

What is in your BOB first aid kit?

Instead of thinking of individual items, approach stocking the kit from a different direction. Think about what the most likely medical threats you will face will be, and then decide what items you need to deal with those threats.

The most serious and immediate threat is blood loss from a serious wound. Large 'bloodstopper' bandage and pad combos are great. **Non-deodorant feminine hygiene pads** are also great, and have obvious dual-use potential. Pads with deodorant chemicals can cause toxic shock if applied to open wounds, and should never be used for that. You should have a couple pairs of **hemostats** to clamp off severed arteries. Blood clotting agent is needed as well. You can use a commercial emergency clotting agent, or **ground cayenne pepper** for this. A tourniquet should be in your kit. I just keep a couple lengths of **surgical rubber tubing**, which has other uses as well. **Butterfly bandages**, **surgical tape** and **sterile sutures** are what you need for smaller cuts and gashes, as well as pads and gauze bandages to hold them in place. The **dissolving sutures** can be used for down inside the wound and the nondissolving ones on the surface. A **scalpel** with disposable blades can be useful to debride the wound, removing shredded dead tissue and foreign materials. **Surgical shears** are required to cut away clothing and shoes to get to wounds and treat them. Various **band aids** and **adhesives pads** for the small stuff, and an **eye cup** to protect a wounded eye. If you can get IV fluids and know how to use them, this can be a real lifesaver for victims with severe blood loss. And, of course, **exam gloves** to protect you and the victim while dealing with those wounds. You might want to carry **surgical masks** as well.

The next big threat is infection. Many people keep **Neosporin** on hand, but I do not care for the stuff. It has a very short shelf life, and heat makes it even shorter still. I prefer **colloidal silver spray**, which works great, and can be taken orally as well to fight systemic infections. I also keep **provoiodine solution** and **surgical sponges** to clean up wounds, plus **alcohol pads** for smaller cuts. **Wet wipes** are invaluable for cleaning the dirt, blood and other crap off of a person to find their wounds and abrasions. **Topical, oral and injectible antibiotics** are great if you have the expertise to use them safely and can get them. Store them in a **thinsulate pouch** to protect them from heat.

One of the biggest threats to your life in a stressful bugout situation is dihorrea. So many people die in the third world every year of dehydration from severe dihorrea. They could be so easily saved by just a blister pack of **Immodium AD**. I carry the generic equivalent; lots of it. I also carry packets of **powdered sports drink** to replace electrolytes lost to dehydration.

Another frequent killer is a severe allergic reaction. I carry **Benadryl Liqui-Caps** for this. The liquid in the caps can be squeezed into the mouth of someone whose throat is closing up from this, where they could never swallow a tablet. Injectable Bendryl is even better, again if you can get it and know how to safely use it.

If you are in an area with poisonous snakes, a **snakebite kit** is needed. And for orally ingested poisons, you need two things; **syrup of ipecac** to induce vomiting for most poisons, and **activated charcoal** for ingestion of something like gasoline, which you do not want the victim to vomit up due to the risk of saturating the lungs with it. The charcoal is also good for really

extreme dihorrea such as occurs in cases of dysentery or cholera. A large dose of charcoal will form a temporary plug in the intestines, preventing massive dehydration and death until antibiotics can be administered and take effect.

A **CPR mask** should also be in the most accessible part of your kit, to protect you if you need to recussitate someone. These come in small disposable packets and take up little space. I carry one on my person whenever I am out of the house.

Broken bones require splints. For large long bones, improvise materials can work fine. I have a stiff accordion-folding reflective windshield sun screen that could easily be cut into a couple of excellent splints for limbs. In my kit I have a couple sizes of finger splints as well. They are held in place by **gauze bandages** and/or **surgical tape**. For a smaller, more compact kit, you can buy a formable splint material for fingers and toes at most good backpacking supply outlets like REI.

The rest is mostly for discomfort. **OTC pain killers, antacids, witch hazel** for poison ivy or oak, an insect sting kit, sterile eyewash to flush out foriegn material, **tweezers** to remove splinters, an **Ace elastic bandage** for wrapping sprains, etcetera. One other important item is a digital **thermometer** with disposable tip covers to check for fever, and spare batteries for it. A small **LED headlamp** for exams is also quite useful.

I have gone completely overboard with the first aid kit I carry in my car. It is a large fishing tacklebox, loaded to capacity. I am thinking of adding a second bag full of large bandages and pads in case I come across a really bad accident out on the road with multiple victims. You do not have to go quite that far, but these basic things listed above are what are required to treat most of the common medical emergencies and conditions you will come up against in a situation where you are out on your own, and medical help will not be quickly forthcoming, if available at all.

Additional

Something else good to keep in your kit is a **roll of plastic wrap** (i.e. Saran Wrap) You can cut a roll in half crosswise for space management. The stuff makes a good pressure wrap or just to hold things together and it sticks to its self. Be sure to fold the end back on itself so it's easier to get the roll started.

You also should keep a **sharpie pen** in your kit so you can make notes on the victims arm for the medics when they get there.

A **magnifying glass or good reading glasses** are also very handy.

I also keep a **Primatene Mist inhaler** (epinephrin) in my kit.