

Chapter 3. Part 2. First Aid Kit Essentials

Chapter 3 • Introduction to First Aid

Part 2 • First-Aid Kit Essentials

(What to pack, why it matters, and how to keep it ready 24 / 7)

1 Why a Well-Stocked Kit Saves Time—and Lives

- **Minutes count.** Searching for tape or sterile gauze while blood is pouring wastes precious time.
- **Reduces errors.** Pre-sorted supplies mean you give the right item instantly.
- **Legal safeguard.** A documented, up-to-date kit shows you took “reasonable precautions” if your care is reviewed later.

2 Core Components and Their Uses

Category	Item	What It Looks Like / Size	Main Use	Quick How-To
Bleeding & Wound Care	Sterile gauze pads (5 × 5 cm, 10 × 10 cm)	Flat squares in sealed packs	Absorb blood, cover open wounds	Press firmly for 2 min; add layers, never remove soaked pad
	Adhesive bandages (“Band-Aids”) assorted	Small strips, butterfly closures	Protect minor cuts, secure IV cannula	Center pad over wound, press edges
	Crepe/elastic roller bandage (7.5 cm × 4 m)	Stretchy beige roll	Hold gauze in place, control swelling	Wrap distal → proximal with 50 % overlap
	Hemostatic dressing (optional)	Impregnated gauze	Life-threatening bleeding when tourniquet not possible	Pack into wound cavity, apply pressure
	Alcohol wipes / antiseptic swabs	Small foiled squares	Clean skin before dressing or injection	Wipe outward in spiral, let dry 30 s
Immobilisation & Support	Triangular bandage	Cotton triangle 90 × 90 × 127 cm	Sling for arm, bind splint, head dressing	Fold as sling; knot at side of neck
	SAM/universal splint	Foam-padded aluminium strip	Temporarily stiffen fractured limb	Mould around limb, secure with bandage
Airway & Breathing	CPR face shield / pocket mask	One-way valve plastic	Safe mouth-to-mouth resuscitation	Seal rim on mouth, blow through valve
	Nitrile gloves (pairs, M & L)	Blue/purple disposable	Protect rescuer and patient from infection	Don before any patient contact
Burn Care	Burn gel dressing or hydrogel sachet	Cool, clear gel-soaked pad	Stop heat damage, ease pain	Apply over burn 10-15 min, then loosely cover
Cold & Heat	Instant cold pack (squeeze-to-activate)	Soft pouch	Reduce swelling or pain	Shake, wrap in cloth, 10-20 min on site
Medications <i>*Check local rules</i>	Paracetamol / ibuprofen tablets	Blister pack	Mild pain, fever	Adult: 500 mg–1 g paracetamol q6 h
	Antihistamine (loratadine)	Blister pack	Mild allergy, itching	10 mg once daily
	ORS sachets	Powder packets	Dehydration after vomiting/diarrhea	Mix with 1 L water; sip 200 mL/hr
Tools & Misc.	Trauma shears (blunt tip)	15 cm scissors	Cut clothing, tape, seatbelts	Angle under fabric, cut away from skin
	Digital thermometer	Pen-style	Measure body temperature	Oral/axillary per device guide

Category	Item	What It Looks Like / Size	Main Use	Quick How-To
	Tweezers (steel)	Pointed tip	Remove splinters, debris	Sterilise with alcohol before use
	Safety pins (medium)	Metal	Secure bandages, slings	Pin through outer layer only
	Waterproof notepad & pen	Small, durable	Record vitals, drug times, hand-over notes	Note time of incident, interventions
	Emergency contact card	Laminated	Local EMS (112 in India), poison control	Tape inside lid for quick dialing

Tip: Pack **duplicates** of gauze, gloves, and bandages—they're used most often.

3 Smart Kit Organisation—So You Can “Grab & Go”

Section	Colour Code / Label	Contents	Why It Works
1. Red - “Life-Threatening”	• Tourniquet (if trained) • Hemostatic gauze	Bright colour = fastest grab for bleeding or no-breath emergencies	
2. Yellow - “Major Wounds & Immobilise”	• CPR mask • Sterile gauze • Roller & triangular bandages • Splint	Next-priority items often used with red section	
3. Green - “Minor Care & Meds”	• Plasters • Alcohol wipes • Pain tablets, ORS	Daily scrapes, mild pain—frequent access	
4. Blue - “Tools & Docs”	• Shears, tweezers • Gloves reserves • Notepad, emergency card	Keeps sharps separate; avoids contamination	
External pocket	Instant cold pack, burn gel	Quick application without opening main kit	

Use zip-lock pouches or mesh pockets in matching colours; add bold text labels for colour-blind users.

4 Maintenance Schedule—5 Minutes a Month

Task	How	When
Inspect expiry dates	Check meds, antiseptics, gel dressings; discard 3 months before expiry.	First week of every month
Restock used items	Pack list taped inside lid; tick items during use, buy replacements next day.	Immediately after any use
Check packaging integrity	Look for torn seals, moisture, rusted scissors; replace as needed.	Monthly
Battery check	Digital thermometer, flashlight (if included)	Press power; replace batteries if weak
Clean & dry	Wipe dust, ensure no spilled liquid; store in cool, dry, visible spot.	Monthly
Drill run-through	Open kit, locate red-zone items with eyes closed → builds muscle memory.	Every 6 months in lab/class

Pro Hint: Set a recurring phone reminder titled “**First-Aid Kit Check**” or stick a bright “*Next Check DD/MM*” label on the kit.



5 Frequently Asked Student Questions

Question	Short Answer
Can I add prescription antibiotics?	No—only give drugs legally allowed without Rx unless you're licensed and authorised.
What if I can't afford fancy splints?	Folded newspapers, magazines, or a ruler + bandage can improvise. SAM splints are ideal but not mandatory.
Why nitrile gloves, not latex?	Nitrile resists chemicals and avoids latex allergy.
Where should the kit live?	Visible, dry, <1.5 m high, near exit/fire extinguisher. In a vehicle: under front seat in red pouch.
Do I need two kits?	Yes if you travel—keep one full kit at home/clinic and a slim "go-kit" (plasters, gloves, gauze, CPR mask) in your backpack.

6 Key Take-Home Points

1. **Stock what you'll actually use.** A compact, well-thought kit beats an overloaded one you can't close.
2. **Organise by urgency,** not by size or cost—life-saving tools up front.
3. **Maintain monthly.** Dust, expiry, missing items turn a good kit into a useless box.
4. **Practice retrieval.** In stress, your hands should find the tourniquet before your eyes do.
5. **Keep a contents list** inside the lid; tick items as you use them—easy restock, easy audit.

Next skill lab:

Pair up, blindfold one student, start a stopwatch, and ask them to locate a sterile gauze pad in a colour-coded kit. Swap roles. Debrief on what layout tweaks shaved the most seconds.