

Emergency Basics

FIRST AID

Why This is Important



In a pandemic, health care services may be overwhelmed, or you may not wish to leave home and risk exposure to the flu virus. You may be required to administer more advanced medical care to yourself or others than you have in the past. If communications with a healthcare provider is available, you will need supplies and knowledge to

be able to follow their directions. If no medical care is available, you might find yourself the sole provider of care for those around you. You will need supplies and skills.

Supplies

Essential supplies include a first aid kit and emergency dental kit. These come in all sizes and can be tailored to fit your situation. Remember to include medical supplies for children and pets, who may require different sizes of supplies or strengths of medications. **An example first aid kit** is described at <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/firstaidkit.html> and includes the following items:

- **sterile gloves** (latex, or nitrile if you are allergic to latex)
- **sterile dressings** to stop bleeding and to protect wounds
- **cleansing agent/soap** and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- **antibiotic ointment** to prevent infection
- **burn ointment** to prevent infection
- **adhesive bandages** in a variety of sizes
- **eye wash solution** to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant
- **thermometer**
- **prescription medications** you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine, and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates
- **prescribed medical supplies** such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies



Other important things to have:

- Cell Phone
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Non-prescription drugs:

- Pain relievers (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen)
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for upset stomach)
- Laxative



Emergency Dental Kits:

You can find emergency dental kits online, in drugstores and in camping stores, or you can put together your own. Kits vary, but usually include ways to temporarily repair or treat lost fillings, toothaches, broken dentures, and loose crowns and bridges. They do not provide permanent solutions, but could help you get through a rough time until you can get dental care.

Skills

Taking a basic first aid class will give you the skills and confidence to use your supplies in an emergency situation. Check with local public safety organizations such as American Red Cross for basic first aid and CPR classes. Take the time NOW to schedule a class.



References

Get a good first aid book and also "*Where There is no Doctor*", and "*Where There is no Dentist*". These are available free on-line at <http://hesperian.org/books-and-resources/>.