

Over the Counter Medication Pack

By Scotten W. Jones

Introduction

I think it is safe to say that most people have a collection of over the counter (OTC) medications in their medicine cabinets at home to treat minor illnesses. When you are away from home, running errands, travelling, hiking and camping or engaging in many other activities you won't have easy access to your home supplies. This document describes an easy to carry OTC medication pack designed to treat common minor illnesses.

This OTC medication pack guide is provided as is. It is up to the user to confirm the accuracy of the information and to determine the appropriate usage, treatment, and training required before taking any of these medications.

Medication Selection

This medication pack is the result of several different information sources in an effort to determine the most effective and useful medications to carry. Documents consulted in preparing this medication pack include an article from Consumer Reports magazine on the most effective OTC medications for a variety of common ailments and several wilderness first aid and wilderness medicine guides. One of the wilderness first aid guides recommends several medications that are available OTC and also used as a prescription medication in stronger doses. In this guide where both the OTC and prescription doses are listed, the prescription doses are listed for reference purpose only and should not be used without a physician's supervision.

Kit Construction

I have made up several of these kits that I keep in my truck, various computer and hiking backpacks and first aid kits. The kits are housed in zippered clear plastic pouches 6-1/2" x 4" by approximately 3/4" thick and include the OTC medication guide at the end of this document, a golf pencil to note expiration dates, usage and refills, a credit card size Fresnel magnifier to help with label reading and all of the recommended medications. See figure 1.

Over the Counter Medication Guide

The guide at the end of this document is designed to be printed double sided on 3 sheets of paper. I staple the three sheets together and fold them up to place inside the kit. The guide is made up of:

- Symptoms and Recommended Over the Counter Medications – this is designed to be printed double sided on one sheet of paper and lists common symptoms with recommended treatments.
- Recommended Over the Counter Medications and Usage - this is designed to be printed double sided on one sheet of paper and lists information about each of the recommended medications, usage, dosage and notes and warnings.
- Inventory and Usage – this is designed to be printed double sided on one sheet of paper and lists medications, recommend quantities, expiration date, and then has multiple columns for quantity used and to sign off when the quantity used has been replaced. Any medication that reaches its expiration date should be discarded and replaced.



Figure 1. Over the Counter Medication Pack.

Suggestions questions or comments

Emails of suggestions, questions or comments may be sent to scotten.jones@verizon.net

Symptoms and Recommended over the Counter Medications

Symptom	Recommended medication (see medication table for usage and notes)
Allergic reaction	Sudden, severe allergic reactions can be life threatening and may require prescription treatments such as an Epi pen or hospitalization. Give Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), 2 tablets and seek medical attention.
Allergies (hay fever)	Loratadine (Claritin), 1 tablet every 24 hours as needed.
Constipation	Bisacodyl, 1 to 2 tablets to relieve constipation. Action takes up to 8 hours and may be sudden.
Cough	Honey or glycerin cough drops. Cough suppressants such as dextromethorphan provide little if any relief and pose potential risks. Also treat post nasal drip if present (see below).
Diarrhea	Loperamide (Imodium), 2 tablets at first loose stool, 1 tablet after each loose stool. Do not exceed 4 tablets a day for more than 2 days.
Fever	Acetaminophen (preferred), 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours, ibuprofen or Percogesic are alternates. In otherwise healthy adults fevers <102°F should not be treated. A mild fever helps the body's immune response to disease.
Headache - sinus	Ibuprofen, 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain plus Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) for congestion.
Headache - tension	Ibuprofen, 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed.
Headache - migraine	Ibuprofen, 2 to 4 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed. Do not exceed 16 tablets in 24 hours.
Heart Attack	4 – 85mg Chewable aspirin (check for aspirin allergies first)
Heartburn	Cimetidine (Tagamet), 2 tablets, 4 times daily.
Hysteria	Percogesic, 2 tablets.
Insomnia	Percogesic, 2 tablets at bed time.
Itching	Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), 1 to 2 tablets.
Menstrual cramps	Ibuprofen, 2 to 4 tablets depending on the severity of the pain. Take with food to avoid stomach irritation.
Motion sickness	Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), 1 to 2 tablets every 6 hours
Muscle ache	Percogesic, 2 tablets every 4 hours as needed, ibuprofen is an alternative, 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed.
Muscle spasm	Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), 1 to 2 tablets with ibuprofen 2 tablets, at bed time.
Nausea	Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), 1 to 2 tablets every 6 hours.
Post nasal drip – cold	Older style antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl Allergy and generics) or chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton or generic) are best but do often cause drowsiness. Take diphenhydramine, 1 tablet every 6 hours as needed.

See over for more

Symptoms and Recommended over the Counter Medications (Continued)

Runny nose – cold	Best treated with oxymetazoline nasal drops or spray (Afrin or Neosynephrine Nighttime) for the first three days followed by pseudoephedrine pills (Sudafed) to avoid rebound congestion. Take pseudoephedrine, 1 tablet every 12 hours as needed.
Severe pain	Ibuprofen, 4 tablets (800mg total, not more than 3,600mg per 24 hours) and acetaminophen, 2 tablets (1,000mg, not more than 4,000mg per 24 hours).
Shin Splints	Ibuprofen, 2 tablets, 4 times daily. Take with food to avoid stomach irritation.
Sore throat	Dyclonine (Sucrets) appears to work longer than other sore throat treatments. 1 lozenge every 2 hours as needed, do not exceed 10 per day.
Tendonitis	Ibuprofen, 2 tablets, 4 times daily. Take with food to avoid stomach irritation.

Recommended over the Counter Medications and Usages

Medication	Usage	Dosage (adult)	Notes and warnings
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Relieves pain and reduces fever.	500mg tables, 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed. Do not exceed 8 tablets (4,000mg) in 24 hours.	Less adverse reactions than aspirin or ibuprofen. Overdoes can damage the liver and be fatal. Does not reduce inflammation. May be taken with ibuprofen for severe pain.
Bisacodyl	Stool softener to treat constipation	5mg tablets, 1 to 2 tablets to relieve constipation. Action takes up to 8 hours and may be sudden. Up to 6 tablets may be taken for complete cleansing.	Do not take within one hour of drinking milk or taking an antacid. Do not take if you are allergic to bisacodyl, aspirin or tatzazine. Do not give to children under 10.
Chewable aspirin	Heart attacks	4 – 85mg tablets as soon as possible	Chewable aspirin gets into the victims system faster. Check for aspirin allergies before administering. Significantly improves survival rate and quality.
Cimetidin (Tagamet)	Relieves stomach acid and some allergic reactions	200mg tablets. Nonprescription adult dose is 2 tablets, 4 times daily. Prescription does is as high as 4 tablets, 4 times daily.	May interact with blood thinners and increase blood concentration of other medications.
Cough lozenges	Reduces coughing due to throat irritation.	As needed	Honey and glycerin are best. Medicated lozenges are no more effective and create unnecessary risks.
Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)	Relieves allergies, coughs, muscle spasms, motion sickness and itching due to minor skin irritation.	25mg tablets. Antihistamine, 1 to 2 tables every 6 hours, Coughs, 1 tablet every 6 hours, Muscle spasms, 1 to 2 tablets w/wo ibuprofen at bedtime, Motion sickness or nausea 1 or 2 tablets every 6 hours.	Exercise caution when giving diphenhydramine to patients with asthma, increased intraocular pressure, hyperthyroidism, cardiovascular disease or hypertension. May cause drowsiness. Better for treating post nasal drip due to colds than newer antihistamines.
Dyclonie (Sucrets)	Relieves sore throat.	2mg lozenges, 1 every 2 hours as needed, do not exceed 10 per day.	Dyclonie appears to work longer than other sore throat treatments.

See over for more

Recommended over the Counter Medications and Usages (continued)

Medication	Usage	Dosage (adult)	Notes and warnings
Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin)	Relieves pain, fever, menstrual cramps and inflammation.	200mg. Nonprescription, 2 tables, 4 times per day, prescription, 4 tables, 4 times per day.	May irritate the stomach and should be taken with food. For severe pain 800mg may be taken simultaneously with 1000mg of acetaminophen. In otherwise healthy adults fevers <102°F should not be treated. A mild fever helps the body's immune response to disease.
Loperamide (Imodium)	Relieves diarrhea	2mg. Nonprescription, 2 tablets at first loose stool, 1 tablet after each loose stool. Do not exceed 4 tables per day for more than 2 days. Prescription, 2 tablets initially, 2 tablets after each loose stool; do not exceed 8 tables per day.	
Loratadine (Claritin)	Relieves symptoms of hay fever or upper respiratory allergies.	10mg. 1 tablet every 24 hours as needed.	Less likely to cause drowsiness than Diphenhydramine.
Percogesic	Relieves pain, fever, muscle spasms. Is a decongestant, a mild sleep aid, can calm a hysterical person	325mg acetaminophen and 30mg phenyltoloxamine. 2 tables every 4 hours as needed.	Particularly good for joint and muscle aches.
Pseudoephrine (Sudafed)	Nasal decongestant.	120mg Pseudoephrine HCL, 1 tablet every 12 hours as needed. Do not exceed 2 tablets in 24 hours.	Do not take with MAO inhibitors.

Inventory and usage

Medication	Qty	Expiration date	Used Qty	Replaced (initials)	Used Qty	Replaced (initials)	Used Qty	Replaced (initials)
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	4							
Bisacodyl	2							
Chewable aspirin	4							
Cimetidin (Tagamet)	4							
Cough lozenges	8							
Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)	4							
Dyclonie (Sucrets)	4							
Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin)	8							
Loperamide (Imodium)	8							
Loratadine (Claritin)	6							
Percogesic	6							
Pseudoephrine (Sudafed)	4							

