

# Sukhi Lalli

## First aid kits

Prevention is better than cure, so being aware of hazards, and taking sensible precautions against them is a priority. But, in the event of an accident, a first aid kit at home can be used to deal with minor injuries, or for keeping a serious injury stable while seeking help.

## What to include in a kit

The following list can be used as a shopping list. The quantity of each item is a guide only – the amount or number of each item you have will depend on the number of people in your home.

### Essential items

- 12 to 24 individually-wrapped band-aids in various sizes (fabric or waterproof),
- sterile dressings, (for covering a wound): three medium (5cm x 5cm) and one large (10cm x 10cm),
- adhesive tape, (to hold dressings in place; it can also be used on its own on small cuts and grazes),
- a triangular bandage (for use as a sling to support an injured arm or shoulder),
- tensor bandage (to support sprains and strains, or to hold dressings in place),
- sterile non-fluffy, absorbent gauze (for cleaning and drying wounds and also for covering wounds),
- safety pins in a variety of sizes (for securing bandages),
- round-ended scissors (for cutting tape or bandages),
- tweezers (for removing objects such as splinters).

### Optional extras

- a sterile eye pad (a large wound dressing can be used instead to cover an eye),
- skin closure strips (for holding the edges of a wound together),
- sterile saline sachets (for cleaning a wound) – but clean water will do,
- a thermometer.

### Medicines

There are some medicines that can be useful to keep at home in case of minor accidents. These include:

- hydrocortisone cream for insect bites (but not for use on broken or infected skin),
- acetaminophen for pain relief (tablets for adults, liquid for children),
- antihistamine tablets for allergic reactions.

However, these medicines should be kept in a separate locked medicines cabinet. For further advice, ask your pharmacist.

### Where to store first aid items

Keep your first aid kit in a waterproof container large enough for the contents to be arranged so that items can be found quickly when needed. A plastic container with a closely fitting lid would be suitable. It is a good idea to label the box (for example, with a green cross) so that it can be easily recognised by anybody.

**Sukhi Lalli Pharmacist**  
*Your self-care health advocate*  
**Pharmaceutical Care Clinic**

1139 Yates St. Victoria, BC. V8V 3N2  
(250) 386-5100  
www.slpm.ca

## Ready-made kits

There are many ready-made kits available that can be bought from a pharmacy. The cost of a ready-made kit ranges from \$10 to \$100. There is no standard for first aid kits and so the content of different kits varies. You should check the contents carefully. Some may not include all the items you need, while others contain more than you are likely to need or even some unnecessary items (such as cotton wool or alcohol wipes, which are now considered unsuitable for cleaning wounds). Making a kit up yourself might cost more than some ready-made kits, but you're more likely to end up with a kit containing only the things you need.

## Where to keep your first aid kit

It makes sense to keep your kit close to where it is most likely to be needed. It should be out of the reach of children, but still readily accessible when needed. The place should be dry and cool, so the bathroom is probably not ideal.

## Using the first aid kit

Just as important as keeping a first aid kit is knowing how to use what's in it. All adults, older children and teenagers living in the house should know where the kit is kept, what is in it and how to use it. It's a good idea to keep a first aid manual with the kit.

Replace any used items immediately and check expiry dates from time to time, so that you can discard and replace out-of-date items.

It is a good idea to get proper training in first aid. This is provided by organisations like St John Ambulance and the Canadian Red Cross. See below for how to contact them for details of training courses in your area.

## First aid contact information

St. John's Ambulance (Victoria Branch)  
941 Pandora Ave.  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 3P4  
Phone: (250) 388-5505  
Fax: (250) 388-3100  
Website: [www.sja.ca/bc](http://www.sja.ca/bc)  
E-mail: [victoria@bc.sja.ca](mailto:victoria@bc.sja.ca)

Canadian Red Cross (Coastal Office)  
909 Fairfield Rd.  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 3A3  
Phone: (250) 382-2043  
Fax: (250) 382-3420  
Toll Free: 1-800-661-9055

This material is intended for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for the medical advice of your doctor or any other health care professional.  
Always consult with your physician if you are in any way concerned about your health.

**Sukhi Lalli Pharmacist**  
*Your self-care health advocate*  
**Pharmaceutical Care Clinic**

1139 Yates St. Victoria, BC. V8V 3N2  
(250) 386-5100  
[www.slpm.ca](http://www.slpm.ca)