



Chapter 5: Survival Medicine

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Captain Dave is the first to admit he doesn't know how to remove an appendix, and he's a lot better with a fighting knife than a scalpel. But he knows how critical medical care can be in a survival situation. Food, water and shelter may be the first three items on your emergency list, but medical care should be number four.

Whether it's a bomb blast, car crash or natural disaster, medical treatment always seems to be necessary early in an emergency situation - just when it's hardest to come by. But with education, you can provide the first aid you or those close to you need. Captain Dave recommends reading and taking classes (such as those offered by the Red Cross and some EMT programs) on first aid and becoming a first responder.

An entire first aid tutorial with information on how to treat different medical emergencies is [online here](#) at Captain Dave's Survival Center.

For more advanced information, read the [Survival Medical FAQ](#), also online here. This includes specific information on antibiotics, lab tests and several medical kits.

If you don't have the time, at least store a few first aid kits in important locations.

First Aid Kits

There are dozens of commercial first aid kits available from many different suppliers. Captain Dave recommends you have on hand three different types of kits:

- A small, basic kit for you car and bug out bag.

- An intermediate kit for around the home and for traveling.
- An extensive medical kit stored with your survival gear for use when going to a regular doctor or hospital is out of the question.

While kit contents will vary, your basic kit (which most outdoors or camping-type stores should carry) should include at least the following. If you can't buy one with these contents, pick up a few supplies and create your own:



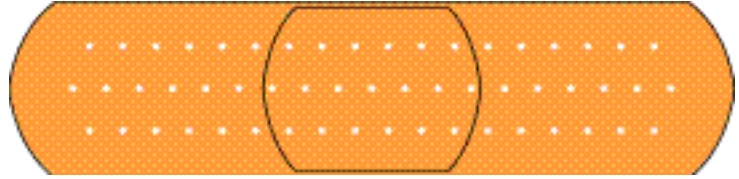
- Bandages
- Antibiotic ointment
- Gauze pads
- Iodine or similar prep pads
- Alcohol prep pads
- Butterfly bandages
- Antibiotic ointment
- Medical adhesive tape
- Aspirin and/or non-aspirin pain relievers

The intermediate kit will include more of each of the above items, plus the following:

- Larger adhesive bandages
- Smelling salts or ammonia inhalants
- Ace-type bandages for strains and sprains
- Several sizes of sterile pads
- Rolls of gauze
- Antiseptic towlets
- Thermometer
- Snake bite poison extractor
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- Moleskin
- Rubber (latex) gloves
- Burn medication
- Anti-itch treatment
- Sun screen
- Diarrhea medication

- Eye drops
- Basic first aid instructions

Your more advanced medical kit can be expected to include not only the above, but some or all of the following:



- Special bandages, such as conforming, trauma and field dressings
- Rubbing alcohol for sterilization
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Betadine
- Scissors
- Forceps
- Scalpels
- Hemostats
- Sterile sutures, in several sizes
- Wound probe
- Mouth-to-mouth shield
- Instant hot pack
- Instant cold pack
- Prep pads
- Eye pads
- Sponges
- Cotton balls
- Burn treatments
- Dental tools
- Splint materials
- In-depth first aid/surgical guide
- Cold medication
- Decongestant
- Antihistamine
- Colloidal silver

If you can find a sympathetic doctor or have other access to prescription medicines, you should consider stocking up on a few key items:

- Broad spectrum antibiotic
- Antibiotics for sinus infections, strep throat and other common "winter"

- ailments
- Pain killers

Remember, if you have kids or a special medical problem, add whatever extra items you think are appropriate.

Veterinarian Supplies

We're not worrying about your pet -- although they can be injured in disasters, too -- but using easily-obtainable veterinarian supplies for your own needs, as many survival writers recommend. While Captain Dave does not endorse this position, it bears mentioning. In a survival situation, does it really matter who or what the prescription was originally written for? Use your own judgment and don't forget to read our [disclaimer!](#)

Alternative Medicines

Captain Dave has seen too much of the world not to believe that there are more ways to treat common ailments than the AMA would have you believe. And should a post-apocalyptic world mean we have to revert to herbs and tree roots, a bit of knowledge about alternate medicines may be helpful. (A list of useful alternative medicine sites is being developed.)

For day-to-day well being, Captain Dave is partial to homeopathic medicine. This approach to healing stimulates your body's natural healing force. You can check the yellow pages for the homeopathic physician near you.

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