



The following are the basics of a good medicine cabinet, updated to include supplies recommended during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Read and follow all packaging instructions carefully and keep ALL supplies in a safe place not accessible to children or pets. Some products such as calamine lotion and antibiotic ointment can be replaced annually or even less frequently without a problem, but for prescriptions or medications that really have to work to ensure your ongoing health, be sure that your supply is unexpired. If you have questions, contact your provider or your local health department.

1. Thermometer – any type is fine for adults (under the tongue, digital, infrared no-touch); infants should have a rectal thermometer. Thermometer “strips” are not as accurate, but can be used if necessary.
2. Cough drops and cough syrup
3. Acetaminophen for relief of any type of pain and/or fever
4. Ibuprofen for relief of any type of pain and/or fever
5. Antidiarrheals
6. Antacids
7. Antihistamines and decongestants – they treat different symptoms although they are sometimes combined in one medication
8. Calamine lotion and/or anti-itch medicine
9. Adhesive bandages in multiple sizes
10. Alcohol and/or hydrogen peroxide for disinfecting
11. Antibacterial cream
12. Tweezers
13. Face masks
14. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes (at least 60% alcohol)
15. Latex gloves
16. Pulse oximeter (optional)
17. 2-week supply of personal prescriptions, vitamins, over-the-counter supplements

For families with children, items above that are made especially for children are recommended rather than trying to modify dosages of adult medications.

REMINDERS

- For products that have expiration dates, check at least annually to ensure they’re up to date – don’t hoard medications or supplies as they are less effective or may be completely ineffective after their expiration dates
- Dispose of medications properly – check www.fhn.org for locations of medication drop-off locations
- Post the national 24-hour Poison Control Hotline somewhere all in your household can see it: 1-800-222-1222
- Be sure you also have housecleaning supplies on hand to help limit the spread of germs, such as disinfecting cleaning wipes (be sure the formula is able to kill viruses and germs on surfaces) and disinfecting sprays. Having bleach and other similar cleansers is also a good idea but as with all supplies, hoarding generally doesn’t work; the products can dry out or lose their effectiveness if stored too long. A 2-month supply of any cleaning/disinfecting product should ensure their usability.
- If your pets require medication or special food, be sure you have a 2-month supply of those items for them; your veterinarian or pet food supplier may not be as readily available in a pandemic.
- If you’ve haven’t felt well in more than a week, call your provider’s office to discuss or set an appointment.
- If you have chest pain, shortness of breath, severe pain (headaches, abdominal pain, etc.), or a serious injury, go immediately to the nearest hospital emergency room or urgent care facility.

For more information on emergency preparedness, visit www.fhn.org/emergency-preparedness-team.asp