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What's in a First-Aid Kit?

Whether it is under your bathroom sink, in your car, or on your camping trip, having a fully stocked first-aid kit is a must, but, it is useless if it is not correctly filled after each use. Once in a while check on the items inside your kit and you can use an online printable check-list to double-check that everything is in your first-aid kit and nothing has expired.

Red Cross recommends when either putting together a kit or purchasing a kit make sure to include personal items like medications, emergency phone numbers, and any other items suggested by your healthcare provider. Like I mentioned before, double check the items in the kit for any expiration dates, check flashlights for working batteries, and always replace what is used or tossed.

When putting together a first-aid kit a basic kit for a family of four should include the first aid instruction booklet, this will help when caring for someone in a step-by-step manor and which items to use for each situation. Before performing any care always wear gloves. Red Cross suggests including two pairs of large sized non-latex gloves. I interpret the reason for the larger size is so that anyone can wear them and non-latex as a precaution to latex allergies. Tweezers, they are important to get out slivers or tics. Scissors; to cut open packages, cut any cloth or bandages to better suit a wound. One space blanket for warmth, layering, or I've read people used it as a reflector in extreme situations to attract others for help. Don't forget to include one instant cold compress to treat sprains or other wounds to prevent swelling. Include a one-way valve breathing barrier to perform CPR. Include an oral thermometer that is not made of glass or

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mercury, for safety reasons. Have five antiseptic wipe packets to clean the wound area. When packing ointments include five antibiotic ointments, like Neosporin, packets sized 1 gram and two hydrocortisone ointments, like Cortizone, also sized 1 gram. To temporarily treat pain and also used as a fever reducer constantly have two packets of 81mg Aspirin. As for bandaging; include two 5x9 absorbent compress dressings, 25 assorted adhesive bandages, and one adhesive tape measuring 10 yards x 1 inch. Sterile gauze pads always have five in both sizes 3x3 inches and 4x4 inches and two sizes of roller bandages one 3 inches wide and another 4 inches wide. Lastly, include two triangle bandages that can be used as a sling or as a trauma pad to cover large wounds and stop bleeding. Plus, don't forget the flashlight and spare batteries.

When preparing for a trip with more people you can base your kit off this list I just mentioned that is suited for basic needs of a group of four. Also, pack anything as you think is appropriate. I've seen other lists include hand sanitizer, safety pins, rubber bands, and yes, even duct tape. Unfortunately, we often don't learn what is necessary in every situation until it happens. The list from Red Cross is a basic first-aid kit to temporarily treat a wound until you can reach further care at a clinic or hospital.