

# PREFACE

Surgeons all too frequently see patients who are referred with problems that could have been managed by the referring physician, or they see patients who should have been referred to them much sooner because earlier surgical intervention would have significantly improved clinical outcomes. In this era of increasing specialization, primary care physicians face enormous challenges,<sup>1</sup> including when to refer patients for specialty care. This book was written to provide such information in an easy-to-read and accessible format.

*When to Refer to a Surgeon* was not intended to serve as a complete reference, but rather to list general guidelines. All of the chapters were written by specialists with the editorial guidance of two surgeons and a professional medical editor whose combined goal was to ensure a cohesively written format throughout. Our contributors address both adult and pediatric health issues.

We believe that this book has several unique features that allow easy and rapid access to vital information. ***When and whom to refer*** boxes introduce each chapter, and the pertinent medical information is presented under consistently worded headings. Overall this book is a condensed list of easy-to-read answers to frequently asked questions concerning when to refer, what tests to order, and what tests ***not*** to order.

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**REFERENCE**

1. Grumbach K, Selby JV, Damberg C, Bindman AB, Quesenberry C Jr, Truman A, Uratsu C. Resolving the gatekeeper conundrum: What patients value in primary care and referral to specialists. *JAMA* 282:261-266, 1999.