

12 Months of Preparedness

4. First Aid

The basics of first aid might be simpler than you think. Just like in all aspects of life, before we can help another, we must first help ourselves. The first thing you should be asking yourself is: is this scene safe? Ensure that there aren't any immediate threats to you or your patient that need to be addressed before you can attend to the person in need; if there are, get yourself and your patient, if possible, away from the threat. Before anything else, you don't want to wind up becoming a patient yourself. Next up, make sure to protect yourself and your patient by washing your hands and using sterile equipment if possible - I highly recommend you keep a box of non-latex gloves in your size in the same place you store your first aid kit. Consider purchasing a commercially available first aid kit or making your own. Having a kit in your home, your car, and at your place of work is essential for being prepared for a first aid emergency anywhere. A basic first aid kit could include sterile gauze, triangle bandages, roller gauze, tape, antiseptic wipes, absorbent compresses, burn ointment, antibiotic cream, a rescue/breathing mask, a chemical cold pack, a roll-up splint, blunt tip scissors. Take care that you get a first aid kit that fits your needs; many basic kits won't include bandaging or splinting equipment for anything except the smallest and most basic of injuries. If you aren't familiar with any of the equipment in your first aid kit, figuring it out while trying to treat a patient is **not** the time; you could cause more harm to an already injured person if you act rashly. If you want to practice, you can always find a friend or family member to practice splinting and bandaging. In a disaster situation, yours might be the only care the patient receives for hours, or even days. In this case, it is important to make sure that bandages are changed regularly and that any infection or wound sites are kept clean as possible until the body can begin to heal.

For some more advanced, detailed education on how to provide First Aid, you may enroll in a class for a First Responder/CPR certificate. Here are some links provided on basic first aid education.

<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/first-aid/performing-first-aid/first-aid-steps>

<https://unchartedsupplyco.com/blogs/news/basic-first-aid>

<https://nhcps.com/lesson/cpr-first-aid-first-aid-basics/> For a quality first aid kit, you might look at this for the home:

https://www.firstaidmarket.com/products/lifeline-first-aid-deluxe-first-aid-kit-for-basic-first-aid?_pos=4&_sid=2e48f2fe3&_ss=r

For something more intensive and ready for the field, you might consider a larger kit like this:

<https://www.firstaidmarket.com/collections/trauma-wound-care/products/standard-emergency-medical-kit-93-pieces-346100>

Note: The kits are mentioned only as examples. We do not recommend any particular supplier.