



the (kid-friendly) first-aid kit

When considering items to include in a first-aid kit for your home, gauze, bandages and children's pain relievers are naturals (see "Must-Haves" at right). But you'll also want items that help reduce your child's stress—here's where Scooby Doo and Dora the Explorer can come in handy.

For minor cuts and scrapes: Elizabeth C. Powell, M.D., M.P.H., of the Pediatric Emergency Medicine Division of Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, recommends a Hershey's Kiss and a character bandage. "Sometimes kids are more relaxed and tolerant having Spider-Man on their arm or leg," she says. Colorful ice packs in fun shapes can wipe away tears and fears, too. Try goldfish or baseball ice packs (**\$6 at mypreciouskid.com/cold-pack.html**) or the fuzzy blue Boohbah cold pack (**\$7 at drugstore.com**).

For one-stop shopping: Check out the Medibag, which looks like a toy doctor's kit. Inside its plastic case are stickers, blue gloves, Crayola Crayon bandages—all the basics in kid-pleasing forms (**\$25 at mypreciouskid.com/first-aid-kit.html**).

Colorful, silly-shaped ice packs can wipe away tears and fears.



Must-Haves for Boo-Boos and Bumps

Here are the basics for any family first-aid kit, according to the American Red Cross and the experts we spoke to:

- » Bandages
- » Adhesive medical tape
- » Antibiotic ointment
- » Antiseptic wipes
- » Children's pain reliever (ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- » Instant cold compress
- » Hydrocortisone ointment
- » 4x4-inch gauze
- » Oral thermometer (rectal thermometer for kids under age 2)
- » Tweezers
- » Children's Benadryl

+ Joint injuries

What you should do: Kids fall often, so twisted ankles or wrists—resulting in soft tissue injuries like a sprain (a stretched or torn ligament), strain (injured muscle and tendon) or bruise (broken small veins and capillaries)—are common. "Ice is helpful for most types of soft tissue injury," says Elizabeth C. Powell, M.D., M.P.H., of the Pediatric Emergency Medicine Division of Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

Most of us know of the RICE treatment (rest, ice, compression, elevation) for soft tissue injuries. But for toddlers, think RIE; compression with elastic wraps doesn't provide significant protection. "I rarely use an Ace bandage with toddlers—there just isn't much benefit," says Powell, who is also an associate professor of pediatrics at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. Experts recommend children's ibuprofen for pain.

Call your pediatrician if...

- + Swelling occurs. Professional evaluation and X-rays will rule out fracture or injury to the growth plate, developing tissues at the end of children's long bones. During late adolescence, the growth plate is replaced by solid bone.
- + Your child favors the injured area, or is not using the limb as he usually does. Again, a doctor will want to rule out a fracture, which in toddlers isn't as alarming as it sounds. "Most fractures are minor," asserts Powell. "They usually heal in three to six weeks." If there is a fracture, a medical professional may need to apply a splint or a cast.
- + Pain lasts longer than 24 hours. Even if there's no serious injury, your doctor may elect to treat the discomfort with children's pain medication.

Nancy Gottesman has successfully treated her son Robby's cuts, scrapes and nosebleeds for 12 years in Santa Monica, Calif.