity is a chronic disease with multiple contributing etiologies resulting from a combination of genetic, metabolic and behavioral causes. The Obesity Sourcebook discusses the status of obesity in America, the challenges of
this epidemic and management options. Written for the consumer, it is sub-divided into five parts with numerous chapters.

Part I provides basic information about obesity: what it is, what causes it, how to measure it; and considers issues concerning economics, ethics of weight loss practices and regulations. Increasing weight has adverse medical, psychosocial, and functional implications, in addition to health care resource consequences. The illnesses associated with obesity such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer are described in Part II.

The chronic and relapsing nature of obesity has led to a multitude of dietary, behavioral, pharmacological, mechanical and surgical approaches to control weight. Treatment based on liquid meals, diet pills, calorie restriction, and surgery is not the panacea to long-term weight control and better health. Various treatment options are explored in Part III with respect to their effectiveness in facilitating weight loss. The appropriate use of pharmacotherapy and surgery as treatment options are discussed. The risks and benefits of such therapies are reviewed on the basis of current scientific knowledge. Data currently available on the safety and efficacy of pharmacotherapy with new anti-obesity drugs is examined. The method of treatment depends on how obese a person is.

The importance of a life-long commitment to weight control achieved through combined changes in behavioral patterns, diet, and physical activity is emphasized. Guidelines to make a long-term commitment, straighten priorities, set realistic goals, and change behaviors for a lifetime are provided. Criteria to select a sound weight loss program to judge its potential for safe and successful weight loss is also furnished. The Food Guide Pyramid and Nutrition Facts Panel are featured tools for choosing a healthy diet.

Obesity, multifactorial in origin, reflects inherited, environmental, cultural, socioeconomic, and psychological conditions. The prevalence is disproportionately high in many populations, especially in women, the poor, and members of some ethnic groups, particularly, American Indian, black, and Hispanic. The widespread health implications and astonishing proportions are explained in Part IV.

Part V offers a glossary of terminology, Body Mass Index (BMI) table, practical nutrition tips and credible resources for additional information and help. The BMI, describes weight relative to height, and is cited throughout the text as a measurement correlated with total body fat. Included are tips for dining out at ethnic restaurants illustrating reduced calorie menus, shopping list and lower fat alternatives and cooking methods. References and resources such as website addresses and
contact information for health, professional and government organizations are listed.

Consumers should find the information contained in the Obesity Sourcebook a useful aid in understanding the complexity of obesity; the intimate connection between weight management and improved health; and losing weight safely and keeping it off permanently.

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