

Emergency first aid

*“Your knowledge could save a life.
Your ignorance could lose a loved
one. Go do a first aid course!”*

Susan Conniry & Tom Beasley | *Backyard Tourist*

Dealing with any sort of medical problem in an emergency is fraught with problems

If you have longstanding medical issues or disabilities you need to plan your emergency survival techniques now.

You need to talk to your medical practitioners and make sure you have every base covered. Delivery of medicines, medical equipment, and expert care may be seriously disrupted in the event of a local or national disaster. You can prevent yourself from becoming another casualty, or a drain on stretched resources, by planning ahead.

Training

If you are in good health, and especially if you have dependents, you owe it to yourself and your family to be prepared for a medical emergency. In a large disaster the emergency services will be overloaded and either slow or unable to respond. Your lack of knowledge could lead to a loss of life. Or your misguided attempts to help could make an injury worse. So take a class.

Get qualified in First Aid and CPR. If your area offers the initiative, learn AED (automated external defibrillation).

These AED machines administer an electrical shock through the chest wall to the heart, and many businesses and public buildings such as airports are installing them. The equipment analyses the need of the victim and delivers the usage advice through computer technology. The American Red Cross and American Heart Association run courses in CPR and AED. Your local YMCA may also run classes.

Red Cross First Aid, CPR and AED classes are available for any age group and can be tailored to the needs of specific groups. Much of their training program is now available in Spanish. They also offer pet first aid classes, First Aid for Responding to Emergencies and Infant and Child first aid. Go to www.redcross.org and enter your ZIP code for more details of courses available near you.

If you are involved in an emergency and there are no qualified medical personnel available you should call the emergency medical services. Call the EMS if:

- ❖ A wound has bright red blood or is spurting.
- ❖ The victim has lost consciousness, or is losing consciousness.
- ❖ Has chest pain.
- ❖ Has persistent pain in the abdomen.
- ❖ Is passing blood or vomiting.
- ❖ Has seizures, slurred speech or severe headache.
- ❖ Appears to be poisoned.
- ❖ Has back, head or neck injuries.

Waiting

While you are waiting you should ensure that the victim is neither chilled nor overheated.

- ❖ **Do not** move anyone unconscious or semi-conscious nor give them anything to eat or drink. If the victim is vomiting, place them on their side to prevent choking.
- ❖ If the victim faints, position them on their back and elevate their feet by about a foot. If the victim is having a seizure try and put something soft under their head but stay clear of thrashing which may injure you.

Bleeding

- ❖ If there is serious bleeding apply pressure with a clean absorbent cloth, or your fingers. If this cloth is soaked, add another. Don't remove the first as it will remove any clotting that may have occurred. If the bleeding doesn't stop, and you can do so, raise the wound above the level of the heart.
- ❖ If the bleeding stops, clean the wound gently with soap and water to remove debris. Squirting the liquid works better than rubbing.
- ❖ If the bleeding does not stop add an Ace bandage. If this fails, or if you have no bandage, squeeze the wound or the pressure point above the wound. The pressure point is where the artery is against the bone, as in the bottom upper arm or where the leg bends at the hip.
- ❖ If a body part has been torn off wrap it in a clean dressing and place in a plastic bag but *do not freeze* as this destroys the tissues.
- ❖ Do not remove an object impaled in a wound. Leave this to the experts.

Burns

Burns come in three degrees from the least severe (first) to the most dangerous (third). Third degree burns require immediate medical attention as they destroy all layers of skin and some or all of the underlying fat, muscles, bones or nerve tissue. The burn will look black or brown and the tissues underneath may appear white. Any burn larger than the size of a hand could be life-threatening. With burns remember: *never use ice on anything other than small superficial burns as it causes body heat loss*. Cool burns with water or a cool, wet cloth. Cover burns to prevent infection but bandage loosely. Do not apply anything.

- ❖ **Chemical burns** • Should be flushed with water until the emergency medical services arrive.
- ❖ **Electrical burns** • Don't touch the victim until you know the power is *off*. Do not cool the burn. Prevent the victim from becoming cold and do not move, as spinal injuries may well have occurred.
- ❖ **Sunburn** • Cool the burn with aloe vera. Don't go back outside unless slathered(!) in SPF 15+ and covered up and wearing a hat.

Heart attack

Sit the victim down against a wall or sofa with raised knees, feet on the floor, not lying down.

Rescue breathing

This can be learned on a Red Cross course. It is what you do when someone has stopped breathing yet still has a pulse. A mask should be worn if you do it to a stranger to avoid catching a disease. You should perform rescue breathing before,

or during, you call the emergency services, especially if the victim is a child. Brains need oxygen to function, children's brains incur problems sooner than adults. All rescue breathing techniques will show how to tip back the head and chin to keep the victim's airways open while the rescuer pinches the victim's nose closed with their finger and thumb. When the rescuer places their mouth over the victim's, forming a seal, and breathes into their lungs, the chest should inflate. (Failure to do so indicates an obstruction.) After 2 breaths they check for a pulse. If there is a pulse but no independent breathing the rescuer continues giving one breath every five seconds. If the victim begins to breath unaided, the rescuer will stop. If the breathing stops the rescuer will begin CPR, which it is sad to say, is hardly ever successful and often results in broken ribs. Professional equipment is more reliable and, should you be near the equipment, another good reason to take AED training. If you have CPR training, and all else is failing, and no help is on its way you should try it.

These techniques are simple to learn and you owe it to your loved ones to learn them as they could save a life in your everyday environment—not just in an emergency.

Poison

Call your poison center or emergency medical services immediately if you suspect someone of taking poison. Signs of poison include:

- ❖ Nausea.
- ❖ Vomiting.
- ❖ Diarrhoea.
- ❖ Chest or abdominal pains.
- ❖ Difficulty breathing.

- ❖ Changes in consciousness.
- ❖ Seizures.
- ❖ Burns around the lips and mouth.

You can be poisoned in four ways: inhalation (breathing it), ingestion (eating it), absorption (through the skin) and injection (bites and needles).

Self-reliance solutions—and preventions

Stay calm.

If your victim has breathed in a poison get them to fresh air as soon as possible. If they have poison on the skin take off any clothing that the poison touched and rinse their skin with running water for 15 to 20 minutes. If poison is in their eyes, rinse with running water for 15–20 minutes.

If they have eaten or drunk poison you are dependent upon medical assistance so you will have to access your local Poison Prevention Centre. 1-800-222-1222 is the central switchboard if it or your telephone is still working. Have details of the poison and your victim ready when you call. If vomiting is recommended you will need to have an emetic such as syrup of ipecac, available in your first aid kit. Milk may also be a suggested curative.

In an emergency situation stay away from places where poisonous creatures may be hiding. They won't really bother you unless you bother them. Remember the basics, dark basements and attics may house snakes or spiders. If you get bitten, wash the wound and keep your bite below your heart. **DO NOT:** cut the wound or apply a tourniquet. **DO:** Stay still. If anyone in your home is bee-sting allergic keep an epi-pen or your doctor prescribed medication with you at all times.

In a big urban emergency rats and other feral animals such as dogs, cats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats may be

disturbed. Even domestic animals may act oddly. Stay away from them. If you are bitten you will need to seek emergency attention promptly if you suspect rabies (drooling, partial paralysis, unusually quiet or irritable). If the wound is small, wash it with soap and water and apply antibiotic (check for known allergies). If large, control the bleeding as outlined above. Remember what the animal looked like and where you last saw it.

Natural and homeopathic medicines

This is a complex subject and not one that should be embarked upon during an emergency. There are many credible alternative medical treatments and homeopathic remedies as well as many positive endorsements for self-healing techniques derived from yoga and meditation. People who have studied these techniques will find many of the practices they have learned about will prove useful in a first response survival scenario. You are encourage to learn more about this fascinating area of self-reliance.

Advance planning

There are a number of things you can do *before* an emergency. You can learn about the types of emergency situations most likely to strike you in your area by checking out your local county website or library. Discover whether there is a plan of action—whether you chose to use it or not is your choice but you should be aware of what the plans are. Your community may have a warning system in place for some types of emergency. TV, radio, siren, etc.

You know that in an emergency you will be hungry for information. Get yourself a battery or wind-up radio in case the TV goes down or you are stranded outside. And because we never know where we will be in an emergency we should

plan things ahead with our family. Here are some suggestions for your family's preparedness plan.

- ❖ Discuss as a family the nature of possible emergency events.
- ❖ Discuss how you would respond to each type of emergency.
- ❖ Draw a floor plan and mark as many possible escape routes as possible and practise evacuating through them. (You may want to reconsider jumping through windows.)
- ❖ Find out how to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches. Do not attempt to reconnect your own gas supply when the emergency ends.
- ❖ Select a family member, out of state maybe, to act as a central liaison post. If you are separated you can relay messages through them in order to reunite your family.
- ❖ Consider how you would have to use your home, work or cell phone, if the networks are still working. Teach children how to make emergency, local and long distance calls from home, from a pay phone and from a cell phone. Leave numbers of emergency contacts and family in the home, in your wallet, in the children's school back packs.
- ❖ Pick five meeting places, two close to your home, three outside your neighbourhood in case you can't get back home. List these in the order you will try them on the same sheet of paper as the phone numbers.
- ❖ Tell your family members to listen to the radio.
- ❖ List and carry the names and numbers of family doctors, important medical information and the names and serial numbers of medical equipment such as pacemakers. Carry color photographs of other family members in case you get separated.

- ❖ Carry identification, credit cards, small notes in cash and photocopies of important documents such as household insurance. It is a good idea to have photocopies of all of these documents and cards held by your emergency contact out of state as you may lose everything and duplicates will make dealing with the aftermath a great deal easier.
- ❖ You will need spare sets of house and car keys. Work out where best to keep them in advance.
- ❖ Keep original family records in a fireproof/waterproof safe.
- ❖ Whatever or wherever you are, if you have kept the items from the emergency packs given at the end of this book you should be in good shape to deal with many emergency situations. Many needs will be basic such as tools, fire-making equipment, bleach, duct tape, needle and thread, warm clothes, toilet paper, trash bags, box-cutters, knives, etc. Make sure you have them someplace easy to find and grab if you are forced to leave in a hurry.
- ❖ Don't forget your pets. Make sure their shots are up to date, they are wearing ID and rabies tags, they have 2 weeks food, clean bowls, etc. Keep their veterinary paperwork with you as most animal shelters do not allow pets without proof of vaccination.
- ❖ Turn off sensitive electrical equipment such as computers, VCRs and television as well as major appliances, this will help to prevent power surges when electricity is restored. Don't call 911 for updates on power outages, listen to news stations for updates.
- ❖ Remember you will feel shocked after a traumatic incident. A good way to deal with this is to remain active and volunteer to help other victims. Children may wish to talk about it, often repeating stories over and over. Listen to them and encourage them to get involved in the rebuilding process: making cards, baking cookies, etc for emergency services personnel, etc.

Lists

“The state of your life is nothing more than a reflection of your state of mind.”

Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

The dynamics of survival

We all have a basic survival instinct. We stay alive day in and day out by adhering to the rules—shelter, water, fire and food. A survival situation is a perceived condition. It is merely your conditioned comfort zone and its boundaries being moved. See your survival as a personal challenge. You can live without electric. You can live without central heat. Using your brain, knowledge and your two hands a human can adapt to any situation. Turn it into a game. Instead of taking the easy way out present yourself with a challenge to overcome instead of something to be defeated by. Survival is everyone getting through. The weakest link is your focus of attention. Survival is beyond community; rather it is tribal. A tribe is a group of people with equal skills. Take away one member of the tribe and anyone else can pick up the slack. Organize your resources and your responses to a group of eight or less. Use your instincts—the animal within!

Pocket pouch

The pocket pouch is a small leather pouch that remains in your pocket at all times. Its contents may vary but this is what's in ours:

2 Benadryl capsules (for allergic reactions).

2 Maglite bulbs—Same size as your flashlight.

2 U.S. quarters.

8p nail.

A very small flat file.

Artificial sinew—Dental floss is a good substitute. It's waterproof and strong.

Basket Needle—That's a *big* needle.

Bic lighter (wrap a hair tie or elastic band around it).

Bobby pin.

Brass wire wrapped on a metal sewing machine bobbin. • *Use Christmas wreath wire from a craft store.*

Button.

Chap stick.

Ear plugs.

Magnesium fire starter.

P-38 can-opener—The army version, it's about an inch long.

Seam ripper—From a sewing or craft store.

Sewing needles (glovers' needles) for sewing leather.

Small flat screw driver.

Three fish hooks.

Toe nail clippers—They cut light wire, dental floss etc.

"Uncle Bill's" tweezers—Available in sport goods stores.

Fanny pack

Second item in the series of three. Not always carried but goes with the big backpack.

The fanny pack contains:

50 feet of 550 cordage—Military surplus or sportsman catalog. Made up of 7 strands which can be unraveled for lighter uses.

6' of flexible plastic tubing— $\frac{3}{8}$ "—basically it's a giant drinking straw for your solar still.

6 × 6 6mil plastic sheet (clear)—Home Depot. A shower curtain will work if it's very light colored or clear.

Ace bandage.

Bandanna.

Boonie hat—Broad-brimmed sun hat that protects ears and neck. Military surplus stores.

Compass.

Dark cotton work gloves (insect sprayed).

Dust mask—Respro mask from www.respro.com is best.

Eye wash cup.

Goggles with extra dark lenses.

Iodine crystals—Sporting goods store.

Liquid soap—Will serve more purposes than anti-bacterial handwash, like lubing things.

Maglite flashlight (AA size)—keep on a lanyard.

Metal spoon—Serves many purposes, make sure it's a strong one.

One large oval carabiner.

Playtex rubber gloves.

Rechargeable AA batteries.

Safety pins.

Saw blades—Metal and wood versions from power tool it work well.

Sea sponge (feminine hygiene). For internal use. You may prefer to pack a few strips of terry towelling to wash'n'wear

alternately. Pack extra safety pins.

Skull cap (like motorcycle riders wear).

Small sharpening stone.

Snakebite kit—Drugstore version. Be advised, they're not that great and Tom doesn't carry one now.

Sponge (for water gathering).

Toothbrush.

Tuna fish can—Empty 6 ozs can. 101 uses: digging, cooking, as a cup, a lamp base.

Washcloth.

Backpack

Being prepared to go mobile is always important. A backpack is like having your house on your back.

Contents: (this is our list—you may want other items)

.22 rifle.

100 feet of 550 cordage.

2 bandanas – Use them as a handkerchief, a pot-holder and, a whatever.

20 lb breakdown child's hunting bow—WalMart

or any sporting goods store should have one. Remember to practice. You can use sharpened small sticks, or even pencils as arrows.

70 oz. (or larger) Camelbak—This is a water back pack with a straw to your mouth.

96 oz. Collapsible Nalgene water bottle.

Bo staff – This is a martial arts stick. You'll need to find a specialist store. Tom has his drilled with holes which he uses to create bird traps and has given it a rubber tip to give better traction and silence the tapping noise it can make on rock.

Boot liner—fleece.

Boots—sturdy.

Broad-brimmed fur felt hat with chin strap—Sporting goods or cowboy store. Felt sheds water and keeps the sun off.

Compression bandage—A Kotex would do.

Compression sacks (2)—From a sports or camping store. These bags squeeze air out of

bulky items such as sleeping bags or clothes to save space.

Ensolite pad—One of those sleeping pads available from a camping store such as REI or Sears. The dense foam can be cut up and used for padding.

Expedition weight fleece long john underwear—top and bottom.

Fleece balaclava.

Fleece coat.

Fleece mittens.

Fleece pants.

Fleece sleeping bag.

Gaiters—Prevents stuff like snow, water and stones from getting in your boots.

1qt. Nalgene wide mouth water container.

Internal frame pack.

Large safety pin—and some small ones.

Large scarf—Get the regulation Army issue scarf. It's a multi-purpose item that can swathe your head and neck, double up as clothing, a bandage, a papoose, a sheet, a carrying device – almost anything you can think of.

Leather belt—It's to hold your pants up. Yep, you'll lose weight surviving and you need to keep your hands free for important stuff.

Leather gloves—Protect your hands from cuts and bites.

Metal can with a removable metal handle—That's a #10 can with a bent coat-hanger to Tom.

Military coat liner—light-weight nylon—Available from catalog or supplier like:

www.sportsmansguide.com

Military pant liner—light-weight nylon—Available as for coat liner.

Mosquito head net—Sporting goods store.

Nylon shorts—Durable and they dry fast.

Nylon windbreaker.

Plastic sheet—6' × 6'—for solar still.

Poncho—Nylon rain poncho.

Poncho liner (lightweight nylon insert)—Military version is quilted for extra warmth. Tom says he's sewn two together

and stuffed with leaves (wet or dry) to provide shelter and warmth.

PVC raincoat—top (with hood) and bottom—100% water-proof and very cheap. Resist the temptation to pay more for a fancy one!

Sand water filter tube (end of water bed tube).

Small day pack.

Socks—fleece.

Solar battery charger.

Space blankets (2).

Tent fly (for debris gathering).

Triangle bandage.

U.S. Forest Service Fire tent—This is the fire shelter that forest firefighters use if they get caught in the blaze. You curl up in it and wait for the flames to pass over you. You probably don't need one if you live in wetlands.

Washcloth.

Wasp spray.

Wool gloves—For warmth.

Car pack

This pack goes to work with you. It goes in your car. It is designed in case you're stranded and have to walk back home.

- 00 steel wool**—For fire making.
- 9 volt battery**—Same thing.
- Ace bandage.**
- Aspirin.**
- Band-Aids.**
- Bandana.**
- Baseball type hat.**
- Benadryl.**
- Bic lighter.**
- Book for reading.**
- Can of tuna.**
- Candle.**
- Chapstick.**
- Cordage.**
- Cotton work gloves.**
- Extra eyeglasses.**
- Flashlight.**
- Knife.**
- Lard.**
- Large plastic trash bag.**
- Liquid iodine.**
- Map** (several designated meeting places and routes of travel).
- Money**—small bills.
- P-38 can-opener.**
- Pliers.**

- Raincoat.**
- Soap.**
- Sunglasses.**
- Throwing stick**
- Tuna can.**
- Walking shoes.**
- Warm long underwear.**
- Water.**
- Wool blanket .**
- Wool hat.**

Long-term ideas

“Jar your thinking” list

- .22 bullets.**
- 10 gallon metal trash cans with lids.**
- Back scratcher.**
- Barbecue grill.**
- Bicycle.**
- Bicycle pump.**
- Bleach.**
- Books.**
- Bug spray.**
- Camp stove.**
- Chain saw.**
- Chlorine.**
- Clothespins.**
- Dog leashes.**
- Drinking alcohol.**
- Drop spindle** for spinning wool.
- Empty containers.**
- Extension cords.**
- Fire extinguisher.**

Firewood.
Fly swatters.
Funnels.
Games.
Garden seeds.
Grain grinders.
Gun cleaning kit.
Lantern wicks.
Lanterns.
Maps.
Moving blankets.
Musical instruments.
Old clothes.
Paper.
Pens and pencils.
Phone books.
Pillows.
Push pins.
Rolls of plastic sheeting.
Rubber boots.
Sand.
Scissors.
Sewing supplies.
Shovels, rakes, garden
hose.
Sling shot.
Smoking pipe.
Spray bottles.
Stuffed animals for the
kids.
Sweaters.
Tent.
Tire repair kit.
Tobacco.
Toilet plunger.
Twine.

Wagon.
Whistle.
Wool blankets.

Tools

Awl.
Axe.
Baling wire.
Bolt cutters.
Box cutter.
Broom.
Chain.
Chisels.
Clamps.
Clipboard.
Clippers.
Come-along.
Crescent wrench.
Digging bar.
Duct tape.
Dustpan.
Ear plugs.
Electrical tape.
Eye protection.
Files.
Fireplace tools.
Floor mop.
Glue.
Hacksaw.
Hammers.
Hand drill and bits.
Hand pump.
Hatchet.
Heavy gloves.
Ladder.

Measuring tape.
 Nails.
 Pipe cement.
 Pipe wrench.
 Pitch fork.
 Pliers.
 Post hole digger.
 Propane torch.
 Punch.
 PVC pipe.
 Rags.
 Rake.
 Rasp.
 Roofing cement.
 Rope.
 Rubber gloves.
 Sandpaper.
 Saw.
 Screwdrivers.
 Shovel.
 Splitting mall.
 Stapler.
 Trowel.
 Various screws, nuts and bolts.
 Vice.
 Vice grips.
 WD-40.
 Window screen.
 Wire cutters.

Car parts

Antifreeze.
 Battery.
 Brake fluid.

Bulbs.
 Clutch fluid.
 Fan belts.
 Fuel cans.
 Fuses.
 Hoses.
 Jack.
 Oil.
 Spare tire.
 Spark plugs.
 Transmission fluid.
 Wood block.
 Wrench.

Kitchen

Bags.
 Barbecue grill.
 Bowls.
 Colander.
 Cups.
 Cutlery, i.e. knife, fork, spoon.
 Cutting board.
 Cutting knives.
 Dish rack.
 Dish soap.
 Dish towels.
 Dish towels.
 Dutch oven.
 Foil.
 French press.
 Manual can opener.
 Measuring cups and spoons.
 Paper towels.

Plastic bags.
Pot holders.
Potato peeler.
Pots, pans, lids.
Recipe books.
Scrubby pads.
Spatula, large spoon.
Strainer.
Tea ball.
Tea kettle.
Timer.
Tongs.
Trash can with lid.
Various storage containers.
Wok.

Garden

Baskets.
Bird netting.
Bow saw.
Chicken wire.
Clippers.
Hand trowel.
Hand weed sickle.
Have-a-heart trap.
Hose.
Machete.
Nozzle.
Trash burning barrel.
Watering can.
Yard sprayer.

Medical cabinet

In any survival situation, it is imperative that you exercise care. The simplest things can easily escalate into a life-threatening situation. Preparation is essential and in some cases very easy to do. If you know you require certain life-preserving medicines keep them handy: in your car, your purse, your computer case, your home, or at a friend's house. If you use contact lens ensure you have spares and adequate cleaning solutions. If you wear spectacles keep cheap replacements with you.

Preparedness

Get your vaccinations

current: Hepatitis A and Tetanus.

Take a First Aid course.

Take a CPR course.

Take a Wilderness First Responder Course.

Stock up on special prescription medications, i.e. insulin.

Consider including these items in your own home medical kit:

3" x 5" cards.

Ace bandages.

Adhesive tape.

Analgesics.

Antacids.

Antibiotics—Keep them current. Check expiry dates on all medications.

Anti-diarrhoea.

Antihistamines.

Asthma medication.

Band-Aids.

Chapstick.

Cold packs.

Crutches.

Epinephrine—The epi-pen should be with anyone who is subject to anaphylactic shock. As they have been known to malfunction a phial and syringe

alternative should be available and kept very, very close by.

Eye drops.

Haemorrhoid treatment.

Hand lotion.

Hot water bottle.

Iodine.

Laxatives.

Lice medication.

Oil of cloves.

Pen and pencil.

Razor blades.

Rubbing alcohol.

Sanitary napkins/Tampons.

Scissors.

Sheets for bandages.

Sheets for bandages.

Skin medication,
i.e. calamine lotion,
anti-fungal creams.

Smelling salts—ammonia.

Soap.

Splints.

Syrup of Ipecac.

Thermometer.

Vitamins.

Watch.

Areas to consider

Geriatric.

Pediatric: diapers, child-strength medicines.

Childbirth.

Dental.

Personal hygiene

Items to consider:

- Anti-microbial soap.**
- Baby strength products.**
- Conditioner.**
- Dental floss.**
- Feminine hygiene.**
- Razor blades.**
- Shampoo.**
- Sunscreen.**
- Toothbrush.**
- Toothpaste.**
- Towels.**
- Washcloth.**

Hand trowel.

Hibachis.

Hunting.

Kerosene.

Lumber.

Permanent markers.

Plywood.

**Potato/corn chips for
lamp.**

Propane.

Propane torch.

Sand bags.

Sleeping pads.

Solar still.

Wind-up alarm clock.

Miscellaneous

Things to consider:

- .22 rifle.**
- Animal husbandry.**
- Barrels**
- Beer and wine making
kits.**
- Blacksmithing.**
- Bow and arrows.**
- Charcoal.**
- Cistern for rain water.**
- Compost pile.**
- Disposable brushes.**
- Engine repair.**
- Farming.**
- Fishing.**
- Gun cleaning kit.**

Pets

Things to consider:

Bowls.

Food.

Leashes.

Medicine.

Fleas.

Parasites, Fleas.

Sleeping.

Toys.

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