

## Preface

As a medical doctor focusing on metabolism and nutrition, colleagues ask me where they can find reliable information on vitamins and minerals and their application in medicine. Although an abundance of material is available, most is of two types: on the one side, skeptical and stubbornly conservative; on the other, biased and unsubstantiated. This book aims for the middle. In writing it, I have tried to be objective and evidence-based, but also open-minded. I have drawn from the scientific literature, as well as my own clinical experience.

No longer “alternative” therapy, micronutrients are taking their rightful place in mainstream medicine. We now have convincing evidence of their efficacy in preventive medicine and therapeutics. This book is generously referenced to direct the reader towards in-depth reviews and original articles in this rapidly expanding field. It is intended as a resource for doctors and other health professions allied to medicine. Although micronutrients are generally available over the counter, interested members of the public

should consult with their doctor or pharmacist. Nutrition and metabolism are complex and individual. Prudent use of micronutrients as therapy should always be medically supervised.

With some modification, this book is essentially the first English translation of *Burgerstein's Handbuch Nährstoffe* (Karl F. Haug Verlag, Heidelberg). This classic Swiss text, written by Dr. Lothar Burgerstein, first appeared in 1982. Dr. Burgerstein died in 1987 at age 92, but his book has been carefully updated through nine German editions and continues to be a leader in the field. The latest editions have been bestsellers. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of several people to this book. The spirit of Lothar Burgerstein certainly motivated its writing. Hugo Schurgast made substantial contributions to the text and appendices. Uli Burgerstein provided constant support and encouragement, and much insightful criticism.

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