

Family First Aid Kit

No one likes to think about the threat of impending emergencies, much less sprinting out the door to equip the house for every eventuality. However, enlisting the cooperation of your teenager to help prepare your household for an emergency is the perfect way to get set, fast. It also presents a great opportunity to begin a family conversation about disaster preparedness, not to mention honing your teen's research skills along the way!

To get started, recruit your teen to do some research into disaster preparedness. Do you live on or around a fault line? Are you in hurricane territory? Be ready to cover all your bases by researching tornadoes, earthquakes, fires, and floods. What it takes to be prepared can vary widely depending on whether your home is on the coast, in the woods, on the plains, or in a city. No matter where you live, however, it's important to be prepared for everything - especially if the closest you've gotten to a family emergency discussion is teaching Rover to "stop, drop, and roll"!

First thing's first: a home first aid kit is a household must-have. Although your teen should do his own research into first aid kit components, here are some basics to begin with, as recommended by the Red Cross:

What You Need:

- Adhesive bandages, various sizes
- Sterile gauze pads, various sizes
- Conforming roller gauze bandage
- Antiseptic wipes
- Anti-bacterial ointment
- Cold pack
- Small scissors
- Tweezers
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Flashlight
- Whistle
- Waterproof matches

What You Do:

1. These are the essentials, but they represent only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what your family could need. Help your teen brainstorm about what specific needs your family might have, such as important medications, and consider how much extra food and water you'll need in case of emergency (it's recommended that you stock up enough for at least three days).
2. Next, have your teen research emergency plans. What should the family do in case of a flood, tornado, or fire? Make sure that fire escapes, storm cellars, and exits are kept clear, for one thing. If family members are separated, how will they get in contact? Where should they meet if phone lines are jammed? Ask your teen to create an emergency contact sheet with the phone numbers for the police, fire department, and nearby relatives or family friends, and keep a copy in the first aid kit as well as one by the family telephone.
3. With any luck, you'll never have to use your kit or implement your emergency plan. But working with your teen to build a home first aid kit and emergency plan will not only give you piece of mind, it will



give your teen a feeling of preparedness and a sense of responsibility for the family's future.
4. For more information visit www.redcross.org or www.ready.gov

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