

The Wilderness Survival First Aid Kit

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THE

WILDERNESS

SURVIVAL

FIRST

AID

KIT

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Emergency first aid in the wilderness begins with your own personal first aid kit. The kit should be small and waterproof. A plastic or aluminum box with a tight fitting lid makes a good container. A heavy-duty ziplock or waterproof ditty bag may be used as well. It should contain the essential medical instruments and bandage materials listed. All items should be carried on backpack trips. Asterisked items (*) may be left in camp or

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automobile. The contents of a medical travel kit should be carefully chosen, using the type of trip, duration and distance from medical care as criteria. All medications should be stored in separate air-tight plastic containers and clearly labeled as to the name of the drug, dosage, and expiration date.

Medical Instruments & Bandage Materials For The Basic First Aid Kit

Adhesive strips - 1" x 3", 10; Adhesive strips - 2" x 4", 5: Minor cuts & abrasions.

Butterfly bandages - medium size with tincture of benzoin applicator, 10: Closure for minor cuts. Apply benzoin to make the bandage stick.

Adhesive tape - 1" roll, 1

Battle dressing - 4" x 4", 1: Large wounds or abrasions pressure dressing.

Elastic Ace bandage - 4", 1: Securing dressing, splints or wrapping sprains.

Moleskin or Molefoam, 1 pkg.: Cover or prevent blisters.

Gauze pads (Telfa pads & Vaseline gauze)- 4" x 4", 6: Cover large wounds.

30" x 4" piece of 1/4" wire hardware cloth with edges taped, 1: Splint for suspected fractures.

#11 sterile scalpel blade with handle, 1: Removing splinters & other small foreign bodies from the skin.

Hemostat or tweezers, 1: Removing splinters, cactus spines and other foreign bodies.

Small scissors, 1

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Oral thermometer, 1

Sling or triangular bandage, 1: Immobilize arm/shoulder if needed.

Wilderness first aid manual and CPR card, 1

Length of surgical tubing, 1: Constricting band.

Snakebite extractor kit, 1: Remove snake or bug venom.

Disposable gloves, 2 pr.: Avoiding contact with blood.

Medications For The Basic First Aid Kit

Aspirin - 5gm or 325mg tabs, 50. Two every 3 hours as needed. This is a highly effective agent for relief of minor pain and for lowering fevers. Its is an excellent exoskeletal anti-inflammatory agent. It will decrease fever; decrease the inflammation of tendinitis and sunburn. All brands are equally effective regardless of price. Purchase the 5gr USP size.

Precautions:Use with caution if you have a history of ulcers or asthma or are on anti-coagulants.

*Antacid tabs, 20. As needed.

Use to neutralize stomach acid in the treatment of indigestion, heartburn and ulcers.

Precautions: May cause self-limiting diarrhea. It can be used as a mild laxative.

Antihistamine - Decontaminate, 20. Follow package directions. This group of drugs blocks the release of histamine, a chemical released during allergic reactions. Benadryl (diphenhydramine) is highly effective in the treatment of mild allergic reactions to insect stings and hay fever. It may also be used to control motion sickness, nausea, vomiting and insomnia.

Precautions: Most antihistamines cause drowsiness.

Antibiotic Ointment, 1 oz. Apply externally as needed. Used to treat superficial bacterial skin infections. Bacitracin Ointment is very effective and may be purchased over-the-counter. Precautions: Some individuals may be allergic to one component of the ointment.

*Tylenol tabs, 24. As directed.

*Tylenol with Codeine 1/2 gm (or 32mg) tabs or Vicodin, 12. One every 4-6 hours for severe pain.

May be used as an aspirin substitute but has no anti-inflammatory properties.

Liquid soap, 2-4 oz. Clean wounds.

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Sunscreen SPF #15 or greater, 3-4 oz. As directed. SPF 15 or higher provides effective protection against sunburn. Banana Boat or Bullfrog are among the best products available.

Steroid Ointment or cream, 1-2 oz. Follow package directions. Used externally to decrease the inflammatory effects of insect bites and poison oak. Kenalog Ointment (0.1%) is very good but is available only by prescription

Precautions: Do not use on skin infections.

Insect Sting Kit (if allergic or hypersensitive to hymenoptera insect stings.), 1. As directed

Should be carried if you are severely allergic to bee or wasp stings. It contains epinephrine and is available only through a doctor's prescription. The EpiPen Auto-Injection Kit is a good example and is used only for emergency treatment of anaphylactic reactions. It is injected intramuscularly to relieve breathing difficulties.

Precautions: It may cause, headache, tremor, restlessness or anxiety.

Insect repellent, 2-4 oz. As directed.

50% or better DEET is a very effective insect repellent. Natural repellents such as citronella have proven to be very effective as well.

*Throat lozenges, 10. As directed.

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*Pepto-Bismol tabs, 24. As directed.

*Immodium tabs, 12. As directed.

These are an effective treatment for diarrhea and soothe an upset stomach. Precautions: Use with caution if you have a history of ulcers, asthma, or are on anti-coagulant medications.

Lip Balm with sunscreen, 1 tube. As needed.

*Cavit - 7gm, 1 tube. As needed.

This is a pre mixed filling paste and is available from a dentist or a dental supply store. It relieves the pain of a chipped tooth or a lost filling.

Precautions: This is a temporary fix only until you can get to a dentist.

Water purification tabs, 1 bottle: As needed.

Ibuprofen 200mg tabs, 24. As directed.

May be used as an aspirin substitute. It is an effective anti-inflammatory and pain reliever. It may be used to reduce fever.

Precautions: Should not be used by people who are allergic to aspirin.

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*Oral Rehydration Salt Packet, 2. As directed for dehydration.

Diamox - 250mg tabs, 15. As directed for prevention or treatment of acute mountain sickness.

The foregoing lists were prepared by Robert Vinton, M.D. who is a general practitioner, avid backpacker and bicycle tourist.

This information will give you an excellent first aid kit. No kit is any good without some medical training. I strongly suggest that you enroll in a first aid and CPR course if you haven't already done so. Additionally, read and understand the instructions on the medications before you have a medical emergency. There is no substitute for the old Boy Scout adage - "BE PREPARED!"

There is a new self-help book on travel and wilderness medicine that is available at most of the outdoor stores and outfitters. The title of the book is: "The Medical Guide for Third World Travelers" and it is written by Marc Robin, R.N. and Bradford Dessery, R.N. I recommend it highly.

Ron Blackwood just passed the Godan test at the 1995 Tai Kai. He has trained for 10 years under Kevin Millis, 9th Dan. His hobbies include technical rock climbing, Scuba Diving (1 more class to qualify as Master Diver) and

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