
ULTIMATE
SURVIVAL
MEDICINE

Contents

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The importance of being prepared

It's impossible to predict when disaster will strike. Regardless of whether it is man-made or has natural causes, society will quickly disintegrate. Whether it's Hurricane Katrina or the intense blizzard that struck the Northeastern states, we've seen how easy it is to lose our ability to function due to disaster. Both events cut people off entirely, leaving them no choice but to look out for themselves.

When I think about preparing, I like to think about completing goals for thorough planning and proper strategy to ensure that my family stays safe. I know that we will survive through any emergency, nationally or locally. This is exactly what a survival mindset entails—being prepared to handle anything that comes across your path. A big part of this preparedness comes from first aid. Of course, having weapons and ammo are important means of protection, but they won't heal you once you get injured. This guide will demonstrate a few different techniques that you must learn to ensure that you can handle illness and injury in any given scenario.

Why you need to learn first aid

An accident can occur at any given time, and during a crisis, you may not be able to reach a medical professional. Even the police may not be available! You will only be able to depend on yourself to ensure that your family members are safe and healthy. Even outside of a crisis, a problem could arise where first ad is necessary. Maybe you went camping during the weekend and someone got burned

by a smoldering campfire, or a family member had an accident while hunting. Out in the country, you could be completely separated from any kind of medical assistance.

A knowledge of first aid procedure is a key skill to survive, and if a doctor is unavailable, you are the best chance that an injured person has. Pay close attention and take the tips outlined throughout this guide to heart so that you can help when it is needed the most.

The importance of cleanliness

Hygiene is a significant challenge when you are out in the wilderness. Finding clean water in a crisis—or even outside of your tent—is difficult enough, but proper hygiene is crucial to ensure that small accidents don't become life-threatening events. Latrines should be dug between 100-200 yards away from the campsite, and you should put a keen focus on personal hygiene.

Make sure that your hands are washed before and after you eat, use the bathroom, and certainly before administering first aid treatment.

During a crisis, sicknesses and infections can quickly become life-threatening without having the right treatment. Soldiers in the Civil War were more likely to perish from dysentery as opposed to battle. Even during a disaster, the chances are higher of you struggling with diarrhea than shooting a round of bullets at an enemy.

If you truly want to survive through any crisis, being clean is the first and most important step.

The basics of wound care

The quality of a survivalist mentality mimics the quality of training and supplies. For first aid, this is the same viewpoint. You must keep the correct equipment on hand and get the correct training to be successful. Later, we'll go into detail about the things that you should have, but first, let's talk about the basic elements of caring for wounds.

There are millions of Americans admitted into emergency rooms each year. Unfortunately, accidents will always happen. The most common type of accident is a flesh wound, which is what we will discuss first.

At this point, you need to ask three crucial questions:

- What happened?
- Is there pain anywhere else?
- Are there any pre-existing medical conditions?

The goal of this is to discover whether there is a risk of infection and whether there are additional wounds that might not be readily visible. You should also find out if there is a medication that should not be given to avoid an allergy attack. It's also important to know about pre-existing conditions since that may also help determine what treatment to give.

Let's talk a little more about the wound itself.

Check quickly to see if you can pinpoint any signs of damage, and take note of the location, depth, and length of the wound. If the issue is on an extremity or a joint, try to get them to show full range of movement, if possible. Their pulse should probably be close to 100 beats a minute, but they should be able to breathe normally and not go into shock. Later, we'll talk about dealing with shock.

The biology of the body

Before we get ahead of ourselves, the best way for you to understand first aid is to have a basic understanding of the bodily process. There are two layers to your skin—the top is the epidermis, and the bottom layer is the dermis. Underneath the dermis there are subcutaneous fat layers (yellow in color), muscle (red), connective tissue (grey or white) and solid bone.

- A wound that causes injury only to the epidermis is called an abrasion—it's similar to a skinned knee from falling off a bike.

- A wound that gets to the dermis is a laceration, which is a more serious situation, like getting stabbed with a knife.

- If the wound has a significant piece of tissue that has been removed, the wound is called an avulsion—these commonly happen in car crashes, where body parts are either ripped off or torn open.

How to treat a wound

Stop the bleeding

The first thing to do is to get the bleeding to stop. Should the victim lose over 3-4 pints of blood, they will need a transfusion, so you must figure out how to stop the blood flow. Take a clean piece of fabric—a towel, shirt, rag, etc.—and press down firmly on the wound. The best way to do this is by using clean gloves and gauze, too.

Then, you will have to raise the wound higher than their heart and continue to apply pressure. It may take around ten minutes to stop the flow of blood. If it doesn't slow, it could be an issue with a large artery or vein, which means you will need to insert your finger into the wound and apply pressure directly.

A tourniquet can be used as a last resort to stop the flow of blood, but this should only be done if you cannot stop it through other means. If a tourniquet is kept on for more than a couple of hours, the limb must be amputated.

Clean the wound

When the blood stops flowing, the wound must be cleaned. Take off—or cut off—any type of clothing and wash the area thoroughly with sterilized water. An infection can start if anything gets stuck, so take extra care to ensure that nothing is caught inside the wound. A syringe can be used to flush the wound completely with a little bit of air pressure. The wound may have to be pulled open slightly to get the deepest parts cleaned thoroughly. If you don't have a syringe, you can use a gauze compress and repeat until water running out of the wound is clear.

Don't close the wound

If you cannot get to a hospital, the best thing to do is to keep the wound open. If you close it with sutures or staples, you risk having an unclean wound, which can create internal infections and serious issues.

If you cannot get the bleeding to stop or if the laceration is large, you can use a butterfly closure or even duct tape in a pinch. Your first choice should always be to keep the wound open to allow for drainage and clearing of pus until the victim can be brought to a facility that will properly clean and dress the wound.

Dressing the wound

You should always use the wet-to-dry method for dressing a wound. After cleaning, place a damp, clean dressing on the area and cover it with a dry dressing before bandaging everything together. The moisture encourages circulation and tissue breakdown, which assists in healing.

The dressing should be changed once every 12 hours, and you should check for any signs of infection or differences occurring in the wound or the areas around it. The wound will start swelling, turn red, and will feel warm if an infection is present. Keep a close eye out for this, since infections can quickly spread throughout the body and become life-threatening as quickly as 6 hours later.

The question of antibiotics

Antibiotics are a great method of protecting a wound against infection. They shouldn't be taken for every scrape and cut, but when it comes to deep wounds, damage inflicted by an animal, or wounds that are contaminated with bodily fluids, saliva, or feces, these wounds are particularly susceptible to infections. Antibiotics should be taken as a precautionary measure.

Treating a stab wound

If you are providing first aid treatment for someone who has been in a fight, there are some important things to know about treating stab wounds. Stab wounds are serious injuries. The blade can cause excessive bleeding, high risk towards infection, and wounds located in the abdomen or chest are incredibly deadly.

Before running to the scene to assist the victim, make a quick visual scan to ensure that the area is safe. In a disaster, this is particularly important, and it represents a basic rule of survival first aid. You should only offer assistance if you can do it without putting yourself into danger. This sounds selfish, but you need to preserve yourself to ensure that you can assist your family, friends, or even a stranger that you are trying to save.

Like basic wound treatments, you should visually inspect to find any additional damage, and start working on the serious problems first. If there has been a struggle with a knife, there will probably be more than one laceration or puncture wound, so put your focus on any wounds that are gushing first.

If the knife is small and is still there, try to remove it. Only do so if removing the knife will not cause more damage. If there is a large knife still there, your best bet is to leave it. The blade is taking on the role of a plug that is stemming blood flow, so removing it could cause a life-threatening loss of blood.

Afterwards, use pressure, elevation, cleaning, and bandaging to complete the first aid process.

Treating a gunshot wound

When compared to stab wounds, gunshot wounds are even worse. Bullets can cause an incredible amount of damage. They tear straight through flesh, shatter bones, and send little shockwaves that kill surrounding tissue. A victim who has been shot is going to be bleeding uncontrollably, and you will need to take quick and precise action to give them a fighting chance.

Your first step is always to quell the bleeding. There are clotting agents that can speed this process if pressure does not work, and a tourniquet should be applied as a last resort. This isn't ideal, since cutting the blood flow means that the limb will begin dying off after two hours. Unfortunately, for someone who has been shot, this may be the only way to stop the flow of blood and save them. A makeshift tourniquet can be created with a stick and a triangle bandage, spinning the stick to apply pressure to the wound. Make sure that the bandage is at least 2 inches thick so that the tissue damage is minimized.

Soft tissue damage

Look for an entry and exit hole. Should the bullet still be in the wound, you must find a way to remove it. The best way to do this is after the victim is stable and the flow of blood has slowed down. Until that point is reached, keep applying pressure to allow the blood to clot. If it is a big hole, you won't have time to wait for the blood to clot. In this case, the hole can be filled with damp gauze (soaked in sterile water) while pressure is applied. This allows the body to attach to the gauze and clot against it. Everything should be wrapped properly with pressure bandages until you can find medical assistance.

Hard tissue damage

If the bullet hits a bone, the impact will cause the bone to shatter. While out in the field, the only method of dealing with this is to make a splint to bind the bone in place. Don't forget to stop the bleeding before attempting to attach a splint.

- Hard splints are best used for limbs. A makeshift hard splint can be made with sticks, with wrappings on each side to support the wound and prevent movement.

- Soft splints are good for joints—like an ankle or elbow—and can be constructed with a pillow or blanket. Simply wrap the pillow or blanket around the joint and secure its position with duct tape.

Splints work by restricting movement within the damaged area. Bone and muscles that suffer damage must be shielded against movement. This will limit loss of blood and prevent further damage. Once the splint is attached, you can use the Capillary Refill test to make sure that the splint is not cutting off circulation. Press your fingernail into the skin of an area that is in the splint and release that pressure. The color should return to the skin after 2 seconds. If it takes longer, or if their fingertips are turning purple, this is a sign that the splint needs to be loosened to allow for proper blood flow. Undo the splint and re-do the process to ensure that the splint is keeping the wound in place while still allowing for good circulation.

Organ damage

While out in the wild, it is impossible to fix organ damage. The only goal of first aid in this situation is to stabilize the victim enough to get them to a surgeon. Aside from stopping the flow of blood and bringing the victim to a doctor, you will have to consider two different situations.

If it is a chest wound, you might hear a sucking noise. This comes from entry and exit points allowing air to seep into the chest cavity. This is an issue that needs to be immediately fixed. Take an occlusive dressing (water, air-tight) and put it over the wound, leaving only one side without tape. This lets the dressing become a valve, allowing pressure to get out as the victim breathes.

If it is a stomach wound, it is possible that there will be organs hanging out of the abdominal cavity. This victim needs medical care immediately. The only thing that you can do is to keep any exposed organs warm, wet, and clean. Do not try and insert the organs back inside. Cover any exposed organs with gauze and clean water, wrapping with occlusive dressing to lock in moisture. If organs dry out they will die, and the victim will follow shortly thereafter. Keeping their organs wet means keeping them alive.

Treating a sprain

One of the most frequent hiking injuries comes from rolling an ankle. A sprain comes from overstretching a ligament or tendon, and though they might be more common in the ankle, they can happen anywhere. A sprain comes with pain, tenderness, swelling, and discoloration. Sprains will look like large bruises.

Treating a sprain is best done with the RICE process.

- **Rest**. Eliminate weight and stress from the affected area and rest. If you are not in a safe area, you can walk with crutches or have someone carry you. Keep in mind that it could take weeks for a sprain to heal, and putting weight on it slows the healing process.

- **Ice**. The best way to reduce swelling is to apply a compress or ice pack to the area. The best procedure is to apply an ice pack every ten minutes, each hour. This should be repeated for the first few days until the pain begins to reduce.

- **Compression**. For the first 1-2 days, the affected area should be wrapped inside a compression bandage to quell the swelling. If you have sprained an ankle, you will also need a supportive brace for your ankle if you are continuing to walk, including crutches.

- **Elevate**. For 2-3 hours each day, keep the affected area above your heart to minimize swelling and bruising.

Using the RICE method helps nearly every ankle sprain heal naturally. Adding ibuprofen or naproxen can help reduce pain, swelling, and discomfort.

Treating a broken bone

One of the most common injuries comes from broken bones. You will find that you are frequently using first aid training to help someone who has broken a bone. It is essential to immobilize the are to prevent any further damage. Slings and splints are great ways to secure the injury long enough to deliver them to a safe place.

Some bones are obviously broken, since the area may look misshapen or crooked. If you're dealing with a severe break, the bone may have even broken through the skin. It's much better to let a professional realign a broken bone, but if you have no other option, you may have to push the bones back together to allow them to heal.

The next thing you will have to do is put on a splint. Both parts above and below the break must be immobilized. If you have a broken forearm, the splint needs to immobilize the wrist and the elbow.

If the victim has a broken collarbone or otherwise injured shoulder, a sling should be used to immobilize their arm. You should be making a pouch that absorbs their arm's weight, freeing their neck and limiting movement. Use a triangle bandage—an improvised sling can be made from a long-sleeve shirt—and put it on their chest. The top of the triangle should be pointing towards the elbow of the afflicted arm. Put the injured arm across their chest, resting on top of the triangle bandage. Fold the bottom to meet the top while holding the remaining two points. These should be tied around the back of their neck and adjusted for comfort as necessary.

If you think that the victim has suffered a head injury or a break along the spine, neck, or pelvis, it will be incredibly risky to try moving them. We don't always have the option, particularly if they are in immediate danger. If possible, splint injuries before moving them to reduce any additional damage.

How to perform CPR

When someone stops breathing, CPR becomes a crucial first aid skill. It forces the body to continue supplying blood to vital organs, even if the heart has stopped. CPR works for heart attack victims, those who have lost consciousness and breath, and even drowning victims.

Perform CPR on an adult

- See if they are breathing. If not, you can begin CPR
- Put the heel of your palm in the center of their chest
- Place your other hand on top and lace your fingers together
- Push firmly down for at least 2 inches and allow the chest to fully rise back up
- Compressions should be performed at 100-120 beats per minute (there are plenty of people who use the beat of "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees as a reference)
- Once you have delivered 30 compressions, the airway needs to be opened
- Lift the chin and tilt the head back while pinching the nose to prevent air from seeping out
- Seal their mouth with yours, and exhale
- The breath should be significant enough to notice the victim's chest rising
- If it isn't rising high enough, repeat positioning and exhale again
- After two solid breaths, begin another set of 30 compressions
- Breathe again twice, and return to compressions

There should be around five full repetitions of compressions and breathing. This usually takes about 2 minutes. After five repetitions, stop to see if the victim has started breathing. If so, then you can stop CPR. If they have not, then you need to begin another round.

Perform CPR on an infant

If a baby has stopped breathing and is unconscious, CPR can be performed, but with a different approach than with an adult.

Follow these steps:

- Try to get a response through tickling the baby's feet
- If they begin gagging or coughing, this is a good sign, since it means their airway is only partially closed
- Back blows or thrusts to the chest can be used to open the airway and dislodge anything blocking it
- Once the blockage is resolved, you can read their pulse through the upper arm. If they have a pulse and are breathing, put them into a recovery position
- CPR should only be performed if there is no pulse and they are not breathing
- Gently tilt back their head to allow the airway to open
- Give two rescue breaths while pinching their nose shut and gently exhaling for one second
- Stop between breaths to allow air to escape and check for a pulse. If there is no pulse, begin compressions
- Put two or three fingers in the middle of the baby's chest
- Perform 30 fluid compressions to the same rhythm ("Stayin' Alive")
- Their chest should be depressing one-third or one-half of their chest, which should be around an inch

Keep going for five compression cycles until the infant is revived.

Treating Hypothermia

Hypothermia happens when the body starts to lose heat quicker than it can be replaced. This creates loss of memory, slurred speech, shivering, and unconsciousness. Hypothermia typically comes from severely cold weather or being immersed in cold water, and it can be life-threatening. For an infant, their skin will feel cold, and they may be refusing food or much quieter than usual.

Once you have established that a victim has hypothermia, the steps within the next thirty minutes can save them. Bring them inside to a warm shelter. You can put them on the ground and use clothes and blankets as insulation layers. If they are wet, make sure that they are changed into dry, warm clothing and begin reheating them gradually. If you do this too quickly, their heart may be shocked into cardiac arrest, so it's important to do this slowly. Put a warm, dry compress on their chest, neck, groin, and armpits to start spreading heat throughout the body. When they can, have them drink something warm and sugary—like hot water, tea, and honey—and make sure that they stay insulated, dry, and

warm until they are better. Should they lose consciousness again or stop breathing, start another round of CPR until they recover.

Treating Heat Exhaustion / Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion and heatstroke typically occur when someone is dehydrated and engaged in strenuous physical activity or incredibly hot temperatures. They usually show themselves through exhaustion, headaches, sweating, cramps, dizzy spells, dark urine, and powerful thirst.

- Heat exhaustion is the initial stage, where your body starts to quickly lose water and salts through perspiration.

- Heatstroke is the secondary stage, and is a much more serious condition. This means that the body cannot cool itself down, and this high temperature can cause severe damage to the brain or other organs in the body.

In order to treat these, the victim needs to be immediately brought out of the heat. They should take off their clothes and have cool water applied to their skin. If you have icepacks, they can be placed underneath their armpits to speed up the cooling process. Lay them down and let a fan blow cool air over them to encourage evaporation and sweating. After 10-15 minutes, their condition should improve. If not, the victim could have serious heatstroke and needs medical attention immediately. If you cannot get them to help, continue to repeat the cooling process as best as possible.

Treating someone going into shock

Going into shock necessitates a medical emergency. Shock is when severe blood loss occurs, preventing organs and cells from getting the proper amounts of oxygen. There are a few different symptoms of shock, including blue lips, blue fingernails, excessive sweating, nausea, dizziness, cold or clammy skin, and a loss of consciousness.

***The shock position**

You might have to perform CPR for severe shock where the victim is not breathing. If they are unconscious and still breathing, place them into the shock position. This means putting them on their back, elevating their legs, and getting them warm and comfortable. If they might vomit, they can be propped on the side in the recovery position and monitored until they recover or medical assistance arrives. Someone who is suffering from shock needs to rest between 24-48 hours as a minimum, and they should be constantly evaluated for signs of deterioration.

Treating burns

Accidents are inevitable, and when there are tons of people near a campfire, burns will be common accidents. There are three burn levels, and there are different procedures for each.

First degree

This burn is mild and doesn't typically need medical attention, since only the first layer of skin will be affected. A first-degree burn comes from hot water or sunburn. Relieving the pain can be done through putting cool water over the burned area, or applying a cold compress. Aloe Vera is also useful for healing and relieving pain.

Second degree

Second degree burns are more serious because they involve the top and bottom skin layers. They come with increased pain, and are easily recognized through blisters. Cool water can be run on a second degree burn for 10-15 minutes to relieve the pain, and the affected area should be covered with a loose bandage. This prevents blisters from bursting open. If they already have, you can use an antibiotic cream to protect the burn before putting on the bandages.

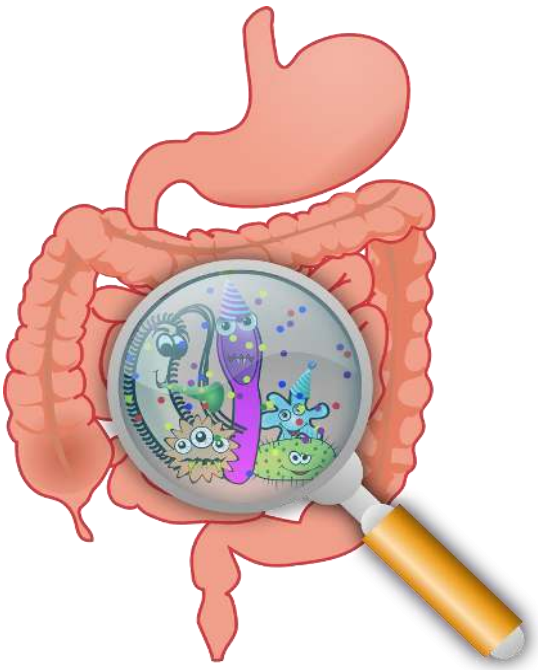
Third degree

These burns go deep into tissue layers, and the skin will either be white or black. Third degree burns can kill nerves, so they might be less painful. Use the same procedure as you would with a second-degree burn, but keep in mind that these burns take months to heal and create substantial scars.

Treating diarrhea

During a survival situation, you may have had no other option but to drink contaminated water, eat food that has spoiled, or use unclean utensils. This means that you have been exposed to bacteria,

and this harmful bacteria results in diarrhea. The simple solution for this is to use medicine, but there are other options to relieve symptoms.



It is crucial to keep hydrated, so you will need to drink lots of fluids. You will need sodium, potassium, and chloride, so you can add a bit of salt and a few spoons of sugar to your drinking water. Add a little bit of lemon juice to improve the taste. You can also use an electrolyte pack to give your drinking water all the nutrients it needs. You can also drink black tea, since tannins will reduce inflammation throughout the intestines.

Treating a drowning victim

There are almost 8,000 deaths each year due to drowning, so it is crucial to understand how to treat a drowning victim. If you notice that someone is in trouble, you need to reach them as soon as you can. Bring along a floatation device, since the drowning individual may be panicked. Without a flotation device, this could put your own wellbeing at risk during the attempt to save them.

First and foremost, the drowning victim will need rescue breaths. When they have been brought to shallow water, rescue breaths can be given as their nose is pinched and you are breathing into their mouth. This technique puts fresh oxygen in their body and increases the likelihood that they will survive. Give two breaths every 30 seconds. Be mindful that the victim may vomit, since the water that has been ingested will inevitably come back up. If this occurs, you should quickly check to make sure that vomit is cleared from their mouth before you continue providing rescue breaths.

When they are out of the water, you must verify that the airway is free and clear, and that the victim is breathing. If they are not, start performing CPR. If they are breathing, lay the victim in the recovery position on their side until they are conscious again.

Treating an animal attack

Being outdoors for long periods of time means that you are at high risk of encountering wildlife. It could be a curious mountain lion wandering across your path, a bear that is protecting her cubs, or an ornery moose.

Avoiding an animal attack means always being vigilant. Make sure that your campsite is clean, your dishes are washed, and that food is kept inside bear-proof containers. Of course, common sense is key here, too—never feed animals close to the camp, and don't bring food with you inside of your tent.

Treating a bite

Being bitten by an animal is not entirely common, unless you are hunting wild game. Rather, you're much more likely to get bitten by a dog. Although a dog can leave a significant amount of damage, it is much more manageable than a bite from a bear or a mountain lion.

A bite from an animal combines three different kinds of wounds: crush, tear, and puncture. This makes it difficult to treat. You will want to use the same steps as you would with a basic wound—but with a few changes.

First, keep in mind that this wound has an extremely high susceptibility to infection. You should spend additional time ensuring that the wound is clean, and antibiotics should be taken for good measure. An animal can carry a vast array of pathogens, so look for any infections that may start appearing over the following few days. The wound should be left open to allow for efficient cleaning and redressing each day.

If your immunization record is up-to-date, you may not have to worry about this one, but the second risk from an animal bite is tetanus. You will have to get an immunization shortly after suffering a bite. Tetanus may not incubate for seven days, but symptoms can appear as quickly as 24 hours after being bitten. Symptoms include stiff jaw muscles and muscle spasms traveling throughout the body. This can make it difficult to breathe, causing respiratory failure and death. If you don't have your tetanus immunization yet, speak with your doctor and arrange for the shot as soon as possible.

Lastly, there is a risk of rabies from an animal bite. If the attack was an unprovoked one, you can assume that the bite came from a rabid animal. Dogs usually carry rabies, but the disease can also be carried by bats, cats, and other small animals. If there is a tingling sensation near the wound, or if the victim suffers from a fever, headache, or muscle ache, they could be infected with rabies. Sadly, rabies is fatal once it seeps in, so if you believe that you have been exposed to the disease, you need to immediately get vaccinated.

Treating a scratch

Treating an animal scratch is similar to treating an animal bite, except there are long lacerations instead of deep puncture wounds. Your priority will always be to stop the flow of blood, clean the wound, and use antibiotics. Tetanus vaccinations should be administered if the victim has not had the tetanus vaccine, and the rabies vaccine should be administered as soon as possible.

Treating crushing injuries

Nature can be very unpredictable, and sometimes the dangerous animals are the ones that you never consider—for example, a moose. Bulls can get aggressive during their mating season, and have been known to attack people. This can also happen if you wander too close to the moose calves.

If you manage to survive a moose attack, you will suffer multiple crush injuries. The average moose weighs 1,500 pounds, and attacks by charging, kicking, and stomping. Any victim of this type of attack should be checked for breathing signs first and foremost. Then, start to work on obvious or open wounds. Any broken bones should be splinted, and move them very carefully to a safe location. This is crucial, since there could be internal damage to organs, ribs, or the spine.

Treating a snake bite

Handling a snake bite is certainly a delicate process. If the snake is venomous, the bite can quickly turn into a life-threatening situation without the right treatment. In fact, even snakes that are non-venomous can cause infections or allergic reactions with their bites. If you cannot identify the type of snake, then you should always treat it as if it is venomous.

You should first call for help before you calm the victim and get them to stay still. If they can stay still, they can prevent the venom from spreading, since movement helps circulate blood. Restrictive clothing should be removed around the bite, and the limb should be immobilized. If you can see the snake, try to remember any type of identifying mark or characteristic which might help identify the correct anti-venom. If there is no help nearby, you can make a pressure bandage 2-4 inches above the bite to reduce the spreading of venom. Make sure that you don't cut off the victim's circulation, since this will lead to amputation of the limb.

If you are located hours away from medical assistance, it is a good idea to have a snake bite kit tucked into your medical kit. This type of kit is a small pump that removes venom that has been injected. There are some that consider it to be less effective, but it is a much better choice than sucking venom out with your mouth. A snake bite kit should be used immediately.

Treating a spider bite

The majority of bites from spiders do not contain venom. They usually create irritation, redness, and pain, but these symptoms tend to resolve themselves after about a week of basic first aid care. If the bite comes from a brown recluse or a black widow, symptoms may not show for several hours. Symptoms from these spider bites can be chills, fever, itching, sweating, or a purplish tinge around the bite. Thankfully, these bites are not fatal, but the healing process does require basic care.

First, the bite should be thoroughly washed with water and soap before putting a cool compress on the area. To relieve pain, ibuprofen—or similar medicine—can be used, though you should be on the lookout for any signs of allergies. For those with severe reactions, you can use an epi-pen to dissolve the allergen. For less severe reactions, an antihistamine is effective when relieving swelling and itchiness.

For brown recluse spider bites, the sores can create severe tissue damage, which is shown by the blue and red "target" sign around the wound. It may be necessary to perform surgery for the damaged tissue, since there is no anti-venom available.

Treating other insect bites

Although they may not be life-threatening unless a mosquito bite carries malaria or another serious disease, mosquitoes are certainly unpleasant for anyone who loves the outdoors. They are itchy, uncomfortable, and can even cause allergic reactions.

There are other minute insects that can bring a host of issues. Ticks bring lime disease or Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and flies can carry dysentery or cholera. The best way to avoid these is by staying away from known areas of infestation, applying repellants to your skin, and wearing the right clothes to protect against bites. If you happen to suffer a sting or a bite, it could get infected, so try not to scratch it. An antihistamine cream can be applied to each bite to relieve itching, and a chilled green tea bag can be placed on the bite to relieve swelling.

The best recommendation is to quickly inspect yourself each day to ensure that there are no ticks or leeches attached to your body. Salt is a great tool to use when ridding yourself of leeches. For ticks, you can smother it with Vaseline to cut off its oxygen supply. When you remove the tick, carefully use a set of tweezers to gently get it out. Do not break off the head or squeeze the body, since this may release harmful bodily fluids from the tick into your bloodstream.

Managing infections along with an injury

During a survival situation, the most significant danger posed by an open wound or accident is infections. It is nearly impossible to maintain cleanliness in a wound when you are in the wilderness, so you need to pay close attention. The best method of dealing with infections is to look for signs early on, and treat the infection quickly.

Signs of an infected wound include any—or all—of the following symptoms:

- Reddened edges that start to spread out. Infections are a bright, angry, intense shade of red.
- Swelling and stretching of the skin. This is a sign of pus, which can be drained from a wound that has been infected.
- Fever or streaking. If the victim has a high fever, or their veins have bright red streaks running alongside them, this means that the infection has rapidly progressed, and should be treated immediately.
- The wound feels warmer to the touch than the rest of the body.
- A substantial amount of pain, which is higher than normal compared to the wound size or severity.
- The wound is not healing over time.

If a victim—or yourself—is suffering from an infected wound, it will need to cleaned immediately. Take off any bandages and put a warm, wet compress over the infected area. This should remain in place for at least thirty minutes and changed whenever it cools down. This compress should be applied 3-4 times each day, depending on how big the wound is and how intense the infection is.

The next step is difficult, but it must be done. The infection needs to be breached, meaning that the wound is opened with a sterile, clean instrument. This lets the infection drain out. Afterwards, use basic wound care to properly bandage and dress the wound, ensuring that the victim stays properly hydrated.

Using activated charcoal for an infection

I have found that one of the best methods of cleaning an open wound is with activated charcoal. You can easily include these pills inside your medical kit, and they are incredibly efficient.

Mix the pills with sterilized, clean drinking water. The two components will bond together and create a paste. When placed inside a wound, the water and charcoal soak up bacteria and toxins like a sponge, cleaning dead tissue and preventing the infection from spreading.

Put the charcoal paste right into the wound, cover with gauze, and bandage closed. After a few hours, the wound should be noticeably less red. A new poultice can be put on every couple of hours until the wound no longer displays symptoms of infection. Keep applying this poultice until the infection is gone.

Using antibiotics for an infection

A common-sense approach to eliminating an infection is by using antibiotics. It usually takes only a few days to see signs of improvement. This means that it is easy to stop the round of antibiotics early, particularly if you have a limited amount. The problem here is that, if you don't follow a round of antibiotics all the way through, there will be some bacteria remaining and the infection may not go away entirely.

You'll need to make sure that the infection does not get to a critical level. Since pills can take care of moderate or mild infections, a severe infection will require IV antibiotics.

These are the most common types of antibiotics, since they can be used as multiple remedies. Purchasing antibiotics may require a prescription, so each antibiotic also has a veterinary equivalent for you to consider. Vets use essentially the same formulas with a different packaging and relaxed rules for purchase. This makes it possible to stock medical supplies in large quantities.

Amoxicillin 250mg/500mg. Veterinary Name: Fish Mox or Fish Mox Forte.

- This penicillin-based antibiotic fights against infections and bacteria. It is commonly prescribed for pneumonia, bronchitis, tonsillitis, and infections inside the nose, ear, throat, skin, or urinary tract.

Ciprofloxacin 250mg/ 500mg. Veterinary Name: Fish Flox or Fish Flox Forte

- This is a great antibiotic for intestinal infections, highly infectious diseases, and even anthrax exposure.

Cephalexin 250mg/500mg. Veterinary Name: Fish Flex or Fish Flex Forte.

- This antibiotic covers a wide range of infections, but it is commonly used for strep, middle-ear infections, staph infections, or any infection located inside the bones.

Metronidazole 250mg. Veterinary Name: Fish Zole.

- This is helpful when treating infections inside the blood, severe infections in the intestines, meningitis, or even abscesses inside the organs. It can also be used to treat bone and skin infections.

Doxycycline 100mg. Veterinary Name: Bird Biotic.

- This antibiotic allows you to treat bacterial infections, including acne, UTIs, periodontitis, and any eye infections. It can also treat STDs like gonorrhea and Chlamydia.

Ampicillin 250mg/500mg. Veterinary Name: Fish Cillin or Fish Cillin Forte.

- Ampicillin is another antibiotic based on penicillin, and can treat many bacterial infections inside the bladder. It also is used to treat meningitis, pneumonia, and infections inside the stomach.

Clindamycin 300mg. Veterinary Name: Fish Cin.

- This type of antibiotic looks for bacteria inside the blood, and is very helpful for treating lung infections, abscess, sepsis, or skin infections.

Sulfamethoxazole 400mg or Trimethoprin 80mg. It's also called Bird Sulfa.

- This type of medication combines two different compounds. It is great to use when treating diarrhea, dysentery, UTIs, ear infections, and even bronchitis.

Make sur that you are following all instructions listed on the box whenever you are taking antibiotics. This ensures that you will get the maximum effectiveness from the treatment. Don't forget to take the entire round of antibiotics. Many of them come in 250 or 500-mg tablets, though it you are unsure of how to treat a specific infection, you can follow this general guideline: take 2 tables 4 times a day for 14 days. This provides more than enough antibiotic to kill off bacteria. Having these antibiotics inside your kit will prepare you to treat as much as 90% of bacterial infections during a survival situation.

Using maggots as an extreme alternative

This method should only be used in extreme cases of infection. If their condition is not improving with charcoal poultices and there are no antibiotics available, this means that they have little chance of survival. At this point, your best bet is to use something called maggot therapy. It isn't pleasant, but this healing method has gained FDA approval. In a survival situation, the procedure will be much more primitive, of course, but the basic theories are the same. Maggots eat dead tissue, cutting off food supply for bacteria, and secretions from the larvae fight infection.

To make this work, the wound has to be moist with plenty of exposure to oxygen. Dry wounds will not help this process, so you'll need to cater the wound environment to match the desired environment of the maggots.

The wound will need to be exposed to flies. This may only take thirty minutes or so, but the best bet is to allow the wound to be uncovered for an entire day. Continue to check the wound until you see maggots growing. Keep checking throughout the process.

While the maggots will eat dead tissue first, they will eventually move towards healthy tissue, which is why you will need to pay close attention. There will be an increase in pain when this begins, and blood will start to appear in the wound. At this stage, the maggots should be removed. Clean the wound out with water to rid the wound of maggots, checking and cleaning routinely for the following days. Then, the wound can be bandaged and treated like any other wound. When the dead tissue and infection is gone, the wound should go through a natural healing process.

Plants to boost immunity and treat infection

Being a survivalist means that you must have a solid understanding of each asset you have that may give you an additional edge during a survival situation. This section will talk about plants that can increase immunity and heal infections.

Plants should not be a replacement for antibiotics or medicine, but if you have no other option, it's good to know how to use them.

They are also valuable additions to your garden, since they provide natural, medical alternatives.

Aloe Vera. The thick leaves can be sliced open to get the gel inside. This soothing substance can help heal burns, rashes, and cuts.

Angelica. Called wild celery, these roots can be made into an infusion to alleviate menstrual cramps.

Bilberry. Make a poultice and place it on a wound to improve circulation. This speeds up the healing process and helps guard against infections in the area.

Calendula. These flowers can become a tea or cream to relieve intestinal cramps or reduce viral infections. It can also be turned into a compress to heal rashes, cuts, and burns. Creating a mild tea compress can also help fight against eye infections.

Cayenne. Once it is dried and turned into a powder, cayenne can be turned into an oil infusion or combined with a cream. It can treat arthritis pain, or added to tea to soothe a sore throat, intestinal infections, or gas. Additionally, a cayenne oil infusion can help stem mild to moderate bleeding when treating a wound.

Chamomile. This flower is incredibly popular, and is commonly combined with teas, creams, or salves. Drinking chamomile tea helps you relax and will reduce tension in the muscles. It also soothes cramps, inflammation, and fights against insomnia. Using a cool tea compress can help treat eye infections and rashes, as well.

Echinacea. Both the flowers and roots can be ground up to create a potent antibacterial and antiviral solution. Echinacea is commonly used to support the immune system and speed recovery from the cold or the flu.

Elder. This tree has two parts that provide medicinal benefits: the berries and the flowers. Creating a syrup or a tea from the flowers can soothe allergies and reduce coughing. The berries will produce the same result, but they will need to be cooked beforehand to avoid poisoning yourself.

Witch Hazel. A tincture can be produced with the bark and applied directly on the skin. This will reduce swelling, pain, itching, mild burns, and insect bites.

Honey. While it might not be a plant, if you can get a nest of wild bees and smoke them out, this is one of the most valuable topical antibiotics that you can find. Honey has compounds that kill bacteria and support the process of healing.

Feverfew. You can use the flowers, stem, and leaves to create a tea which will prevent migraines and relieve fevers. It can also be applied directly to the skin to eliminate germs, and putting it on the gums will relieve tooth pain.

Garlic. Fresh garlic cloves can create a tea to lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Its natural antiviral and antibacterial properties make it a great choice to treat respiratory and digestive infections. Garlic can also be applied externally during the dressing of a wound to reduce risk for infection.

Ginger. The roots can be ground to produce an effective tea for treating digestive disorders, morning sickness, and motion sickness.

Ginko. The fresh leaves can be made into a tea to support circulation and memory, and it can also help relieve symptoms of asthma and bronchitis.

Ginseng. These roots can be made into a potent tea that relaxes the body and decreases the harmful effects of mental and physical stress. It also is known to support the immune system and can help the body fight off a virus or infection.

Goldenseal. Use the roots to create a tea that will act as a mild laxative or a means to reduce heavy menstrual bleeding. Diluting the tea can create an effective treatment for eye

infections, or a mouthwash to relieve infected or swollen gums. Goldenseal should not be taken during pregnancy.

Lavender. These flowers can be used in a relaxing tea which provides relief from intestinal and muscular cramps. It can also open airways for those who suffer from asthma. Additionally, lavender has antiseptic properties to treat insect bites, open wounds, and rashes that are inflamed and itchy.

Lemon balm. Each section of this plant—minus the roots—can create a tea, salve, or cream. Lemon balm can reduce anxiety, cramping, or a nervous condition. It can also treat cold sores and protect against outbreaks.

Licorice. Licorice root can create a tea that has a mild laxative effect. It can also alleviate canker sores, soothe acid reflux, and alleviate an upset stomach. It can also be used to relieve arthritis pain, but it should be avoided by those with high blood pressure or those who are pregnant.

Peppermint. Aside from the roots, every part of this plant can be made into teas or distilled into oils. Peppermint tea will relieve diarrhea, cramps, and gas. The oil can be massaged into the temples to relieve pain from migraines and headaches.

Sage. The leaves can be used in a tea to relieve sore gums or a sore throat. It can also reduce the severity of various menopausal symptoms. As a pain reliever, the fresh leaves can be rubbed onto insect stings.

Senna. Either dried or fresh, the pods can be turned into a laxative tea. Be careful with the dose that you take—it should only be diluted, and should not be ingested for longer than 10 days at a time.

Sphagnum moss. This is an incredibly common natural iodine source. It's a great dressing that can be used on open wounds for its anti-bacterial properties.

St. John's Wort. Use the flowers to create a tea that will treat symptoms of depression, PMA, and menopause. As an infused oil, St. John's Wort can stimulate the growth of tissues on burns and wounds, and it can also relieve pain in muscles and joints.

Thyme. Use the leaves to create a syrup that will relieve coughs. As a tea, thyme can treat intestinal worms, and as a tincture, it will fight fungal infections.

Turmeric. The roots can be employed to create anti-inflammatory tea. It will reduce cramps in the stomach and intestine, but it should be taken sparingly, since it may create heartburn or upset stomach. It can also be used as a tincture to treat itchy rashes or fungal infections.

Usnea. Commonly called old-mans-beard, this lichen contains high antifungal and antibacterial properties. It can be used as a tincture in treating UTIs, sinus infections, respiratory infections, staph infections, and strep throat.

Yarrow. The dried flowers can be ground into a powder and used as an anti-clotting treatment. When added to water, it is an effective treatment for canker sores.

On the go medical checklist

Keeping an array of medical supplies is essential when you are out and about. Improvisation is a great skill, but if you are able to plan, you will find that you are much better prepared to handle challenging situations. Whether going camping for a weekend or putting your bug-out bag together, you will need to have the right medical supplies on hand.

Listed below are the recommended medical supplies for your kit.

- Butterfly sutures and a roll of duct tape
- Self-adhesive "band-aids" and sports wrapping tape
- Moleskin blister padding
- Gauze and adhesive wound dressings
- Pressure bandages and a triangle bandage

- A topical antibiotic cream
- Burn creams and non-stick dressings
- At least one broad-spectrum antibiotic (Amoxicillin)
- Antiseptic wipes and a disinfectant (Betadine)
- Pain killers (codeine) and some aspirin
- Chemical ice packs for treating a sprain
- Antihistamine cream for treating bug bites
- An Epi-pen (Rx), just in case, even if you don't have allergic reactions
- An oral antihistamine like Benadryl
- Sterile needles and a surgical blade
- Basic grooming and hygiene tools (toothbrush, fingernail clippers, soap)
- Activated charcoal tablets
- Tweezers and a small pair of scissors
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- A first aid handbook
- A flashlight

This is certainly not a comprehensive list, but it does give a solid baseline for what you will need in most crisis situations. If you find that you have specific concerns or regular prescriptions, make sure that these are accounted for throughout your planning process.

Complete medical checklist

Admittedly, I tend to waver towards an extreme level of preparedness. The following list details all the medical supplies that I keep stockpiled in my home.

When crisis hits, we won't be able to head to a nearby clinic for help, and medical facilities that contain prescription drugs and medicine will be a huge target for desperate people and looters.

If you truly want to be prepared, you should begin stocking these items immediately.

- A variety of traditional bandages
- Pressure bandages (Emergency Israeli Bandage)
- A variety of non-stick sterile gauze, dressings, and rolled gauze
- A variety of self-adhesive bandages
- Butterfly strips to close small lacerations
- Superglue to hold cuts closed
- Clotting agents like Quikclot or Celox
- A tourniquet (only for extreme circumstances)
- Plenty of over-the-counter medicines like aspirin, Tylenol and ibuprofen
- Antihistamines like Claritin and Benadryl for allergic reactions
- Oral Airways can keep an airway open after an allergic reaction
- Antibiotic/antibacterial ointments and creams
- Antibiotics, including:
    - Amoxicillin 250mg/500mg. It can be called Fish Mox or Fish Mox Forte.
    - Ciprofloxacin 250mg/ 500mg. It can be called Fish Flox or Fish Flox Forte
    - Cephalexin 250mg/500mg. It can be called Fish Flex or Fish Flex Forte.
    - Metronidazole 250mg. It can be called Fish Zole.
    - Doxycycline 100mg. It can be called Bird Biotic.
    - Ampicillin 250mg/500mg. It can be called Fish Cillin or Fish Cillin Forte. ○ Clindamycin 300mg. It can be called Fish Cin.
    - Sulfamethoxazole 400mg or Trimethoprin 80mg. It can be called Bird Sulfa.

- Topical anesthetic gel for tooth pain relief
- Menstrual supplies
- Duct tape, adhesive tape, and paper tape
- One pair of quality bandage scissors
- Splinting materials that can be cut to size (SAM splints)
- A cast material kit (fiberglass or plaster)
- A variety of new scalpels
- CPR masks
- Boxes of sterile gloves
- Plenty of alcohol to clean hands and instruments
- Antibacterial soap and wipes
- Betadine to make swabs for cleaning wounds
- A variety of syringes (60cc or 100cc) for wound irrigation
- Universal Cervical collar for neck injuries
- A variety of antiseptics for cleaning wounds and your skin
- Ear-loop surgical masks to reduce viral transmission
- Sutures, a needle holder, and a guide on how to suture
- Skin stapler and remover
- Kelly clamps (curved and straight) to remove foreign objects from a wound
- Tweezers and several large safety pins
- A magnifying glass headset and light
- A small gas burner and container to boil water or sterilize instruments
- Thermometer (mercury version and electronic version)
- A variety of hot and cold packs (instant and reusable)
- Spare cotton bed-sheets and an examination table/bed
- A lightweight, portable stretcher
- Blood pressure cuff and stethoscope
- A snake bite kit
- Plenty of Q-Tips, cotton balls, and cotton squares
- A hot water bottle
- Aqua tabs to purify your water
- Basic dental supplies like toothpaste, toothbrushes, and floss
- Dental filling material to perform any emergency procedures
- Sterile eye wash, pads, and an eye patch
- Sunscreen
- Vaseline
- Imodium and electrolyte rehydration packs
- Vitamin C tablets and a variety of multi-vitamins
- Melatonin tables to help you sleep
- Potassium Iodide (for radiation emergencies) to detoxify the body

Conclusion

After going through this guide, you are now ready to start treating a wide range of common accidents if you come across a medical emergency, and you will have all the proper gear to help you successfully treat a patient.

Remember that if there is access to a medical facility and an emergency medical team, their support should always be used, no matter where you might be. Gambling with your life or a loved one's life is never worth it, no matter what.