

## Your Medicine Cabinet & First Aid Kit

Be prepared for common ailments by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home. This list, recommended by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, will help you deal with most minor ailments.

### Medicines Cabinet

- |                                |                                    |                                 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • <b>Pain Killers</b>          | • <b>Anti-diarrhoea medication</b> | • <b>Oral rehydration salts</b> |
| • <b>Cold and flu remedies</b> | • <b>Antihistamines</b>            | • <b>Indigestion remedies</b>   |
| • <b>Decongestants</b>         |                                    | • <b>Sunscreen (summer)</b>     |

### Medicine safety

Make sure you seek advice from a pharmacist if you're taking other medications as they can interact with each other. As with all medication both bought over the counter and those prescribed by your doctor, remember the following;

- **Always follow the directions** on medicine packets and information leaflets, and never take more than the stated dose
- **Always keep medicines out of the sight and reach of children** – a high, lockable cupboard in a cool, dry place is ideal
- **Regularly check the expiry dates on a medicine** – if a medicine is past its use-by date, don't use it and take it to your pharmacy, where it can be disposed of safely
- **Speak with your Pharmacist** - If you have questions about any medicines or you are unsure what is appropriate for your illness/ condition, ask your local pharmacist.

### How your pharmacist can help you

Don't forget your local pharmacist can help with many ailments. Pharmacists are trained professionals ready to give advice on the best treatment. Instead of booking an appointment with your GP, you can see your local pharmacist any time – just walk in. Find your local pharmacy by clicking [here](#) or visiting the NHS website.

### Medication Information

#### • Pain relief

Painkillers like paracetamol and ibuprofen are highly effective at relieving most minor aches and pains, such as headaches and period pain. These medicines also help with some minor ailments, such as the common cold, by reducing aches, pain and high temperatures.

Paracetamol and ibuprofen also help reduce the inflammation seen in arthritis and sprains.

Bear in mind the following;

- Ibuprofen must be taken with caution if you have certain conditions, such as asthma – check with your pharmacist if in doubt
- Pregnant women shouldn't take ibuprofen – visit the '[bumps pregnancy](#)' website to find out more about taking medicines when you're pregnant

#### • Decongestants

Decongestants are a type of medicine that can provide short-term relief for a blocked or stuffy nose. They work by reducing the swelling of the blood vessels in your nose, which helps open up the airways and are available as tablets, capsules, nasal sprays, liquids or powders.

#### • Indigestion treatment

If you have stomach ache or heartburn, a simple antacid will reduce stomach acidity and bring relief. Antacids come as chewable tablets, tablets that dissolve in water, or in liquid form.

#### • Antihistamines

These are useful for dealing with allergies and insect bites. They're also helpful if you have hayfever.

**Creams** Antihistamine creams are applied to the skin to soothe insect stings and bites, rashes and itching from stinging nettles.

**Tablets** Help control hayfever symptoms and calm minor allergic reactions to food. They can also help calm itchiness during chickenpox.

Some antihistamines may cause drowsiness. Ask your pharmacist about this as there are some antihistamines which are less likely to cause drowsiness.

- **Anti-diarrhoea tablets**

Diarrhoea is caused by a range of things, such as food poisoning or a stomach virus, and can happen without warning. It's a good idea to keep an anti-diarrhoea medicine at home.

Anti-diarrhoea remedies can quickly control the symptoms of diarrhoea, although they don't deal with the underlying cause.

**Speak to your GP or pharmacist for advice about a child with these symptoms.**

- **Oral rehydration salts**

Fever, diarrhoea and vomiting make us lose water and essential minerals, and can lead to dehydration.

Oral rehydration salts, available at pharmacies, are an easy way to help restore your body's natural balance of minerals and fluid, and help your recovery. But they don't fight the cause of your illness, such as a virus or bacteria.

- **Sunscreen**

Keep a sun lotion of at least factor 15. Even fairly brief exposure to the sun can cause sunburn and increase your risk of skin cancer. Ensure your sunscreen provides UVA protection. You can protect yourself against the sun further by wearing a hat and sunglasses, and by avoiding the sun during the hottest part of the day between 11am and 3pm.

## Your First Aid kit

- |                   |                           |                           |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| • <b>Bandages</b> | • <b>Eyewash solution</b> | • <b>Sterile dressing</b> | • <b>Antiseptic</b> |
| • <b>Plasters</b> | • <b>Thermometer</b>      | • <b>Tweezers</b>         |                     |

A well-prepared first aid kit can help treat minor cuts, sprains and bruises, and reduce the risk of cuts becoming infected. It should contain the following items:

- **Bandages**– can support injured limbs, such as a sprained wrist, and also apply direct pressure to larger cuts before being treated in hospital
- **Plasters**– a range of sizes, waterproof if possible
- **Thermometer**– digital thermometers that you put in your mouth produce very accurate readings; an under-arm thermometer or an ear thermometer are good ways to read a baby or young child's temperature
- **Antiseptic**– this can be used to clean cuts before they're bandaged, and most can treat a range of conditions, including insect stings, ulcers and pimples; alcohol-free antiseptic wipes are useful to clean cuts
- **Eyewash solution**– this will help wash out grit or dirt in the eyes
- **Sterile dressings**– larger injuries should be covered with a sterile dressing to prevent infection until treatment can be given by a healthcare professional
- **Tweezers**– for taking out splinters; if splinters are left in, they can cause discomfort and could become infected

## More information is available at the following websites

- [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [www.medicinesinpregnancy.org.uk](http://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org.uk)
- [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org)

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