

“Get Prepared to Get Out”

Live Healthy and Be Well!

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As I write this, Winter Storm Octavia is going on outside with freezing rain tonight and the threat of ice in the morning. We have not had our usual real winter snow/ice yet, so I guess this is part of the one or two we usually get up here in January or February each year. BUT, I know that soon we will again be blessed with the good weather we all love, that spring is around the corner, summer not far behind, the beautiful fall weather we have - and all the promises that these seasons bring. So, this column is written with that hopeful outlook in mind.

We have talked many times that our degree of health and wellness is improved by regular activity. In this beautiful area in which we are blessed to live, we have many opportunities to get out and about. See other Laurel articles by my friends Peter McIntosh and Mark Holloway – who always give us good advice about things they have done that we can do, too, and hopefully in a prepared and safe manner so that we may fully enjoy them, but be ready to take care of any mishaps that may unfortunately occur.

With this in mind, I was recently asked to comment on what might make up the contents of a good first aid kit to have at the lake, to take on a hike, or to a camp site. It is also a good idea to have such a thing around the house for those little accidents and such that happen working on the house, in the yard, or in the garage or workshop. Although there are many commercially available kits of this type, it would not be hard at all to make up one with a few basic supplies and some equipment easily obtainable around town (such as one of our fine pharmacies and our hometown hardware store).

I would start out with a small, durable box such as a small tool box or tackle box. You may even want to get a brightly colored box so that it is visible, and mark it well. For hiking, some type of durable “pack” would be better, so that it could be more mobile. You will want everyone in the family to know the location and be able to get it easily when needed. Your supplies should fit in here, and it will keep them organized, hopefully dry, and most importantly – all together in one place. Here is my recipe for the contents of a basic first aid kit. You may add to it as needed, or as your personal experiences dictate.

*For cleaning and bandages:*

Alcohol wipes

Small bottle of normal saline or sterile water (250 mL)

Small bottle 3% hydrogen peroxide or betadine (antiseptic)

Small pack of “wet ones”

Band Aids (various sizes)

Roll of gauze

Gauze pads (4x4, 2x2)

Medical tape

*Basic Meds:*

Benadryl (both liquid and some topical cream)  
Ranitidine 150 mg (OTC “Zantac”)  
Ibuprofen/Tylenol  
1% Hydrocortisone cream  
Silvadene cream/ointment (good for burns)  
Bacitracin/Neosporin type ointment  
Calamine lotion

*Equipment:*

Small tool or tackle box, or mobile pack  
Small pair “needle nose” pliers (getting out fish hooks, etc)  
Tweezers  
Small scissors  
Cravate or cloth rag (for sling or pressure dressing)  
Epi Pen (for anyone around with severe allergies)  
Coban wrap  
Ace Wrap

Remember, the best way to stop bleeding is direct pressure with some gauze or dressing – if this does not work, the wound is deep, or the bleeding is brisk, apply pressure and take the person to an Emergency Room. Likewise, if the bleeding from an injury to an arm or leg is heavy and pulsatile, apply some type of tourniquet between the injury and the heart and head straight to an ER. For simple cuts and scrapes – stop bleeding, and clean the area well before applying a clean dressing. If the wound is more serious, or might need to be closed with sutures, go see a provider as soon as possible. A tetanus shot may also be needed if out of date.

In the case of a serious allergic reaction, be it bee stings or contact with an environmental substance or medicine causing hives, lip swelling, swelling (“edema”) around the eyes – give some OTC Benadryl (25 mg), one of the Ranitidine (150 mg), Tylenol or Ibuprofen, and apply some hydrocortisone cream to the area if there is time. If the person is known to have a serious allergy to what has happened, administer the Epi Pen as needed. These early steps may halt or limit the reaction, but do them ON YOUR WAY to the ER, Urgent Care, or your doctor’s office – and be sure and tell them about any treatments you performed before you arrived.

Sprains and strains will benefit from some ice to limit swelling, and the Tylenol/Ibuprofen for pain control and as an anti-inflammatory. If on a joint such as the ankle or an elbow, the Ace wrap compression will also supply some stability and relief. Refresh yourself on the Heimlich maneuver in the case of a choking situation. Get behind the person and wrap your arms around placing your doubled hands just under the breast bone and squeeze / apply pressure in and up to force air out of the chest and hopefully dislodge the item from the windpipe. While these basic tips are not all inclusive, and hopefully not needed, some basic first aid knowledge and a well supplied “kit” will help you in case you need them.

We really do enjoy hearing from you with any questions, concerns, or ideas for future columns and/or health and wellness related issues for the *Georgia Mountain Laurel*. Please send an email to [rabundoctor@gmail.com](mailto:rabundoctor@gmail.com), or call us at 706-782-3572, and we will be sure to consider your input. This and previous articles can be now be found on the web at [www.rabundoctor.com](http://www.rabundoctor.com) in an archived format. If you use Twitter, then follow us for health tips and wellness advice @rabundoctor. Until next month, live healthy and be well!