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 \times 5 cm, 10 \times 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 $(7.5 \text{ cm} \times 4 \text{ m})$	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 \times 90 \times 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 *Check local rules	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

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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• CPR mask	Bright colour = fastest grab for bleeding or no-breath emergencies	
2. Yellow - "Major Wounds & Immobilise"	• 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 \rightarrow 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.

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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.

Visible, dry, <1.5 m high, near exit/fire extinguisher. In a vehicle: under front seat in Where should the kit live?

red pouch.

Yes if you travel-keep one full kit at home/clinic and a slim "go-kit" (plasters, gloves, Do I need two kits?

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.

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