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CHAPTER

# 23

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## THE MEDICINE KIT

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### *Where There Is No Doctor*

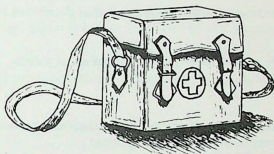
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## 23

## THE MEDICINE KIT



Every family and every village should have certain medical supplies ready in case of emergency:

- The family should have a HOME MEDICINE KIT (see p. 380) with the necessary medicines for first aid, simple infections, and the most common health problems.
- The village should have a more complete medical kit (see VILLAGE MEDICINE KIT, p. 382) with supplies necessary to care for day-to-day problems as well as to meet a serious illness or an emergency. A responsible person should be in charge of it—a health worker, teacher, parent, store-keeper, or anyone who can be trusted by the community. If possible all members of the village should take part in setting up and paying for the medical kit. Those who can afford more should contribute more. But everyone should understand that **the medicine kit is for the benefit of all**—those who can pay and those who cannot.

On the following pages you will find suggestions for what the medicine kits might contain. You will want to change these lists to best meet the needs and resources in your area. Although the list includes mostly modern medicines, important home remedies known to be safe and to work well can also be included.

#### How much of each medicine should you have?

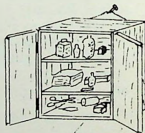
The amounts of medicines recommended for the medicine kits are the smallest amounts that should be kept on hand. In some cases there will be just enough to **begin** treatment. It may be necessary to take the sick person to a hospital or go for more medicine at once.

The amount of medicine you keep in your kit will depend on how many people it is intended to serve and how far you have to go to get more when some are used up. It will also depend on cost and how much the family or village can afford. Some of the medicines for your kit will be expensive, but it is wise to have enough of the important medicines on hand to meet emergencies.

**Note: Supplies for birth kits**—the things midwives and pregnant mothers need to have ready for a birth—are listed on pages 300 to 301.

## HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR MEDICINE KIT

1. **CAUTION:** Keep all medicines out of the reach of children. Any medicine taken in large doses can be poisonous.
2. Be sure that all medicine is well labeled and that directions for use are kept with each medicine. Keep a copy of this book with the medicine kit.
3. Keep all medicines and medical supplies together in a clean, dry, cool place free from cockroaches and rats. Protect instruments, gauze, and cotton by wrapping them in sealed plastic bags.
4. Keep an emergency supply of important medicines on hand at all times. Each time one is used, replace it as soon as possible.
5. Notice the DATE OF EXPIRATION on each medicine. If the date has passed or the medicine looks spoiled, destroy it and get new medicine. Some medicines, especially tetracyclines, may be dangerous if they have passed their expiration date.



Keep medicines out of reach of children.



## BUYING SUPPLIES FOR THE MEDICINE KIT

Most of the medicines recommended in this book can be bought in the pharmacies of larger towns. If several families or the village get together to buy what they need at once, often the pharmacist may sell them supplies at lower cost. Or if medicines and supplies can be bought from a wholesaler, prices will be cheaper still.

If the pharmacy does not supply a brand of medicine you want, buy another brand, but be sure that it is the same medicine and check the dosage. Read the fine print on the bottle or box to make sure it is the right medicine you want.

When buying medicines, compare prices. Some brands are much more expensive than others even though the medicine is the same. More expensive medicines are usually no better. When possible, **buy generic medicines rather than brand-name products**, as the generic ones are often much cheaper. Sometimes you can save money by buying larger quantities. For example, a 600,000-unit vial of penicillin often costs only a little more than a 300,000-unit vial—so buy the large vial and use it for two doses.



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COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL  
326, V Main, I Block  
Koramangala  
Bangalore-1 60034  
India

## THE HOME MEDICINE KIT

Each family should have the following things in their medicine kit. These supplies and medicines should be enough to treat many common problems in rural areas.

Also include useful home remedies in your medicine kit.

### SUPPLIES

<u>Use</u> ↓	<u>Supply</u> ↓	<u>Price</u> <u>(write in)</u> ↓	<u>Amount</u> <u>recommended</u> ↓	<u>See</u> <u>page</u> ↓
FOR WOUNDS AND SKIN PROBLEMS:				
	sterile gauze pads in individual sealed envelopes	_____	20	110, 262 309
	1-, 2-, and 3-inch gauze bandage rolls	_____	2 each	100
	clean cotton	_____	1 small package	85, 96 300
	adhesive tape (adhesive plaster), 1-inch wide roll	_____	2 rolls	98, 262
	disinfectant soap (like Lifebuoy, or Cinthol)	_____	1 bar or small bottle	410
	70% alcohol rubbing alcohol	_____	¼ liter	85, 300, 355
	hydrogen peroxide, in a dark bottle	_____	1 small bottle	96, 225 254, 255
	petroleum jelly ( <i>Vaseline</i> )	_____	1 bottle	104, 111 194, 242
	white vinegar	_____	½ liter	242, 286, 338, 355
	sulfur	_____	100 gm.	242, 247, 246,
	tincture of iodine and tincture benzoine	_____	1 small bottle each	
	scissors (clean, not rusty)	_____	1 pair	98, 300, 308
	tweezers or forceps, with pointed ends	_____	1 pair	97, 213

<u>Use</u>	<u>Supply</u>	<u>Price (write in)</u>	<u>Amount recommended</u>	<u>See page</u>
<b>FOR MEASURING TEMPERATURE:</b>				
	thermometers for mouth for rectum	_____	1 each	36, 37
<b>FOR KEEPING SUPPLIES CLEAN:</b>				
	plastic bags	_____	several	237, 378

### MEDICINES

<u>Use</u>	<u>Medicine (generic name)</u>	<u>Local brand (write in)</u>	<u>Price (write in)</u>	<u>Amount recommended</u>	<u>See page</u>
<b>FOR BACTERIAL INFECTIONS:</b>					
	1. Penicillin, 250 mg. tablets (2,00,000 U)	_____	_____	40	397
	2. A sulfonamide, 500 mg. tablets	_____	_____	100	402
	3. Ampicillin, 250 mg. capsules	_____	_____	24	399
<b>FOR WORMS:</b>					
	4. Piperazine, tablets or syrup	_____	_____	40 tablets of 500 mg. or 2 bottles	411
<b>FOR FEVER AND PAIN:</b>					
	5. Aspirin, 300 mg. (5 grain) tablets	_____	_____	50	414
<b>FOR DEHYDRATION:</b>					
	6. Sodium bicarbonate (also salt and sugar)	_____	_____	½ kg.	182
	or prepackaged mix for rehydration drink	_____	_____	10 envelopes	416
<b>FOR ANEMIA:</b>					
	7. Iron (ferrous sulfate), 200 mg. pills (best if pills also contain vitamin C and folic acid)	_____	_____	100	424

Do not buy capsules. They are very expensive, and not more effective than tablets.

<u>Use</u> ↓	<u>Medicine</u> <u>(generic name)</u> ↓	<u>Local brand</u> <u>(write in)</u> ↓	<u>Price</u> <u>(write in)</u> ↓	<u>Amount</u> <u>recommended</u> ↓	<u>See</u> <u>page</u> ↓
<b>FOR SCABIES AND LICE:</b>					
	8. Lindane (gamma benzene hexa-chloride)	_____	_____	1 bottle	411
<b>FOR ITCHING AND VOMITING:</b>					
	9. Promethazine, 25 mg. tablets	_____	_____	12	419
<b>FOR MILD SKIN INFECTIONS:</b>					
	10. Gentian violet, small bottle; or an antibiotic ointment	_____	_____	1 bottle 1 tube	409
<b>FOR EYE INFECTIONS:</b>					
	11. Antibiotic eye ointment	_____	_____	1 tube	413
	12. 20 percent sulfacetamide eye drops	_____	_____	1 bottle	413
<b>FOR EAR INFECTIONS:</b>					
	13. Boroglycerine ear drops	_____	_____	1 bottle	414
	14. Ear drops with chloramphenicol	_____	_____	1 bottle	414
<b>FOR STUFFY NOSE:</b>					
	15. Decongestant nasal drops	_____	_____	1 bottle	418

## THE VILLAGE MEDICINE KIT

This should have all the medicines and supplies mentioned in the Home Medicine Kit, but in larger amounts, depending on the size of your village and distance from a supply center. The Village Kit should also include the things listed here; many of them are for treatment of more dangerous illnesses. You will have to change or add to, the list, depending on the diseases in your area.

### ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

<u>Use</u> ↓	<u>Supply</u> ↓	<u>Price</u> ↓	<u>Amount</u> ↓	<u>Page</u> ↓
FOR INJECTING:	syringes	1ml	2	77
		5ml	2	
		10ml	1	
		5 ml. needles #22, 3 cm. long	3-6	
		#25, 1½ cm. long	2-4	



<u>Use</u>	<u>Supply</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Page</u>
FOR TROUBLE URINATING:	catheter (rubber or plastic #16 French)	_____	2	284.
FOR SPRAINS AND SWOLLEN VEINS:	elastic bandages, 2 and 3 inches wide	_____	3-6	115,213. 255
FOR SUCKING OUT MUCUS:	suction bulb	_____	1-2	97, 301. 308
FOR LOOKING IN EARS, ETC.:	small torch	_____	1	42, 301. 355

### ADDITIONAL MEDICINES

<u>Use</u>	<u>Medicine</u>	<u>Local Brand</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Page</u>
FOR SEVERE INFECTIONS:					
	1. Penicillin, injectable, if only one, procaine penicillin 600,000 U per ml.	_____	_____	20-40	398
	2. Ampicillin, injectable 250 mg. ampules	_____	_____	20-40	399
	3. Tetracycline, capsules or tablets 250 mg.	_____	_____	40-80	400
FOR AMEBA AND GIARDIA INFECTIONS:					
	4. Metronidazole, 250 mg. tablets	_____	_____	40-80	407
FOR FITS, TETANUS, AND SEVERE WHOOPING COUGH:					
	5. Phenobarbital 15 mg. tablets and 200 mg. injections	_____	_____	40-80 15-30	422
	6. Paraldehyde, 2 mg. and 5 mg. ampules			10-20	423
FOR SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS AND SEVERE ASTHMA:					
	7. Adrenaline injections ampules with 1 mg.	_____	_____	5-10	419
FOR ASTHMA:					
	8. Ephedrine, 15 mg. tablets	_____	_____	20-100	418
FOR SEVERE BLEEDING AFTER CHILDBIRTH:					
	9. Ergonovine, injections of 0.5 mg.	_____	_____	6-12	423

### OTHER MEDICINES NEEDED IN MANY BUT NOT ALL AREAS

WHERE DRY EYES (XEROSIS) IS A PROBLEM:	Vitamin A, 200,000 U. capsules	_____	_____	10-100	424
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<u>Use</u>	<u>Medicine</u>	<u>Local Brand</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Page</u>
WHERE TETANUS IS A PROBLEM:	Tetanus antitoxin, 50,000 units	_____	_____	2-4 bottles	421
WHERE TYPHOID IS A PROBLEM:	Chloranphenicol, 250 mg. capsules	_____	_____	50-200	401
WHERE SNAKEBITE IS A PROBLEM:	Polyvalent antivenin	_____	_____	2-6	421
WHERE MALARIA IS A PROBLEM:	Chloroquine tablets with 150 mg. of base	_____	_____	50-200	405
	Primaquine tablets with 26.3mg. base	_____	_____	100-200	405
WHERE ELEPHANTIASIS IS A PROBLEM:	Hetrazon 50 tablets			30-50	413
WHERE HOOKWORM IS A PROBLEM:	Thiabendazole, 500 mg. tablets (or another hookworm medicine)	_____	_____	25-100	411
TO PREVENT OR TREAT BLEEDING IN UNDERWEIGHT NEWBORNS:	Vitamin K, injections of 1 mg.	_____	_____	3-6	425

### MEDICINES FOR CHRONIC DISEASES

It may or may not be wise to have medicines for chronic diseases such as **tuberculosis**, and **leprosy**, in the Village Medicine Kit. Often, to be sure a person has one of these diseases, special tests must be made in a health center, where the necessary medicine can usually be obtained. Whether these and other medicines are included in the village medical supplies will depend on the local situation and the medical ability of those responsible.

### VACCINES

Vaccines have not been included in the Village Medicine Kit because they are usually provided by the Health Department. However, a great effort should be made to see that all children are vaccinated as soon as they are old enough for the different vaccines (see p. 175). Therefore, if refrigeration is available, vaccines should be part of the village medical supplies—especially the DPT, polio, and cholera vaccines.

## WORDS TO THE VILLAGE STOREKEEPER (OR PHARMACIST)

Dear friend,

If you sell medicines in your store, people probably ask you about which medicines to buy and when or how to use them. You are in a position to have an important effect on people's knowledge and health.

This book can help you to give correct advice and to see that your customers buy only those medicines they really need.

As you know, people too often spend the little money they have for medicines that do not help them. But **you** can help them understand their health needs more clearly and spend their money more wisely. For example:

- If people come asking for cough syrups, for a diarrhea-thickener like kaolin for vitamin B<sub>12</sub> or liver extract to treat simple anemia, for penicillin to treat a sprain or ache, or for tetracycline when they have a cold, explain to them that these medicines are not needed and may do more harm than good. Discuss with them what to do instead.
- If someone wants to buy a vitamin tonic, encourage him to buy vegetables, eggs, or fruit, instead. Help him understand that these have more vitamins and nutritional value for the money.
- If people ask for an injection when medicine by mouth would work as well and be safer—which is usually the case—tell them so.
- If someone wants to buy 'cold tablets' or some other form of 'expensive aspirin' for a cold, encourage him to save money by buying plain aspirin tablets and taking them with lots of liquids.

You may find it easier to tell people these things if you look up the information in this book, and read it together with them.

Above all, sell only useful medicines. Stock your store with the medicines and supplies listed for the Home and Village Medicine Kits, as well as other medicines and supplies that are important for common illnesses in your area. Try to stock low-cost generic products or the least expensive brands. And never sell people medicines that are expired, damaged, or useless.

Your store can become a place where people learn about caring for their own health. If you can help people use medicines intelligently, making sure that anyone who purchases a medicine is well informed as to its correct use and dosage, as well as the risks and precautions, you will provide an outstanding service to your community.

Good luck!



Sincerely,

*David W. Jernier*

The book *Where There Is No Doctor* is available at Rs 29/- plus postage. Multiple copies of reprints of various chapters are also available.

Please write to:

Publications Officer  
Voluntary Health Association of India  
C-14 Community Centre  
Safdarjung Development Area  
New Delhi 110016

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