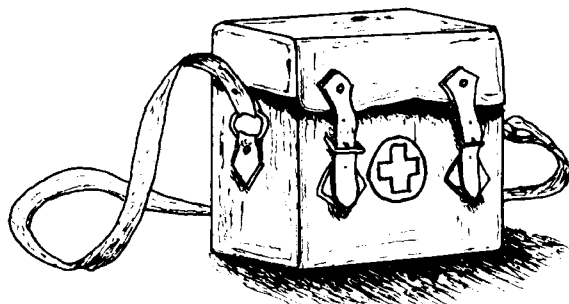


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# THE MEDICINE KIT

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CHAPTER  
**23**



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. 334) 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. 336) 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, storekeeper, 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 254 to 255.

## 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.

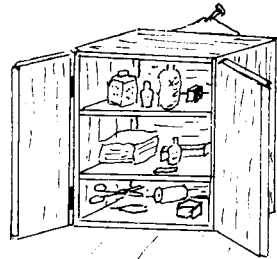
2. **Be sure that all medicine is well labeled and that directions for use are kept with each medicine.** Keep a copy of this book with the medicine kit.

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.

*Note:* Some medicines, especially tetracyclines, may be very dangerous if they have passed their expiration date. However, penicillins in dry form (tablets or powder for syrup or injection) can be used for as long as a year after the expiration date if they have been stored in a clean, dry, and fairly cool place. Old penicillin may lose some of its strength so you may want to increase the dose. (**CAUTION:** While this is safe with penicillin, with other medicines it is often too dangerous to give more than the recommended dose.)



**Keep medicines out of reach of children.**

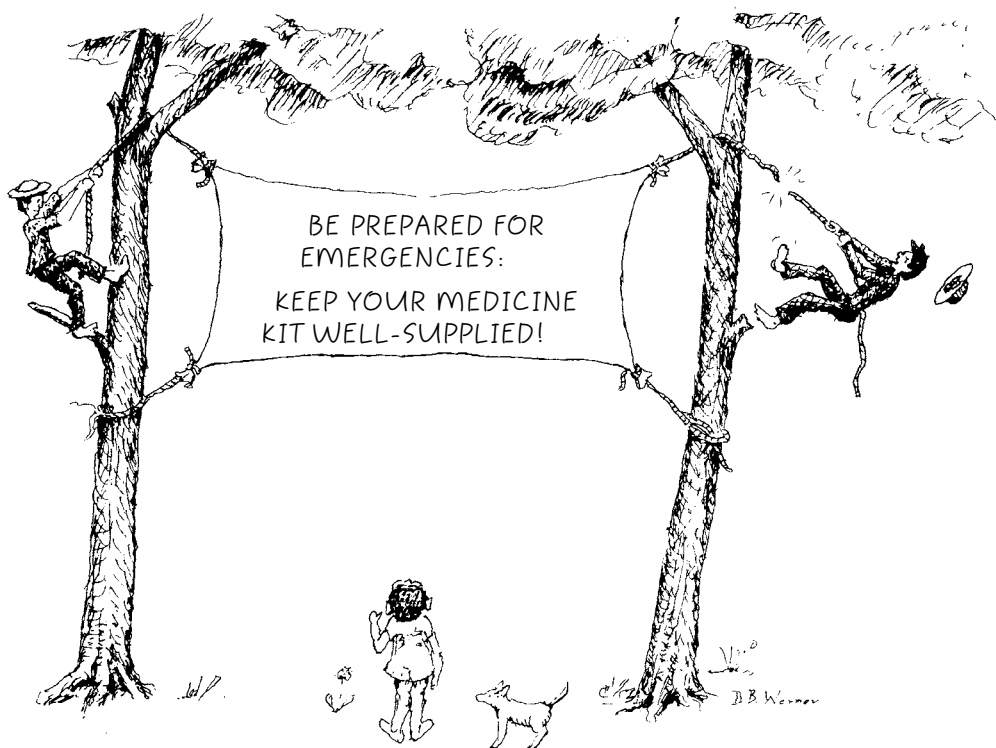


## BUYING SUPPLIES FOR THE MEDICINE KIT

Most of the medicines recommended in this book can be bought in the pharmacies of larger towns. If several families or the village got 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.

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.



## THE HOME MEDICINE KIT

Each family should have the following things in their medicine kit. These supplies 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> ↓
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#### FOR WOUNDS AND SKIN PROBLEMS:

	plastic or rubber gloves or plastic bags for your hands	_____	1 small package	75
	sterile gauze pads in individual sealed envelopes	_____	20	97, 218, 263
	1-, 2-, and 3-inch gauze bandage rolls	_____	2 each	87
	clean cotton	_____	1 small package	14, 72, 83, 254
	adhesive tape (adhesive plaster), 1-inch wide roll	_____	2 rolls	85, 215
	soap—if possible a disinfectant soap like <i>Betadine</i>	_____	1 bar or small bottle	371
	70% alcohol	_____	¼ liter	72, 201, 211, 254
	hydrogen peroxide, in a dark bottle	_____	1 small bottle	83, 183, 213
	petroleum jelly ( <i>Vaseline</i> ) in a jar or tube	_____	1	91, 97, 141, 199
	white vinegar	_____	½ liter	200, 241, 294, 309
	sulfur	_____	100 gm.	200, 205, 206, 211
	scissors (clean, not rusty)	_____	1 pair	85, 254, 262
	tweezers with pointed ends	_____	1 pair	84, 175

#### FOR MEASURING TEMPERATURE:

	thermometers for mouth for rectum	_____	1 each	30, 41
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#### FOR KEEPING SUPPLIES CLEAN:

	plastic bags	_____	several	195, 332
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## MEDICINES

Use ↓	Medicine (generic name) ↓	Local brand (write in) ↓	Price (write in) ↓	Amount recommended ↓	See page ↓
<b>FOR BACTERIAL INFECTIONS:</b>					
	1. Penicillin, 250 mg. tablets	_____	_____	40	351
	2. Cotrimoxazole (sulfamethoxazole, 400 mg., with trimethoprim, 80 mg.)	_____	_____	100	358
	3. Ampicillin, 250 mg. capsules	_____	_____	24	353
<b>FOR WORMS:</b>					
	4. Mebendazole tablets	_____	_____	40 tablets of 100 mg. or 2 bottles	374
<b>FOR FEVER AND PAIN:</b>					
	5. Aspirin, 300 mg. (5 grain) tablets	_____	_____	50	379
	6. Acetaminophen, 500 mg. tablets	_____	_____	50	380
<b>FOR ANEMIA:</b>					
	7. Iron (ferrous sulfate), 200 mg. pills (best if pills also contain vitamin C and folic acid)	_____	_____	100	380
<b>FOR SCABIES AND LICE:</b>					
	8. Lindane (gamma benzene hexachloride) and/or sulfur powder	_____	_____	1 bottle 20 gm.	393
<b>FOR ITCHING AND VOMITING:</b>					
	9. Promethazine, 25 mg. tablets	_____	_____	12	386
<b>FOR MILD SKIN INFECTIONS:</b>					
	10. Gentian violet, small bottle; or an antibiotic ointment	_____	_____	1 bottle 1 tube	371
<b>FOR EYE INFECTIONS:</b>					
	11. Antibiotic eye ointment	_____	_____	1 tube	378

## 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, 5 ml. needles # 22, 3 cm long # 25, 1 1/2 cm long	_____	2 3-6 2-4	65
FOR TROUBLE URINATING:	catheter (rubber or plastic # 16 French)	_____	2	239
FOR SPRAINS AND SWOLLEN VEINS:	elastic bandages, 2 and 3 inches wide	_____	3-6	102,175 213
FOR LOOKING IN EARS, ETC:	penlight (small flashlight)	_____	1	34, 255, 309

### 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	352
	2. Ampicillin, injectable 250 mg. ampules and/or streptomycin 1 gm. vials for combined use with penicillin (if ampicillin is too expensive)	_____	_____	20-40 20-40	353 354
	3. Tetracycline, capsules or tablets 250 mg.	_____	_____	40-80	356
FOR AMEBA AND GIARDIA INFECTIONS:	4. Metronidazole, 250 mg. tablets	_____	_____	40-80	369
FOR FITS:	5. Phenobarbital, 15 mg. tablets	_____	_____	40-80	389

<u>Use</u>	<u>Medicine</u>	<u>Local Brand</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Page</u>
FOR SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS AND SEVERE ASTHMA:					
	6. Epinephrine ( <i>Adrenalin</i> ) injections, ampules with 1 mg.	_____	_____	5-10	385
FOR ASTHMA:					
	7. Ephedrine, 15 mg. tablets	_____	_____	20-100	385
FOR SEVERE BLEEDING AFTER CHILDBIRTH:					
	8. Ergonovine, injections or tablets of 0.2 mg.	_____	_____	6-12	391

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

#### WHERE DRY EYES (XEROPHTHALMIA) IS A PROBLEM:

	Vitamin A, 200,000 U. capsules	_____	_____	10-100	392
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#### WHERE TETANUS IS A PROBLEM:

	Tetanus antitoxin, 50,000 units (Lyophilized if possible)	_____	_____	2-4 bottles	389
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#### WHERE SNAKEBITE OR SCORPION STING IS A PROBLEM:

	Specific antivenom	_____	_____	2-6	388
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#### WHERE MALARIA IS A PROBLEM:

	Chloroquine, Quinine, Artemisinin, or whatever medicines work best in your area	_____	_____	50-200	365- 368
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#### TO PREVENT OR TREAT BLEEDING IN UNDERWEIGHT NEWBORNS:

	Vitamin K, injections of 1 mg.	_____	_____	3-6	394
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### MEDICINES FOR CHRONIC DISEASES

It may or may not be wise to have medicines for chronic diseases such as **tuberculosis**, **leprosy**, and **schistosomiasis** in the Village Medicine Kit. To be sure a person has one of these diseases, often 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. 147). Therefore, if refrigeration is available, vaccines should be part of the village medical supplies—especially the DPT, polio, and measles vaccines.

## WORDS TO THE VILLAGE STOREKEEPER OR PHARMACIST

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 *Kaopectate*, 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 eggs, fruit, or vegetables 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 expensive combination of medicines for a cold, encourage him to save money by buying plain aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen 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 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!

