

# **30 First Aid Items That Will Disappear Fast in a Disaster**

\ Estimated reading time: 6 minutes



**FIRST AID ITEMS  
THAT WILL DISAPPEAR FAST  
IN A DISASTER**

According to the [National Safety Council](#), 69,473 weather events resulted in 813 deaths and 1,718 injuries in 2022. The highest number of reported injuries resulted from winter weather, drought, and tornadoes.

While these numbers are sobering—and we can only guess at what the severe weather events of 2023 will reveal—the injury numbers seem far too low. We can learn some information from hospital admissions, but it makes sense that many injuries people sustain as they prepare, withstand, and clean up after an emergency go unreported. And we have no way of knowing how many disaster-related deaths could have been prevented if victims received prompt medical attention.

As weather-related events become more frequent and more severe, the need for home first-aid supplies becomes more acute. This article focuses on the first-aid items you should stock up on now. They are likely to disappear from store shelves in the wake of a disaster.

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## 1. Adhesive tape

Also called medical or first-aid tape, [adhesive tape](#) holds gauze bandages and splint material in place.

## 2. Aloe Vera Gel

[Aloe vera gel](#) soothes and helps soothe and heal burns and other minor skin irritations.

## 3. Antacid

An [antacid](#) treats upset stomach, heartburn, indigestion, nausea, and diarrhea by neutralizing excess stomach acid and

protecting the lining.

## 4. Antibiotic ointment

Applying [antibiotic ointment](#) to a wound site before bandaging helps prevent infection.

## 5. Anti-diarrhea medication

The loss of fluid in a severe case of diarrhea can become life-threatening. Include tablets (like [these](#)) in your first-aid supplies.

## 6. Antihistamine

These [capsules](#), tablets, or liquid medications help treat allergic reactions from insect bites, seasonal allergies, and some foods.

## 7. Antiseptic wipes

You can use [antiseptic wipes/towelettes](#) to clean wounds, lowering the chance of infection.

## 8. Bandages

Gather [a variety of bandages](#) in assorted sizes and styles (wraps, strips, adhesive, non-stick, butterfly, etc.) to treat many injuries.

## 9. Cold packs

Disposable instant cold packs (like [these](#)) help bring down swelling and inflammation.

## 10. Cotton pads

[Cotton pads](#) and [cotton balls](#) can be used to apply pressure to a wound, absorb discharges, apply medicine, and cushion a tender area.

## 11. Cotton-tipped swabs

You can use sterile [cotton swabs](#) to gently clean and apply topical medicine to delicate areas of the body.

## 12. Disposable latex-free gloves

When water is at a premium, you can wear [these gloves](#) to reduce exposure to germs and bodily fluids.

## 13. Duct tape

You can use [duct tape](#) to create a makeshift bandage, sling, or splint. Plus, you can use it to remove splinters, thorns, or cactus spines.

## 14. Eye pads

An [eye pad](#) can protect an injured eye and absorb any drainage from the eye after an injury.

## 15. Eyewash solution

[Sterile eye solution](#) helps rinse debris and pollutants out of the eye. You also can use it to cleanse wounds in other parts of the body.

## 16. Finger splint

Aluminum finger splints (like [these](#)) help immobilize injured fingers, helping to reduce pain and prevent further injury.

## 17. First-aid manual

We are used to relying on the internet to answer many of our questions. But what if the internet is down or you cannot access it during an urgent situation? Having a [basic first-aid manual](#) on hand can be life-saving.

## 18. Gauze

You'll want a selection of thick and thin [gauze rolls](#) and [pads](#) to apply pressure to wounds to stop bleeding and to wrap after cleaning and treating.

## 19. Hand sanitizer

Alcohol-based [hand sanitizers](#) help stop the transmission of bacteria and other pathogens, especially when the ability to wash your hands is limited.

## 20. Hydrocortisone ointment

[Hydrocortisone](#) treats skin irritations by reducing redness, swelling, and itchiness.

## 21. Hydrogen peroxide

You can use this [antiseptic solution](#) to help prevent the risk of infection from minor cuts and burns.

## 22. Pain relievers

Stock up on pain medications, such as [aspirin](#), [acetaminophen](#), and [ibuprofen](#), to lower fevers and treat headaches and other aches and pains.

## 23. Petroleum jelly

As a lubricant that can be used all over the body, [petroleum jelly](#) can soothe and help heal and protect the skin after minor cuts, scrapes, and burns.

## 24. Protective face masks

Keep a supply of protective [KD-95 face masks](#) on hand to shield from smoke and other pollutants in the air.

## 25. Scissors and tweezers

[Scissors and tweezers](#) are helpful for removing foreign objects from wounds and cutting bandages and tape.

## 26. Super glue

If a cut is deep and a trip to a clinic is impossible, a [strong adhesive](#) made from ethyl cyanoacrylates may [work in place of stitches](#).

## 27. Thermometer

Both an excessive fever and an abnormally low temperature (hypothermia) can be life-threatening, but they each require different remedies. You can use this handy tool to determine body temperature. Choose one (like [this one](#)) that is easy to read, non-mercury, and non-glass.

## 28. Tongue depressors

These sterile [wooden sticks](#) can come in handy for their intended use as well as for making splints, applying ointments, and mixing solutions.

## 29. Tourniquets

These [bands](#) work to control excessive, life-threatening bleeding by stopping the blood flow to an arm or leg injury.

## 30. Water purification tablets

Having clean drinking water is essential to your health. Yet many crisis situations can impact our water supply. Having these [tablets](#) as part of your first aid kit will give you some peace of mind.

## What about personal prescription medications?

Each family has its own unique medical needs. It may be epinephrine auto-injectors, inhalers for asthma, or insulin. Talk with your medical provider about ways you can keep an extra supply of your prescribed medication on hand for an emergency.

For example, consider asking your doctor for 60- or 90-day refills rather than 30-day supplies of the medicines you need every day.

After you gather your supply of the above items, there are some other things to organize and plan as part of your emergency first-aid preparations:

- Medical history forms for each family member



- Emergency contact information for friends and family members (printed out)
- [Emergency \(Mylar\) blankets](#)
- [Waterproof flashlight](#) or headlamp and batteries
- [Waterproof matches](#)
- [Sunscreen](#)
- [Insect repellent](#)

You also may want to consider taking a first-aid course through your local community college or the [American Red Cross](#). Contact your local chapter for information on these classes for adults and children. You can find in-person, online, and hybrid options.

We only have to think back to the early days of the pandemic to realize that certain necessary items (like toilet paper!) can disappear off the shelves during a crisis. Hoarding is not the answer, but organized, thoughtful preparation is.

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