

THE MERCCK INDEX

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
CHEMICALS, DRUGS, AND BIOLOGICALS

TWELFTH EDITION

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

With the Twelfth Edition, The Merck Index marks the beginning of its second century of publication. A comparison of this one-volume, 2600-page, multidisciplinary encyclopedia with the thin catalog of Merck products that was published in 1889, underscores the vast changes that have occurred in this publication over twelve editions, and in the realm of scientific information. Although the text continues to be designed primarily to serve the needs of chemists, biochemists, pharmacists, and those in allied professions, it contains information of interest to a broad spectrum of scientists and others in a large number of disciplines. The material is assembled with today's quick reference needs in mind, but the commitment to enhanced scientific communication and to excellence in scientific scholarship remains paramount.

This edition contains a diverse collection of over 10,000 monographs of which more than 4,000 are devoted to a wide variety of drugs and pharmaceuticals, over 2,000 describe common organic chemicals and laboratory reagents, and another 2,000 cover naturally occurring substances and plants. An additional 1,000 monographs focus on the elements and on inorganic chemicals, almost 1,000 pertain to compounds of agricultural significance, and several hundred describe endogenous substances and biological agents.

A number of changes have been made since the Eleventh Edition was published in 1989. The monograph section has been extensively revised. The chemical structures have been redrawn employing current conventions for chemical depictions. Nomenclature has been reviewed and stereochemical descriptors have been added, where pertinent. In response to requests from our readership, the section on Organic Name Reactions, which last appeared in 1983 in the Tenth Edition, has been updated and reintroduced. The compilation of Chemical Abstracts Service Registry Numbers has been significantly expanded. Several new tables have been added including a glossary emphasizing some of the newer terminology employed in the fields of molecular biology and immunology.

In recognition of the growing utilization of electronic versions of traditional reference works, THE MERCK INDEX ONLINE is made available through major online database vendors. A CD-ROM version of the Twelfth Edition, which is both text and structure searchable, will also be published in 1996.

Compared with their counterparts of earlier eras, scientists of the 1990s have unparalleled access to information from a multitude of sources. In this environment, it is especially gratifying that so many readers inform us that they refer to The Merck Index on a daily basis. We hope that this edition, published by Merck & Co., Inc., as a service to the scientific community, will continue the tradition and prove to be an indispensable reference to all who consult it.

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The creation process for each edition of The Merck Index involves the efforts of many dedicated people with special talents and varied expertise. The successful publication is a tribute to all involved.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Periodic chart	inside front cover
Editor's preface	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Explanatory notes	viii
Abbreviations	xiii
MONOGRAPHS	1-1741
MISCELLANEOUS TABLES	MISC-1–MISC-107
Alphabetical list of tables	MISC-1
Glossary	MISC-2
Common Heterocyclic Ring Systems	MISC-7
Abbreviated terms used by the U.S. Adopted Names (USAN) Council for Radicals and Adducts	MISC-8
International non-proprietary names for radicals and groups proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO)	MISC-8
Cancer chemotherapy drug regimens	MISC-10
Code letters used by companies for experimental substances	MISC-12
Company register	MISC-16
Numerical prefixes commonly used in forming chemical names	MISC-30
Alchemical symbols used in biology and botany	MISC-30
Prescription notation	MISC-30
Latin terms	MISC-31
Greek and Russian alphabets	MISC-33
Roman Numerals	MISC-33
Chemical Terms Translator	MISC-34
Boiling points of solvents	MISC-36
Density of liquids	MISC-42
Percentage solution tables	MISC-46
Isotonic solutions	MISC-47
Indicators	MISC-58
Amino Acid Abbreviations and pKa Values	MISC-60
Saturated solutions	MISC-61
Cooling mixtures	MISC-66
Thermometric equivalents	MISC-66
International system of units (SI)	MISC-67
Universal conversion factors	MISC-68
Table of radioactive isotopes	MISC-78
Radioactive isotopes used in medical therapy and diagnosis	MISC-93
Table of Minerals	MISC-100
ORGANIC NAME REACTIONS	ONR-1–ONR-107
CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS SERVICE REGISTRY NUMBERS	
Alphabetic order by compound name	REG-1–REG-59
CAS Registry Number order	REG-60–REG-124
THERAPEUTIC CATEGORY AND BIOLOGICAL	
ACTIVITY INDEX	THER-1–THER-28
FORMULA INDEX	FI-1–FI-76
NAME INDEX	NI-1–NI-360
Atomic weights	inside back cover

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