
Preface

This is the fourth edition of a work first published in 1983 in collaboration with Dr. Claudia Noyes. There have been two editions in the intervening years, which have provided a modest update. The current work has undergone major revision and has emerged far larger than when I started this work. I have tried to provide an even more encyclopedic coverage of a field that is not nearly as popular as it was when the first work appeared in 1983. On the other hand, times do change and chemical modification may again have the popularity of 40 years ago (see Chargaff, 1970). As with current editions, I continue to be embarrassed by what I missed in early work and apologize in advance to those investigators who I have yet again missed in the current work. As a word of caution, care must be taken with specificity. Mass spectrometry does provide a way of identifying modification, which, in the past, would have been silent. Finally, I cannot recall the source, perhaps Efraim Racker, who commented, "no reagent is as specific as when it is discovered."

REFERENCE

Chargaff, E., Triviality in science: A brief meditation on fashions, *Perspect. Biol. Med.* Spring, 324-333, 1970.