# How to Build and Maintain a Home First Aid Kit

Health · about 27 minutes · 2026-11-06

Assemble a home first aid kit that people can find, understand, and keep ready. These 24 steps cover household needs, containers, a Red Cross-based inventory, bandages and dressings, gauze and tape, gloves and a breathing barrier, tools, cold packs, emergency blankets, optional medicines, personal prescriptions, first aid instructions, Poison Help, training, safe storage, portable kits, expiration checks, restocking, and medicine take-back disposal.

## Things you will need

- A durable, organized first aid case and a consistent secure storage location
- A household checklist and inventory with quantities, expirations, and owners
- Sealed bandages, compresses, sterile gauze, bandage rolls, and medical tape
- Nonlatex gloves, a one-way breathing barrier, safe tools, and a thermometer
- Clinician-approved personal items, a first aid guide, and verified emergency contacts
- A recurring inspection calendar and current medicine take-back information

## Planning the Kit and Inventory

1. **Assess who uses the kit**
   Assess who will use the kit and which minor injuries it should support.
2. **Choose a durable case and storage spot**
   Choose a durable container and a consistent primary storage location.
3. **Build a checklist from a trusted baseline**
   Build a checklist from a recognized baseline and adjust it to the household.
4. **Separate shared supplies from personal medicines**
   Separate shared supplies from personal medicines and emergency instructions.
5. **Record items, dates, and replacement owners**
   Create an inventory showing each item, quantity, location, expiration date, and replacement owner.

## Packing Wound Care and Essential Tools

6. **Pack bandages and absorbent dressings**
   Pack assorted adhesive bandages and absorbent compress dressings in sealed packaging.
7. **Add gauze, bandages, and adhesive tape**
   Add sterile gauze pads, roller bandages, triangular bandages, and adhesive cloth tape.
8. **Include gloves and a breathing barrier**
   Include nonlatex gloves and a breathing barrier with a one-way valve.
9. **Choose safe, usable tools**
   Add practical tools such as scissors, tweezers, and a non-mercury, non-glass thermometer.
10. **Pack a cold compress and emergency blanket**
    Pack an instant cold compress and an emergency blanket with their instructions.

## Adding Medicines, Guidance, and Personal Needs

### 11. Check ingredients before adding antiseptics

Select antiseptic wipes and optional ointments after checking ingredients, age limits, and allergies.

### 12. Review over-the-counter medicines with a pharmacist

Review optional over-the-counter medicines with a pharmacist or clinician before adding them.

### 13. Add clinician-directed personal emergency items

Add clinician-directed personal items for allergies, diabetes, chronic conditions, or accessibility needs.

### 14. Print emergency numbers and poison control details

Include a current first aid guide, verified emergency numbers, and poison-center information.

### 15. Arrange first aid and CPR training

Arrange practical first aid, CPR, and AED training for household members and caregivers.

## Storing Kits for Real Access

### 16. Store the kit away from heat and damp

Store the main kit in a cool, dry, secure place that authorized adults can reach quickly.

### 17. Prepare a smaller kit for travel

Prepare a smaller portable kit for the vehicle, workplace, or activities away from home.

### 18. Keep sterile supplies sealed and separate

Protect clean supplies from moisture, contamination, and accidental opening.

### 19. Show everyone where the kit lives

Orient household members and authorized caregivers to the kit's location and boundaries.

## Checking, Restocking, and Disposing Safely

### 20. Inspect the kit twice a year

Inspect the kit regularly and after every use with a recurring calendar reminder.

### 21. Check dates, packaging, and batteries

Check expiration dates, package integrity, tool condition, and any battery-powered components.

### 22. Restock to your customized quantities

Restock used and missing supplies to the quantities on your customized checklist.

### 23. Dispose of medicines through take-back

Dispose of unwanted medicines through an authorized take-back or mail-back option whenever available.

### 24. Rethink the kit after household changes

Review the entire kit after household, health, activity, or caregiving changes.

## Sources


1. Make a First Aid Kit: What to Include
   https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/anatomy-of-a-first-aid-kit.html
2. Home Safety
   https://www.ready.gov/home-safety
3. Don't Be Tempted to Use Expired Medicines
   https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/dont-be-tempted-use-expired-medicines

4. Disposal of Unused Medicines: What You Should Know
https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know
5. What You Can Do
https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/what-you-can-do

Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/Build-and-Maintain-a-Home-First-Aid-Kit. Corrections: https://www.howcompas