



## First Aid Kits: the Good, the Bad, and the Downright Ugly .....

A first aid kit is a collection of supplies and equipment that is used to give medical treatment. There is a wide variation in the contents of first aid kits based on the knowledge and experience of those putting it together, the differing first aid requirements of the area where it may be used and variations in legislation or regulation in a given area.

It's important to keep a well-stocked first-aid kit on the yard so you can deal with minor accidents and injuries and which has everything you require to keep legally compliant.

Containing at least the following items:

- Assorted, wrapped sterile plasters - Use plasters for small cuts and grazes.
- alcohol-free cleansing wipes - To clean the skin around the wound
- Two sterile eye pads;
- Four individually wrapped triangular bandages, preferably sterile - Triangular bandages are large triangular shaped pieces of cloth. You can fold a triangular bandage to use as either a bandage or sling, or, if sterile, as a dressing for large wounds and burns.
- Six safety pins;
- Two large, individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings - A sterile wound dressing is a sterile pad attached to a bandage. These are for larger wounds to apply pressure to help stop bleeding and are quick and easy to put on in an emergency.
- Six medium-sized, individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings;
- Disposable gloves - Using disposable gloves reduces the risk of infection between you and someone you're helping. If they're available, always wear gloves whenever you dress wounds or deal with any body fluids or waste
- Face shields or pocket masks - These are designed to prevent infection when you give rescue breaths
- basic first aid manual or instruction booklet - and contents to treat: major and minor bleeding, burns, breaks and sprains.
- Tough cut scissors – strong enough to cut through clothes
- A blanket: To keep someone warm and protect them from the cold.



*This fact sheet has been provided by Medi-K First Aid Training [www.medi-k.co.uk](http://www.medi-k.co.uk)*



## **Additional useful contents;**

Instant ice pack – or you can use a bag of frozen peas – Ensure it is wrapped in a cloth as it can cause ice burns.

A foil blanket to keep the casualty warm, crucially important in helping to prevent them going into shock. They should ideally be insulated from the ground and have this wrapped round them to retain their body heat



## **What NOT to include;**

No medications – Aspirin, Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, Epipens, tablets or inhalers (in separately marked container if needed to be stored). The ability to diagnose and issue painkillers is beyond the scope of a basic first aid course. Over the counter drugs can cause a number of side effects and a casualty could be allergic to them. Often these drugs can interfere with prescribed medicines. Without the appropriate training a first aider cannot guarantee that they aren't inadvertently causing harm to a casualty.

No Creams – No sudocrem or burns creams.

No Alcohol - I am sure that we've all heard about the medicinal benefits associated with the alcohol, but does it belong in a first aid kit? The answer to this is absolutely not! I can think of a variety of reasons why alcohol shouldn't be given to a casualty. In addition to impairing judgement, alcohol can also lead to a casualty becoming hypothermic. Alcohol causes the blood vessels to dilate, moving heat away from the core. Couple this with alcohols dialectic qualities and you could end up with a dangerous situation.

No Sharps - I've bought many branded first aid kits which have included a wide variety of sharps including scalpels and even hypodermic needles! The use of both of these items is beyond the scope of a standard first aid course. Without the correct training a first Aider is inviting disaster.



No lotions or Potions – no Iodine spray or tea tree oil

First Aid kits are usually in a green box or bag that's marked with a white cross, and should be easy to find. It is most important that the kits contents are good quality – often cheap kits will not be of sufficient quality should you need to use them.

First aid kits can be assembled in almost any type of container, and this will depend on whether they are commercially produced or assembled by an individual. Standard kits often come in durable plastic boxes, fabric pouches or in wall mounted cabinets. The type of container will vary depending on purpose, and they range in size from wallet sized through to large box.

It is recommended that all kits are in a clean, waterproof container to keep the contents safe and aseptic. The kit should be stored away from heat and humidity, within easy reach for adults but out of the reach of children. Since the supplies must be easily accessible, avoid locking or laced closures. Kits should also be checked regularly and restocked if any items are damaged or are out of date.

The most fully stocked kit will be of no use to you in time of need without basic knowledge of the care required for the given situation. A first-aid course is therefore recommended, with a refresher every three years in order to keep your knowledge current.

## **Further Info and Contacts**

For more first aid information and assistance or to book training courses:

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