



Emergency Medical Q&A

Overview of medical preparedness for individuals, families and community organizations who desire to help others;

INTRODUCTION

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, professional medical help may be overwhelmed and delayed. The key is to be prepared to help without compromising your own or your family's needs. In such situations, individuals with basic first-aid knowledge and supplies can make a significant difference. However, it's crucial to understand the scope of your abilities and the legal protections in place for those who offer aid.

Organizations like FEMA promote a "Whole Community" approach to disaster preparedness, which emphasizes shared responsibility. However, their primary guidance for individuals and families is to assemble a disaster kit that can sustain them for at least 72 hours. This includes food, water, and medical supplies for your own household. Similarly, the American Red Cross encourages every household to have a well-stocked first-aid kit and to be trained in basic first aid and CPR. While their resources don't explicitly advise carrying extra supplies for strangers, the underlying principle is to be in a position to help if you can do so safely.

A significant concern for many who consider helping in an emergency is the fear of legal repercussions. Fortunately, all 50 states have "Good Samaritan" laws in place to protect individuals who voluntarily offer assistance to those who are injured or ill. These laws generally shield individuals from liability as long as they act in good faith, without expectation of payment, and

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within the scope of their training. It is important to note that these laws are designed to encourage people to help and to alleviate the hesitation that might prevent someone from rendering aid. Ethically, the decision to assist a stranger is a personal one. Being prepared with extra supplies can put you in a position to offer comfort and basic care, which can be invaluable in a crisis.

If you choose to prepare to assist others, you can expand your personal first-aid kit with additional quantities of basic supplies. It is not about carrying a mobile hospital, but rather having enough to address common injuries. A comprehensive first-aid kit that could be used to assist others might include:

- * Basic Wound Care: Assorted sizes of sterile gauze pads and adhesive bandages, antiseptic wipes, antibiotic ointment, and adhesive tape.
- * Bleeding Control: Trauma dressings, tourniquets (with proper training on their use), and hemostatic gauze.
- * Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Medical gloves (multiple pairs), and a CPR breathing barrier.
- * Over-the-the-Counter Medications: Pain relievers, antihistamines for allergic reactions, and anti-diarrhea medication.
- * Tools and Other Supplies: Tweezers, scissors, a flashlight, and an emergency blanket.

When considering medications, it is crucial to only provide over-the-counter medications and to never administer prescription drugs to others.

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While your first priority in a disaster should be the safety and well-being of yourself and your family, being prepared with additional medical supplies and the knowledge of how to use them can empower you to be a valuable resource in your community during a time of crisis. Familiarizing yourself with basic first-aid and CPR, and understanding the protections of Good Samaritan laws, are essential steps in being ready to help others effectively and responsibly.

Maintaining a centralized medical equipment storage at a church for a disaster is a noble intention that can provide vital support to your community. However, it is a complex undertaking with significant logistical, legal, and safety considerations that require careful planning and collaboration with official emergency response agencies. Churches and other faith-based organizations are often at the heart of community response during a disaster, providing shelter, food, and comfort. The desire to extend this support to include medical assistance is a natural progression of this mission. While establishing a basic first-aid station is a valuable and achievable goal, creating a centralized storage for a wide range of medical equipment requires a higher level of preparedness.

The Potential Benefits

- * Centralized Location: Churches are often well-known, trusted, and accessible hubs within a community, making them ideal distribution points.
- * Volunteer Base: A built-in network of volunteers can be mobilized for organization and distribution.
- * Meeting Critical Needs: In a large-scale disaster, a local cache of medical supplies can bridge the gap until professional responders can reach everyone.

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Key Considerations and Challenges

Before establishing a medical equipment storage, it is crucial to address the following:

A. Legal and Liability Issues:

- * Good Samaritan Laws: While these laws offer some protection for individuals providing voluntary aid, they may not extend to organizations distributing medical equipment.
- * Liability for Defective Equipment: Storing and distributing medical devices could expose the church to liability if the equipment is faulty, expired, or causes harm. The Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act offers some liability protection to certain individuals and entities during a public health emergency, but it's essential to understand its scope and limitations.
- * Insurance Coverage: Your church's insurance policy may not cover the risks associated with storing and distributing medical supplies. It's vital to have a conversation with your insurance provider.

B. Storage and Inventory Management:

- * Proper Storage Conditions: Many medical supplies have specific temperature, humidity, and light-exposure requirements. Failure to meet these can render them ineffective or even dangerous.

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- * Inventory Tracking and Rotation: A robust system is needed to track expiration dates and ensure that the oldest supplies are used first (First-In, First-Out or FIFO). This requires dedicated and trained volunteers.
- * Security: Medical supplies, especially certain medications, can be a target for theft. Secure storage is essential.

C. Distribution and Volunteer Management:

- * Trained Personnel: Distributing certain medical equipment may require knowledge of its proper use. Untrained volunteers could inadvertently provide incorrect supplies or instructions.
- * Fair and Equitable Distribution: A plan must be in place to ensure that supplies are distributed based on need, which can be challenging to manage in a chaotic situation.
- * Volunteer Safety: Volunteers need to be trained on how to protect themselves from potential hazards when handling medical supplies and interacting with individuals who may be ill or injured.

In conclusion, while the heart of your church may be to provide extensive medical support during a disaster, the most responsible and effective approach is to do so in close partnership with your local emergency management and healthcare community. By starting with foundational first-aid capabilities and working within the official response framework, your church can be a powerful force for healing and hope in a time of crisis.

Questions from Mays Chapel Preparedness Group

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	Question	Answer
1	How can I stock-up on prescription (medications)/ for personal use and others?	<p>Modern medications, especially antibiotics can be lifesavers. The problem seems to be the laws in place in the United States generally require a doctor's prescription in order to purchase many medications.</p> <p>For a number of years some have suggested using non-human medications such as fish medications or animal antibiotics as substitutes for human medications. There seem to be multiple opinions on such usage, and the use of these is something that each individual must decide for themselves. Access to these medications has recently become more difficult, and costs have apparently gone up when they can be obtained. Source that still seems to be available involve supplies of fish medications. Here a few links. Many others are available. These links are not to be recommendations, but may be useful in understanding what is available.</p> <p>A company that has supplied fish and other pet antibiotics for years: https://fishmoxfishflex.com</p> <p>This link covers a number of pet meds: https://top5best.com/fish-mox-amoxicillin-for-pets?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=6477&msclkid=d310e7d7c0f11f3a4f248f338add759d</p> <p>Note; Veterinarians can write for prescriptions for 90 days. Ask for the longest shelf-life dated meds, if possible.</p> <p>Another option to consider involve online sources for medications that usually involve some type of doctor involvement to provide access to prescription meds. There are many online sources available (search for "online antibiotics prescriptions"). These sources may seem to be expensive, and medical insurance may not cover purchases. The user should decide if they are worth it for an emergency. These are supposedly the same level of medications available by normal prescriptions.</p>

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		<p>Here are a few links for informational purposes and are not to be considered as recommendations:</p> <p>https://jase.com</p> <p>https://www.twc.health/products/emergency-preparedness-kit</p>
2	What are alternatives to prescriptions (medications)?	<p>Use of over-the counter medications (OTC) is acceptable, when used according to the directions. Cautions abound though; don't use adult medication for children, consider that some prescription medication may interact with OTC meds, consider that some herbal medication may interact with OTC or prescription medications. However, because of the difficulty of obtaining sufficient stocks of prescription medication many have decided to investigate herbal medications.</p> <p>Remember that most diseases can be stopped by proper hand washing. I would stress soap over antibacterials/alcohol.</p> <p>Of course working every day to keep healthy and in good physical condition are also important. Make sure you visit your dentist at least every 8 months because a healthy mouth leads to a healthy body.</p> <p>Take time now to visit with your pharmacist and find out what over the counter products would be useful in a "no Prescription" situation. Ask about vitamins, OTC diarrhea medications, antibacterial skin creams, antihistamines, OTC pain medications, etc. Ask your MD or pharmacist how to make safe oral rehydration solution.</p> <p>Respiratory viruses and gastro- intestinal infections would cause most of the problems. There are diseases like tetanus and diphtheria and measles and polio that proper vaccination will help prevent. Talk to your MD or pharmacist about flu vaccine, shingles vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine, RSV vaccine, and hepatitis vaccines</p>

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		<p>and even yellow fever vaccines. If you have traveled out of the US, you may have already received many of these vaccines.</p> <p>There are other diseases carried by fleas, ticks, mosquitos, mice and rats which will be more difficult to control like; plague, typhus, dengue and multiple others. Make sure you have proper way to dispose of human waste products over an extended period of time. Do you have face masks, eye shields and nitrile gloves to protect yourself? If you have time find a native plant specialist in your area and find out which plants are edible or could be useful for medicine.</p> <p>Make sure to find out which local plants or plant parts are poisonous.</p> <p>There are great books for homeopathic and alternative medicines including the 1890 version of Cooleys Cyclopedia of Medicine and Pharmacy, the 1892 version of The Cottage Physician and Color Atlas of Chinese Traditional Drugs and Handbooks of Medicinal Herbs. A full set of the Foxfire series is available for sale on the internet and those books are filled with techniques used many years ago to get food and stay healthy. Take time to talk to the Amish or others who live “off the grid” as they have developed excellent ways to have food, medicine and other means of survival.</p> <p>Craig Caudill teaches classes on “off-grid” living. https://naturereliance.org/pages/craig-caudill</p> <p>Below is a list of books for reference on alternative medications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Color Atlas of Chinese Traditional Drugs• Max Wichtl Herbal Drugs• PDR of Herbal Medicines

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRC Handbook of Medicinal Herbs by Duke • Handbook of Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants Kapoor • Natures Healing Arts Folk Medicine • Eastern and Central Medicinal Plants by Foster and Duke • 1890 version of Cooleys cyclopedia of medicine and pharmacy • 1892 version The Cottage Physician by Faulkner and Carmichael • 1942 version of Pharmacopeia of the US • Foxfire book #1 Home remedies • Foxfire book # 11 Wild plant uses
3	What are alternative durable medical supplies?	<p>Durable medical equipment (DME) or supplies refers to items that a healthcare provider prescribes for a patient's long-term use at home to help with illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. DME must be durable (allows for repeated and long-term use), serve a medical purpose, and must be intended for home use. Examples of DME include canes, walkers, wheelchairs, lifts, special chairs or beds, CPAP machines and supplies, oxygen stored in cylinders, oxygen generators, insulin pumps and glucose monitors, and nebulizers. Home modifications such as ramps or stairlifts are not considered DME. An Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) might also be considered DME for some patients, although these are not usually prescribed for home use, but rather for places where large gatherings of people occur and where one might be needed in an emergency.</p> <p>Some types of DME such as canes and possibly walkers could be made from alternative materials such as wood if a reasonably talented craftsman is available with the proper tools. However, most DME is very specialized and must be stored in advance to be available in a disaster type event. The best strategy is for any individuals needing DME to "bring their own" if at all possible. Resupply of important commodities like oxygen may be a problem if normal supply chains are interrupted. The absence of needed DME may make it difficult for some individuals to manage and may negatively impact their chances for survival in austere circumstances.</p>

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		Stockpiling DME in a shelter location may depend on the age makeup, and infirmities of the community members in question.
4	What should be in a First Aid Kit?	<p>Many examples exist of commercial (off-the-shelf) first aid kits which in many cases are cost effective and nicely organized. See, https://www.redcross.org/store/first-aid-supplies</p> <p>Some questions to ask yourself are; will this kit be kept in a home or business? Will it need to be transported in a vehicle? How about carried in a backpack? How many people are likely to need to be served, 1,5,10, 20? What types of emergencies are you expecting to support? (An infectious disease outbreak requires much different equipment than a house fire, for example). What is the level of training of persons using the kit? How long will it be before another (higher) level of medical support arrives; minutes, hours, days? If this is a business or other public building, what type(s) of first aid kits are required by statute, (OSHA)?</p> <p>As a medical provider and outdoorsman I have numerous first aid kits; one for each vehicle, one for the house, one which fits inside a backpack (to contain some o'night survival supplies). Finally a very large backpack just containing medical supplies/ equipment of many types to include some pharmaceuticals for expedition use.</p>
5	What medical skills should you have?	<p>List of available emergency medical care courses for non-physicians;</p> <p>WMA International Wilderness First Aid & Medical Training</p> <p>Wilderness Medical Society WMS.ORG</p> <p>Here are some online courses offered by the Wilderness Medical Society:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilderness First Responder (WFR): A comprehensive course designed for medical professionals to learn emergency medical skills in remote settings. Advanced Wilderness Life Support (AWFS): This course is for those who need extensive training in wilderness medicine, covering a wide range of medical emergencies. • Wilderness First Aid (WFA): A basic course that teaches essential skills for outdoor safety and emergency treatment. • Wilderness EMT Certification: This course combines EMT training with wilderness medicine, preparing participants for emergency medical care in remote areas. • Webinars and Podcasts: The Wilderness Medical Society also offers webinars and podcasts to enhance knowledge and skills in wilderness medicine. <p>For more details, you can visit the Wilderness Medical Society website.</p> <p>TCCC Tactical Combat Casualty Care; (military only) https://www.naemt.org/education/trauma-education/naemt-tccc</p> <p>Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Pages/index.aspx</p> <p>CERT https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/individuals-communities/preparedness-activities-webinars/community-emergency-response-team</p> <p>CERT trains volunteers in basic disaster response skills, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire safety • Light search and rescue • Team organization • Disaster medical operations <p>BLS ACLS ATLS Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) are available on-line</p>

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	Question	Answer
		https://cpr.heart.org/en/courses/advanced-cardiovascular-life-support-course-options Basic Life Support (BLS) is a level of medical care designed for healthcare professionals and emergency responders who may need to perform CPR and other life-saving interventions before advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) is available. It is specifically geared toward those working in clinical environments, such as hospitals, clinics, and pre-hospital settings, and is required for professionals including doctors, nurses, EMTs, dentists, pharmacists, and medical students. The primary goal of BLS training is to enable participants to become proficient in performing high-quality CPR, using an automated external defibrillator (AED), and managing airway obstructions as part of a team. These four courses (BLS, ACLS, ATLS, PALS); are usually best taken by persons working regularly in a clinical setting.
6	Where can I get CPR training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Cross • American Heart Association (AHA) • YMCA <p>Also CPR classes can be taken online;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr/cpr-training/cpr-online
7	Where can I get Heimlich Maneuver training?	<p>Heimlich maneuver training comes with CPR training. Might want to consider some devices in addition such as those covered in this (rather long) link:</p> <p>https://consumerschoice.co/anti-choking-device/?cpid=939839f3-c2a0-4daa-8c20-b09b4e90f3b1&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=o&utm_campaign=533226713&utm_term=1352401990026644&utm_content=84525544276325&tgt=kwd-84526348130318:loc-190&d=c&q=devices%20for%20choking&kw=anti%20choking%20device&msclkid=2c304b327f8f10d19e6623d625da0630</p>

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		Note that these devices may not be FDA approved.
8	Should we maintain assistive medical devices at our institution?	Yes; see question #9.
9	Should we maintain a centralized medical equipment storage? and example question; Should I have medical supplies for others?	<p>A. Collaborate with Local Emergency Management: This is the most critical step. Your local emergency management agency can provide guidance on the specific needs of your community, direct you to relevant training, and integrate your church's efforts into the broader community disaster plan. They can also clarify the legal and liability landscape in your area.</p> <p>B. Partner with Healthcare Professionals: Engage with local doctors, nurses, paramedics, and pharmacists. Their expertise is invaluable in determining what supplies are most needed, how to store them properly, and how to train volunteers.</p> <p>C. Start Small with a Focus on First Aid: Begin by assembling robust first-aid kits and training a team of volunteers in first aid, CPR, and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). This is a manageable and highly effective way to provide immediate assistance.</p> <p>D. Develop a Comprehensive Plan: Your plan should address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What specific supplies and equipment you will store. o Where and how they will be stored securely.

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	Question	Answer
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What about heat, humidity, freezing temperatures? o Who is responsible for managing the inventory. o How supplies will be distributed and by whom. o How you will train your volunteers.
10	How can we obtain homeopathic/ alternative medicine training?	<p>Consider these for training in alternative medicines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornell University 3 month online training program • ACHS (American College of Healthcare Sciences) • Nature's Remedies certificate • Herbal Academy • Chestnut School of Herbal Medicine • Herbal Medics Academy • Wintergreen Botanicals • Maria Noel Groves • Univ of Minnesota Chinese Medicine and Integrative Health
11	How will we provide refrigeration for medicines?	<p>Ensuring the viability of temperature-sensitive medications is a critical concern during a power outage. In the event of a disaster, maintaining the cold chain for supplies like insulin, vaccines, and certain antibiotics can be a life-saving measure. Fortunately, a range of solutions, from simple household items to advanced portable technology, can provide effective off-grid refrigeration.</p> <p>A. Immediate and Short-Term Solutions (The First 24-48 Hours)</p> <p>For brief power outages, your primary goal is to preserve the existing cold environment.</p>

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	<p>* Keep the Refrigerator and Freezer Closed: A well-sealed, unopened refrigerator will typically maintain its temperature for about four hours. A full freezer can hold its temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if half-full).</p> <p>* Coolers and Ice Packs: If the outage is expected to last longer, transfer medications to a high-quality cooler with ice packs, frozen gel packs, or frozen water bottles.</p> <p>* Pro Tip: To prevent medications from freezing, place a layer of cardboard or a towel between the medication and the ice packs.</p> <p>* Temperature Monitoring: It is crucial to place a thermometer in the cooler to ensure the temperature remains within the safe range for your specific medication. Most refrigerated medications must be kept between **36°F and 46°F (2°C and 8°C)**.</p> <p>B. Intermediate and Long-Term Off-Grid Solutions</p> <p>For prolonged power outages, more sustainable solutions are necessary.</p> <p>* Portable Power Stations and Solar Generators: These devices can power a small, energy-efficient portable refrigerator or a 12V car fridge for an extended period. They offer a reliable and clean power source, especially when paired with solar panels for recharging during daylight hours.</p> <p>* Generators: While effective, gasoline-powered generators require a steady fuel supply, produce noise, and must be operated outdoors in a well-ventilated area to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.</p> <p>C. DIY and Low-Tech Alternatives</p> <p>In the absence of power sources, these methods can provide a cooling effect:</p>

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		<p>* Evaporative Cooling (Zeer Pot): This ancient method uses two terracotta pots, one nested inside the other, with a layer of wet sand in between. As the water in the sand evaporates, it draws heat away from the inner pot, creating a cooler environment for medications. This method is most effective in hot, dry climates.</p> <p>* Root Cellars and Buried Coolers: If you have access to underground space, a root cellar or even a buried, insulated cooler can maintain a consistently cool temperature. Placement at the bottom of a pond or in a cool spring can also be useful.</p> <p>Important Considerations for Medication Safety:</p> <p>* Know Your Medication's Needs: Always consult your pharmacist or the medication's packaging for specific temperature storage requirements. Some medications are more sensitive to temperature fluctuations than others.</p> <p>* Avoid Freezing: Unless a medication is meant to be frozen, do not allow it to come into direct contact with ice or freeze, as this can damage its molecular structure and render it ineffective.</p> <p>* When in Doubt, Consult a Professional if possible: If you are unsure about the viability of a medication after a power outage, do not use it.</p> <p>Yes; some of the devices/ equipment you might consider is/are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A hospital bed, (these can be obtained used very inexpensively)• Supplemental oxygen tank(s) or oxygen generator (provided you have electricity)• A suction machine, IV pole, bed pan, extra sheets and blankets• An Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is pricey but can be life-saving

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	Question	Answer
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An infant incubator (preferably used as they are expensive) <p>A comprehensive list of items you might need for a small clinic; https://unisonbiomed.com/essential-medical-devices-for-small-clinics/ Some of these will require training to use and may also require a license in a healthcare related field.</p>
12	What items can we maintain for trade or barter?	<p>The short answer is: Anything that may help someone to survive and thrive in a disaster or Black Sky situation.</p> <p>Food, water, clothing, tools, boots/shoes, socks, firearms, ammunition, hardware (including nails, screws, and even plastic sheeting), cooking supplies, even needles and thread, and much more will be valuable when they are not available in your local Home Depot, Lowes, Walmart, or wherever you are used to shopping. Think about the refugee camps that you have seen in the news. Pots, pans, cooking oil, utensils, and just about anything that you find necessary in your daily life will not be available in stores. Barter items will be whatever you can trade with someone for something that you need. A box of ammunition may buy a laying hen (ammo for food). A part for a radio (communication will become a need) may get a goat. Our ancestors who could not easily get to stores bought items from pots and pans to sewing needles and cloth from wandering “tinkers”. Anything useful for survival, communications, or even entertainment may become objects useful for trade or barter.</p> <p>Skills will also be barter items. If you can heal (doctors, nurses), prepare game (butchers and experience hunters), protect (police, military), or make things (blacksmiths, carpenters, farriers, bakers) may all be able to trade their work skills for food, clothing, or other supplies.</p> <p>Read about Plymouth, Jamestown, or even the western frontier for ideas. Mountain men traded furs for blocks of cocoa and cones of sugar, not just liquor, powder and shot.</p>

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Emergency Medical Q&A

	Question	Answer
13	What is the “shelf life” for medications?	Usually much longer than the expiration date printed on the bottle or box. Only some medications such as nitro-glycerin tabs for angina or insulin deteriorate within a few weeks to months. Medications kept in dry (powder) form last much longer than meds which have been reconstituted with water. Keep all meds in a cool, dry location and out of the sun. Medications do not generally lose their effectiveness all at once but gradually. So most meds have decreased effectiveness over longer periods of time. Some meds lose effectiveness with freezing so try to avoid that as well.
14	Should we keep diarrhea medication like Pepto-Bismol and Imodium on hand?	<p>Yes, and like other OTC meds, use them as per directions. For diarrhea pay particular attention to staying well hydrated. Gastrointestinal diseases caused by bacteria and virus is a very serious condition during a BSE or grid failure due to dehydration and possible lack of antibiotics to treat the patient. Severe dehydration may be fatal so medications that inhibit diarrhea are important. Note that, the change of diet and stress associated with a BSE may contribute to such conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is highly recommended that an adequate supply of Pepto-Bismol be kept on hand in either liquid or tablet form. Tablets may have a longer shelf-life and are easier to store and carry. Pepto-Bismol provides a protective coating for your stomach and contains bismuth which has antibacterial properties.• Keeping an adequate supply of Imodium is also highly recommended to treat diarrhea. The active ingredient in Imodium is loperamide which binds to receptors in the intestinal wall thereby reducing the movement or contraction of intestinal muscles and allowing more water absorption.• Another means of maintaining or re-establishing a balance of good intestinal bacteria may be probiotics that do not require refrigeration.

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Emergency Medical Q&A

	Question	Answer
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to medications designed to prevent diarrhea, medications to loosen stools or induce bowel movement may also be useful, especially if a dramatic change of diet or stress causes changes in bowel movements. • For minor stomach irritations rather than diarrhea, Chamomile tea may be used to sooth the stomach by serving as an anti-inflammatory to reduce irritation and a muscle relaxant to ease cramping and spasms. Chamomile tea can also reduce anxiety and promote sleep. (Probably other natural remedies like peppermint, that might help too... not sure) • While the responsibility of maintaining an adequate supply of these drugs must remain with the individual and family, a separate backup supply might be kept at the community level. <p>Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS)</p> <p>Severe loss of fluids associated with gastrointestinal issues associated with bad water or food sources can present a life-threatening situation, especially when normal medical care is not available. Therefore, it is important to rehydrate those suffering from severe diarrhea and to keep them hydrated until medical treatment can be applied or they recover. Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS) consist of a balance of electrolytes and sugar which facilitates the absorption of sodium and water into the small intestine for rehydration and replacement of lost electrolytes including potassium. Sodium bicarbonate or trisodium citrate, hydrate help correct acidosis which occurs from diarrhea; zinc decreases the severity and duration of the diarrhea. (WHO/UNICEF 2006).</p>
15	What medicines can I skip doses?	It is a very important principle in medicine that patients should always comply with healthcare provider instructions and schedule for prescribed medications. Not doing so can be very detrimental and cause the condition prescribed for to not be treated adequately, such as an infection where antibiotics are not taken properly, and, in some cases, very serious consequences up to and including death. Examples of this could

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Emergency Medical Q&A

	Question	Answer
		<p>include stroke in a patient not taking their anti-hypertensive medications, serious or life-threatening arrhythmias in patients on other important cardiac medications, deterioration in diabetic individuals on insulin or other medications that control blood sugar, or stroke in a person with chronic atrial fibrillation that is unable to take protective anticoagulants.</p> <p>It is also known, however, that patients in general are often not very compliant with doctors' instructions on how to take their medications. This happens frequently, and often without serious adverse effects. Examples of this are a patient with hypothyroidism missing a dose of their thyroid replacement medication, or a patient with hypercholesterolemia missing doses of their statin medication. In chronic medical conditions such as these, missing one or a few doses may not be seriously detrimental, as long as the person gets back on their medication as soon as possible. Even a missed dose of an antibiotic for an infection may not be that detrimental as long as the dosage schedule is resumed immediately. Intentionally missing prescribed doses of medication to conserve medication supply is, however, very frowned upon except under extremely unusual circumstances.</p>

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