



COMMONWEALTH HOLISTIC HERBALISM

We're excited to share our **Guide to Building Your Herbal First Aid Kit** with you!

This guide has:

- Information about planning out your first aid kits
- Complete packing lists for three kits for different situations, as well as the bags we use and their sizes – with pictures!
- We've included both standard first aid supplies, like bandages, as well as specific herbal preparations and what they do
- And links where you can get more information

And if you have any questions, always feel free to contact us at info@commonwealthherbs.com :-)

Let's go!



What should you carry?

What you carry depends on where you are, and what you and other people will be doing there. Think about the places you go every day: what environment are you in? What kind of people are there? What sorts of activities are going on? How accessible is conventional medical care?

For example, you might be going to a baseball game where you're not allowed to carry a backpack. You know there's likely to be conventional medical care right on site, so there's no need to carry a big kit, and you're not allowed a bag or backpack anyway. A small pouch of essentials that fits in a cargo pocket would be appropriate for this situation.

You should also consider what kind of training you have: what sort of injuries do you feel comfortable working with? What sort of tools do you feel comfortable working with? If you don't have training to splint breaks or sprains, for example, then you probably don't need to take up space in your kit with a SAM Splint. It's better to have a smaller kit of things you know how to use well than a large kit of things you aren't familiar with!

How will you carry it all?

When you're thinking about a bag to carry your stuff in, consider the following:

- **Comfort** – Can you wear/carry it all day? What if you have to carry or assist another person in addition to your bag?
- **Size** – The ideal bag will hold what you need without being too large or heavy to manage, or too small and hard to get what you need out of it.
- **Ease to work in** – Perhaps you want a bag that can unzip and lay flat so that you can easily lay it down on the ground to work. Or you may prefer a bag that you can comfortably open while you're still wearing it. Whatever you choose, make sure that it's easy to root around in and find what you need.



- **Water/weatherproof** – It's important that your stuff will stay dry if you're working in the rain or snow.
- **Appropriate appearance** – You might want to stand out as a medic, so that people who need you can find you easily. However, there are some times that you don't want to draw attention to yourself. You might consider velcro if you're going to use identification patches, so that you can quickly remove them if necessary.
- **Not too fancy** – It's a first aid kit: it's going to get dirty, and possibly gross. So although you need a bag that's comfortable, don't spend too much money on it, because it could get destroyed at any point.

Keep in mind that bags sold as first aid kits may not be the bag that best suits your needs. Pre-filled first aid kits are also generally not to my liking, as they contain a lot of items i won't use and not enough of the items i like most. Plus, quality is a factor: often the contents are off-brand and the stick isn't sticky, the scissors aren't sharp, etc.

When you build your own, you know that you're carrying supplies that you're trained to use, that you can use effectively and efficiently, and you're not carrying a bunch of extra weight for things that you won't use.

Inside your bag, pack things in ziploc bags to keep them weatherproof and mess proof when the bag is open. I like to use ziploc to organize too – roller gauze in one ziploc, bandaids in another. Always carry some extra ziplocs for unexpected things, biohazard trash containment, etc.

We use HDPE and Nalgene plastic bottles are much lighter weight and they don't break. are much lighter weight and they don't break. Various herbalists and herbal products companies have tested and found that these two types of plastic are safe and do not leech over 10 years of testing, so we feel ok about the plastic in this case.

If you prefer to pack glass, make sure to keep them in separate waterproof bags so that if they do break, you don't have tincture spilled on your gear. I like to put a piece of cloth – usually a bandana – in too, so that if there is a spill, it'll soak up the liquid.



Use your kit!

Once you've got your kit packed and ready, don't squirrel it away – use it!

Even if you still keep some bandaids and first aid supplies in the bathroom cabinet, get in the habit of going for your kit when you have an injury to deal with. This way you'll get comfortable working with it – and you'll have a chance to discover things that are missing before you're in an emergency situation!

What's Inside?

I have three different kits that i keep ready to go: a **Tiny Carry** kit, which fits in a cargo pocket, a **Daily Carry** kit, which fits in the laptop sleeve of my courier bag, and a **Street Kit**, which is a big enough kit for working for a day with a homeless community, working at a protest or public event, or to grab quick for an evacuation.

You will likely have more than one kit as well, based on the types of things you do regularly. For example: are you a sports mom? Are you a hiker? Are you a roller-derby skater? Think about the things you do often, what kind of injuries are likely, and what size kit you'll need for those things.

You'll find complete packing lists below, but first a final two notes:

A note about knives:

Knives can be really useful in emergencies. generally carry an EMT knife with a seatbelt cutter & glass breaker tip, but i don't ever put that in my kit because there are some places where you can't have a knife.

If i carry my knife separately in a pocket, then i don't have to remember to think about whether or not i should take it out of my kit based on where i'm going; instead, i decide whether or not i should put it in my pocket each time i get dressed. In general, i'm less likely to make a mistake that way, and accidentally end up with a knife in a place where knives aren't allowed.



Pack your skills, too!

Before you even start collecting items, recognize that skills are the very first thing that goes into your kit. Learning how to respond to the things happening around you, learning to bandage and splint, and learning to correctly clean and dress a wound are key skills that everyone should know – even kids!

Enroll in our Herbal First Aid course

to learn the skills you need to respond in an emergency!

Use code **packlist** to get \$25 off!

Click here for the Herbal First Aid Course
use code **packlist** for \$25 off!

Once you have those skills, it's important to practice them regularly so that you keep everything fresh, and so that you even develop muscle memory when it comes to wrapping, splinting, and bandaging. This could be a weekly or monthly family fun event – kids also need to learn these skills, and they're often perfectly happy to let you wrap them up like mummies so that you can practice too!

Finally, practicing these skills in a calm and fun environment will help you stay calm if you need to use them in a real emergency. Likewise, allowing someone to practice on you in a fun atmosphere will help you remain calm if you are ever injured: it's like training your brain that bandages = not scary.



Packing Lists

Tiny Carry

This kit is small enough to fit into a cargo pocket, and useful in situations where you don't want to have a lot of weight, you need to have your hands free, or in places where you aren't allowed to bring a bag or backpack.

The bag itself is an Eagle Creek Pack-It Cube, size XS. This is an older one, they've redesigned slightly but the newer ones are similar and also great. It's a little less than 8x5x3 inches, and weighs basically nothing at all.



CONTENTS:

BANDAGES and GEAR

- 1 triangle bandage
- 2 2" roller gauze
- 2 3x3 sterile gauze pads
- a handful of 1" bandaids
- a pair of gloves
- tweezers & a needle

Additionally, i carry my knife in another pocket.



HERBS

Pine resin salve (Pine resin, Plantain oil, beeswax)
abrasions, light lacerations, boils, etc

Wound wash: Alcohol-free Rose water + Witch Hazel extract or a tincture that is some combination of Usnea/Loosestrife/Propolis/Yarrow/berberine-plant* and water.
washing wounds, dental abscesses, anti-septic.
additionally, Rosewater + Witch Hazel is useful for a burn.

Honey packets

burns, wounds, abrasions

Lobelia tincture

anaphylaxis, asthma attacks, muscle relaxant
you could substitute a strong relaxing nervine for helping keep people calm and for relaxing muscles if you prefer; Ginger + Chamomile tincture is a good choice.

* Berberine-plant: whatever berberine containing plant is abundant where you live, such as Oregon Grape root, Barberry root, or organically cultivated Goldenseal.



Daily Carry

This kit is small enough to fit into the backpack or bag you carry every day, useful in everyday situations in your everyday environment.

The bag is a hanging toiletry bag, about 10x10x3 inches



CONTENTS:

BANDAGES and GEAR

- 2 triangle bandages
- 3 2" roller gauze , 2 4" roller gauze
- 10 assorted size sterile gauze pads
- 1 self-occlusive bandage
- roll of paper tape
- 2 Tegaderm 4x4.75"
- 3 Steri-Strips
- a handful of 1" bandaids
- 5 pair nitrile gloves
- Narcan for opiate overdose (not pictured)
- alcohol swabs (for cleaning tools, not wounds)



trauma shears, tweezers & a needle
sharpie, extra ziplocs,
ponytail holders, plastic mirror (very handy for people who wear contacts)
handwarmers

Additionally, i carry my knife in another pocket.

HERBS

Pine resin salve (Pine resin, Plantain oil, beeswax)

abrasions, light lacerations, boils, etc

Wound wash: Alcohol-free Rose water + Witch Hazel extract or a tincture that is some combination of Usnea/Loosestrife/Propolis/Yarrow/barbering-plant* and water.

washing wounds, dental abscesses, anti-septic.

additionally, Rosewater + Witch Hazel is useful for a burn.

Honey packets

burns, wounds, abrasions

Lobelia tincture

anaphylaxis, asthma attacks, muscle relaxant

you could substitute a strong relaxing nervine for helping keep people calm and for relaxing muscles if you prefer; Ginger + Chamomile tincture is a good choice.

Lavender essential oil

muscle relaxant, nervous system relaxant, antiseptic.

essential oils should be diluted.

Chamomile tincture

cramping, indigestion, panic attack, fever

Ghost Pipe + Solomon's Seal + Sage tincture

panic attacks, rage, anxiety, physical pain

20% Ghost Pipe, 40% Solomon's Seal, 40% Sage

* Berberine-plant: whatever berberine containing plant is abundant where you live, such as Oregon Grape root, Barberry root, or organically cultivated Goldenseal.



CONTENTS:

BANDAGES and GEAR

3 triangle bandages
10 2" roller gauze, 8 4" roller gauze
25 assorted sterile gauze pads
4 latex-free self-occlusive bandage
rolls of paper, cloth, and transpore tape
5 Tegaderm 4x4.75"
10+ Steri-Strips, butterfly bandages, and/or wound closure strips
1" bandaids, moleskin
10 pair nitrile gloves
SAM splint
Narcan for opiate overdose (not pictured)
alcohol swabs (for cleaning tools, not wounds)
water bottle with wound wash + a water bottle with water, clearly labeled
tweezers & a needle, steel lice comb, extra safety pins
shears, sharpies, tick remover, ponytail holders
tea tree toothpicks, menstrual items, plastic mirror,
space blanket, trash bag, handwarmers
notepad + pen

Additionally, i carry my knife in another pocket if that's appropriate to the situation.

PERSONAL GEAR

I include things for sustaining myself that i won't share with other people. This is because it's important that as medics, we sustain ourselves, so that we can stay strong and keep working. We're no good to anyone if we get hurt! For me, this usually includes snacks, a bandana, hygiene items, maps, lip balm, my own herbal items, cash, change of socks & underwear, etc.

I keep my personal gear in the two small front compartments, and everything else in the large main compartment.



HERBS

Pine resin salve (Pine resin, Plantain oil, beeswax)

abrasions, light lacerations, boils, etc

Wound wash: Alcohol-free Rose water + Witch Hazel extract or a tincture that is some combination of Usnea/Loosestrife/Propolis/Yarrow/berberine-plant* and water.

washing wounds, dental abscesses, antiseptic.

additionally, Rosewater + Witch Hazel is useful for a burn.

Honey packets

burns, wounds, abrasions

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anaphylaxis, asthma attacks, muscle relaxant

Lavender essential oil

muscle relaxant, nervous system relaxant, antiseptic. essential oils should be diluted.

Chamomile tincture

cramping, indigestion, panic attack, fever

Ghost Pipe + Solomon's Seal + Sage tincture

panic attacks, rage, anxiety, physical pain

20% Ghost Pipe, 40% Solomon's Seal, 40% Sage

Wood Betony (Stachys off)

concussion, panic, GI upset, dissociation

Ginger tincture

nausea, GI upset, antispasmodic

"Berberine" tincture*

anti septic, anti-microbial, astringent.

bentonite clay

food poisoning, stings, weepy skin conditions

shea butter

chilblains, cold tolerance, chapping, peeling skin, mild sunburns and dry damaged skin

Cayenne powder

non-caffeinated vital force stimulant



Cinnamon powder

athlete's foot, trench foot, GI upset, cough, antispasmodic

* Berberine-plant: whatever berberine containing plant is abundant where you live, such as Oregon Grape root, Barberry root, or organically cultivated Goldenseal.

**Learn more than just first aid:
get prepared for disaster recovery with the
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