

What's in a First Aid Kit?

A well-stocked first-aid kit, kept within easy reach, is a necessity in every home. Having supplies gathered ahead of time will help you handle an emergency at a moment's notice. **You should keep one first-aid kit in your home and one in each car.** Also be sure to bring a first-aid kit on family vacations.

Choose containers for your kits that are roomy, durable, easy to carry, and simple to open. Plastic tackle boxes or containers for storing art supplies are ideal, since they're lightweight, have handles, and offer a lot of space.

Include the following in each of your first-aid kits:

- first-aid manual
- sterile gauze
- adhesive tape
- adhesive bandages in several sizes
- elastic bandage
- antiseptic wipes
- soap
- antibiotic cream (triple-antibiotic ointment)
- antiseptic solution (like hydrogen peroxide)
- hydrocortisone cream (1%)
- acetaminophen and ibuprofen
- extra prescription medications (if the family is going on vacation)
- tweezers
- sharp scissors
- safety pins
- disposable instant cold packs
- calamine lotion
- alcohol wipes or ethyl alcohol
- thermometer
- plastic gloves (at least 2 pairs)
- flashlight and extra batteries
- mouthpiece for administering CPR (can be obtained from your local Red Cross)
- your list of emergency phone numbers



What About Ipecac?

Ipecac syrup used to be a must-have for every home first-aid kit, but there's no evidence that it helps a child who's swallowed a poison. Parents should not use ipecac - they should call Poison Control at (800) 222-1222, or 911 in case of emergency.

After you've stocked your first-aid kits:

Read the entire first-aid manual so you'll understand how to use the contents of your kits. (If your children are old enough to understand, review the manuals with them as well.)

Store first-aid kits in places that are out of children's reach but easily accessible for adults.

Check the kits regularly. Replace missing items or medicines that may have expired.

Updated and reviewed by: [Steven Dowshen, MD](#)

Date reviewed: September 2007