Staying Safe in Remote Locations

If you are heading off to the jungles of Africa, the mountains of Tibet, the rain forest of Peru, or even a U.S. destination such as Denali National Park in Alaska, chances are good that you may be hours, if not days, away from medical care in the event of an emergency. Here are a few steps that should be taken to ensure the safety of your group:

1. Your route and final destination should be mapped with GPS coordinates to facilitate locating your group in an emergency. This information should be shared with family, friends, local emergency response teams (if available) and your insurer.

2. Make sure that your party can communicate with the “outside world” if at all possible- preferably by cell phone or PDA. Cell phone reception is now almost universal, but pockets with little to no reception still exist. For areas where reception will be questionable, consider bringing a satellite phone.

3. Have a plan for medical evacuation if one becomes necessary. Many parts of the world have inadequate or non-existent emergency response systems, so contracting with a medical evacuation vendor either directly or through travel insurance is a must before departure. Know how long it will take to get transportation to your location.

4. Register each member of your party with the State Department. The US government will make every effort to contact American citizens, even in remote parts of the globe, in the event of an emergency such as a natural disaster, terrorism, civil unrest or trouble at home. However, their task is difficult if not impossible if they have not been made aware of someone’s itinerary.

5. Obtain a first aid manual that is both waterproof and tear resistant; pack it in your first aid kit along with sunscreen. Ideally, someone in the group should be certified in CPR and First Aid.

6. Notify the members of your party of any medical conditions, food or medical allergies you have.

First Aid Kits – For a party of 4-6 people, your first aid kit should include the following items:

Bandages – Minor Wounds
- 10 iodine wipes
- 12 unit-doses Polysporin ointment (broad spectrum topical antibiotic)
- 20 1” Band-aid
- 10 4X4 Sterile bandages
- 9 Steri-Strips (minor wound closure)
- 3 tubes of Super Glue (state of the art wound closure)
- 8 Non-adherent 3” X 4” sterile bandages
- 3 3” Conforming bandages
- 1 Triangular bandages
- Tape, Adhesive 1”
- Tape, Paper 1” (for those allergic to adhesive tape)
- Tape, Super 2” X 10’ (a waterproof, stickier, more durable version of duct tape)
- 8 1” X 3” PolyMem medicated membrane dressing (7 day super bandage with colloidal dressing)
- 4 2” X 4” PolyMem medicated membrane dressing (7 day super bandage with colloidal dressing)
For Blisters and Sprains
- 6 BLIST-O-BAN (small) hi-tech, ultra-thin blister pads
- 6 BLIST-O-BAN (large) hi-tech, ultra-thin blister pads
- 1 DuoDerm (blister dressing)
- 2 3” Elastic bandage
- 1 6” Elastic bandage
- 4 Molefoam 4” x 3.5” (pressure point padding)
- 6 Molesking Plus 4” x 3.5” (prevent and care for blisters)
- 3 Tegaderm (lightweight, transparent wound and blister dressing)

For Burn, Rash and Sting
- Spenco Second Skin 2” x 3” pad - burn dressing
- 4 tubes Burnaway Plus
- 1 tube Hydrocort Cream 1% (allergic skin rashes)
- 3 Insect sting relief kits (also used for rash, sunburn)

Non-Prescription Medications
- 1 tube Anti-Fungal Cream
- 24 tablets Benadryl (anti-allergy, mild sleep med)
- 36 Bismuth tabs (anti-diarrhea)
- 30 packets Ibuprofen
- 30 packets Acetaminophen
- 45 tablets Laxative
- 12 tablets Loperamide (anti-diarrhea)
- 12 motion sickness tablets
- 1 bottle nasal spray

Trips off the beaten path can be exhilarating, but dangerous. Make sure your group is prepared for medical emergencies!

Instruments/Miscellaneous
- 2 Survival blankets
- 5 Tongue depressors (use as small splints, medication application, tinder, etc)
- Tick (& splinter /thorn) removal module (incl. Sliver Gripper tweezers, magnifying lens & tick removal instructions)
- 1 LED Penlight-style flashlight (recommended: STREAMLIGHT, 60 hour, high intensity LED, ultra slim, waterproof)
- 1 Retractable knife
- CPR Mask
- Comprehensive Dental Emergency Module (recommended: kit from Dr. Robert Searles, DDS)
- 2 Eye pads
- Sterile eyewash
- 1 vial iodide tabs
- 10 Safety pins
- 4 Disposable thermometers
- 2 Ice packs (chemical cold compress)
- 1 Airway – Adult Medium
- 1 Airway – Adult Large
- 5 Sterile applicators
- 1 4.5” forceps
- 1 5” Halstead forceps
- 3 pairs Nitrile gloves
- 1 pair Surgical gloves
- 1 Sam Splint (flexible splinting)
- 1 Sterile scalp
- 1 5.5” scissors
- 1 7.5” shears
- 1 Sterile saline solution (wound irrigation)
- 1 30cc + 18g syringe (irrigation needle)
- 1 tube Vaseline
- 14 Vionex surgical soaps
- 30 Cotton Balls

For a valuable source of timely insights on safe and healthy travel, visit www.healthytravelblog.com