



Personal First Aid Kits (PFAK)

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Personal First Aid Kits (PFAK):

Do you carry a first aid kit all of the time?

I recommend that you carry a personal first aid kit all the time but especially on SAR missions or when you are outdoors for any length of time.. When I recommend this I always get asked "Well what should I put in the kit"? And then you say to me. I am not going to carry a 2 or 3 pound store bought kit everywhere I go. You do not have to carry the First Responder Mega Kit and what you carry in your personal first aid kit, is just that, personal. The items to include will vary based on several variables.



1. Size and weight you want or able to carry. *(one of my goals is to reduce the amount of pack weight our SAR workers have to carry.)*
2. The function that you want it to serve. *(what items am I really going to use, and will it fit the situation.)*
3. The container to store the items in.
4. The cost and availability of the items. *(needs to be low cost, and easily restocked)*
5. What Over-The-Counter medications should I carry. *(should be low cost, long shelf life type medications)*
6. What personal medications that you take. *(prescription drugs, between you and your doctor).*

Here are a few of my tips and suggestions:

FUNCTION: Decide early on the function you want it to serve. Do you want it to include all the items you will ever need. If so, be ready to carry substantial weight and a container that may be somewhat awkward. The size I will address here will be a mini kit size. approximately 3.75" x 2.5" x 7/8" about the size of a "Altoid Mint Tin". Which fits very well in a shirt pocket and amazingly it holds a lot of items. In fact that is the container I use a "Altoid Mint Tin". It weighs about 5 ounces full. It will serve as a very basic first aid kit used for those everyday type injuries. No, it does not include everything you might need, but you might be surprised what it will carry and with a little ingenuity the items will serve multiple uses.

CONTENTS: Here is a list of what is in my kit, keep in mind that you can change the items in your own kit, these are just suggestions.



- (4) 1" x 3" adhesive bandages (Band-aids)
- (2) gauze 2 x 2's
- (1) sewing needle with 3 foot of thread or dental floss
- (1) straight pin
- (1) razor blade
- (1) antiseptic wipe (benzalkonium chloride)
- (2) alcohol swabs
- (1) 3 in 1 Antibiotic ointment
- (1) hydrocortisone cream
- (2) betadine swabs {for an antiseptic, added to clean water for irrigation solution}
- (2) sting eze swabs {temporary relief of bites and stings}
- (6) aspirin tablets {for pain, headache, fever reduction}
- (4) Advil tablets (Ibuprofen) {anti-inflammatory, pain reducer}
- (2) Tylenol tablets (Acetaminophen) {for pain relief}
- (2) Pepto Bismol tablets {for upset stomach, anti-diarrhea}
- (2) Benadryl tablets {for mild allergic reactions, insect stings, hay fever}
- (1) medical adhesive tape 1 foot
- (1) metal "Altoid Mint Tin" container
- (1) 24 inches long 1/2" wide duct tape (wrapped around edge of container to waterproof)

All this fits in the container with some room for small additions like your own medications, a strike anywhere match or two or whatever you decide.

Make sure the Over-The-Counter drugs you include work for you and that you are not allergic to any of them. Read the directions on the package. If you are unsure of what types to carry consult your doctor. Remember unless you are a Doctor, you can not use these on anyone else but you.

CONTAINER: Yes, I really use a "Altoid Mint Tin"

Metal construction 3.75" x 2.5" x 7/8", it does take a beating but holds up longer than plastic models. It is not waterproof as is, but can be enhanced with the duct tape around the edge. It fits easily in a shirt or jacket pocket. I make several kits so I can grab one anytime.



SAR KIT: This personal first aid kit does not replace the required medical/survival kit for SAR missions. The kits specified for SAR missions are designed to supplement the entire medical equipment package carried by a team to assist either the subject or the SAR workers in case of injury.

FUTURE ADDITIONS: My kit changes constantly my only limitation is the self imposed, "Must Fit In My Pocket Size". In any case I have contemplated adding the following items;

safety pin(s), small zip lock bag, antacid tablets, moleskin (for blisters), tweezers, and dental wax..

CONCLUSION: Will this little kit solve all your problems? Will this little kit have everything you could possible need? The answer to both of these questions is **NO!** It is not intended to do so. The intent is to service common problems, be functional, be low cost, and to be small enough that you will not be bothered carrying this kit on a daily basis. Think back to some of the situations you have been in, what items do you wish you had with you at the time. I have been carrying on of these mini PFAK's for about a year now and I have used it several times for me, and my family members. Actually I have two kits one is the PFAK described here the other is a Personal Survival Kit (PSK), which consists of mostly hardware, non-medical items such as matches, sewing kit, water purification tablets, etc. Items that could make a big difference if you spend a lot of time in the outdoors. This kit will be covered in future articles.

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