

Going on vacation? Don't forget to pack your first aid kit

Travel Assistance Pros Offer Advice on What You'll Need

Summer travel offers the best of everything. While fun in the sun makes for a great vacation, experienced travellers know that accidents can and do happen. Planning ahead is the best way to make sure that summer travel plans aren't interrupted. According to the Travel Assistance Team at Allianz Global Assistance USA, a leader in travel insurance and assistance, a well-equipped first aid kit is among the top travel essentials.

"We help travellers all over the world every day, so we know the types of things that can pop up on summer vacation," said Noreen Deyo, Director of Assistance Services at Allianz Global Assistance USA. "Sunburns, insect bites, minor cuts and scrapes are all very manageable if you're near a pharmacy. But if you're off the beaten path, you need to make sure you pack what you might need."

According to the travel assistance professionals at Allianz Global Assistance USA, every emergency first aid kit should include these essential items.

- 1/ Make sure your kit is small and brightly-colored. You can easily take it with you anywhere and find it quickly in case of an emergency.
- 2/ Include several freezer bags, which are very practical for carrying items that need to be kept dry, like certain medications and your health documents and vaccination certificate.
- 3/ Cell phones can die. Carry an index card with important phone numbers.
- 4/ Be sure to include the basics: a thermometer, tweezers, a non-breakable pocket mirror, cotton bandages and wraps and a chemical cold compress.
- 5/ An antiseptic to treat cuts and scrapes is important, as are disinfecting wipes and a saline eye wash.
- 6/ Pack a variety of bandages for minor injuries to fingers, toes, knees and elbows.
- 7/ Don't forget ointments for burns of all kinds including sunburns. Also bring insect repellents and anti-itch creams to relieve itching and swelling from bites and poison ivy. Take a snakebite kit if you're hiking in an area where snakes are prevalent.
- 8/ Take along iodine or other water purification tablets if access to fresh water may be an issue.
- 9/ Include medications for diarrhea and vomiting.
- 10/ And don't forget preventative treatments (malaria pills, etc.) and basic pain relievers like acetaminophen, because having a headache on the other side of the world is just as unpleasant as having one at home.

One thing is certain: if you are traveling by plane, the change in cabin pressure throughout the flight and the different security measures require taking a few extra precautions. Carry any medication in your hand luggage and put the rest in your checked luggage, which will include items like scissors, antiseptics, repellents and other liquids and creams over 3 ounces. Opt for sturdy, waterproof screw cap bottles, which you can find at pharmacies or in sports stores. Single-dose vials and one-time use packets are always the best option.

Once again, having an emergency first aid kit is essential. While abroad, if you run into a serious health issue that requires a medical consultation, contact your travel insurance or assistance company. It will be able to orient you towards the best medical establishment or healthcare professional and ensure that you receive the best possible medical and financial coverage.

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Allianz Global Assistance USA

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