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YOUR HOME MEDICATION KIT (over the counter):

This is a short list of simple supplies to have handy at home, in case of various medical needs. It is not a complete list, but rather a practical summary. It is also a great list for kids away from home, college students, or those on extended trips.

Here is the shopping list for the items below:

Quick list:

1. Sudafed 30mg tablets
2. Chlortrimeton 4mg tablets
3. Claritan 10mg tablets
4. Pepcid AC tablets
5. Milk of Magnesia
6. Advil 200mg tablets
7. Robitussin DM syrup
8. Immodium AD tablets
9. Cortaid 10 cream
10. Bacitracin ointment

For Cough and Colds:

Sudafed (pseudophedrine) 30mg. This little red tablet is super for congestion and drainage. Taken at this small dose, once or twice daily, it provides nice symptom relief and is safe for everyone (including those to high blood pressure). *It may require a signature for purchase, being kept behind the counter by the pharmacist.*

Chlortrimeton (chlorpheniramine) 4mg: This antihistamine is great for allergy relief for a few hours, and is also good for congestion and drainage from colds. It is drying (too drying for some), but is safe for everyone in this low dose. Taking it at night is preferred, but not required, as it can make you a little sleepy.

Robitussin DM or Delsym: These cough syrups can be helpful for mild cough. They do not help congestion. The DM (Dextromethorphan) is the only over the counter product generally effective for cough.

Triaminic Night-time Cough and Cold: This is an 'all in one' product and I like it when taken in low dose (1 – 2 teaspoons) . It is safe and effective for congestion, drainage, and cough with cold symptoms.

For Fever/Aches/Pains:

Advil (Ibuprofen): This is my preferred anti-inflammatory, although Aleve can be used as well. Taking 3 pills...3 times per day is a good, solid anti-inflammatory dose for fever, aches or pains. Although you can overdo such medications (see page ? for safe use of these medications), taken for brief periods of time (3-5 days) it is safe in almost 100% of people.

Tylenol (Acetaminophen). This is a fine pain and fever medication, but provides no anti-inflammatory effect. 650-1000mg at a time is effective for most people, and can be taken for 3-5 days without concern. *Do not take more than 4000mg total per day.*

For Diarrhea:

Immodium AD (Loperamide). This is a very effective medication for diarrhea and can work quickly. For severe diarrhea, take 2 pills immediately and then 1 after each loose bowel movement, up to 8 per day. You can take them one after another if you require , until symptoms resolve.

For Nausea:

There are no effective over-the-counter medications for nausea and vomiting. It is nice to have a prescription around if you are prone to developing these symptoms with infections (some people are more prone than others). Suppositories (medication taken rectally) are preferred for nausea and vomiting , so that the medication can absorb into your system. Compazine or Phenergan suppositories are preferred and used immediately with significant symptoms and then repeated in 4-6 hours if need be.

(Suppository facts: These medications look like little 'torpedoes'. The pointy end is not the end to insert into the anus....insert the flat end. This will allow the body to retain the suppository best as the 'pointy end' will gently 'close the door' once inserted rectally, and will prevent it from being expelled quickly.)

Constipation:

Milk of Magnesia or Magnesium Oxide (400mg) tablets: These are the single most effective medications for immediate relief of constipation and is the best single medication to have around the house for this purpose.

For urgent relief: 2 tablespoons every 2-4 hours until you 'clear out' (or 2 pills of Magnesium Oxide every 2 hours until effect.)

Glycerine suppositories: These are also quite effective when taken rectally and get result in quick resolution of constipation. When taken rectally, the suppository acts as an irritant and generally results in a reflexive evacuation of a bowel movement within 30 minutes.

Upset Stomach:

Pepcid AC: For indigestion, heartburn, reflux, or general 'sour stomach' I prefer Pepcid AC. You can take 1-2 x per day to keep the stomach settled

Mylanta: 2 tablespoons are good for digestive upset and sour stomach or heartburn. You can dose repeatedly ever hour if you need, but be aware that too much can result in abdominal cramping and diarrhea.

Allergy medications:

For allergic reactions, the following are preferred:

Chortrimeton 4mg or Benedryl 25mg: Either of these are great for itching eyes or itching skin, sinus congestion and drainage from allergies, or any allergic reaction to a medication or other 'run in'. The only drawback is that some people get very tired from these types of anti-histamines.

Claritan 10mg: Great to have for longer-lasting effect without any sedation. Use with seasonal allergy symptoms (nasal drainage, itching eyes, cough and drip), or an allergic reaction of the skin. This helps to suppress allergy symptoms for 24 hours and can safely be taken for several days in a row.

Cortaid 10 (hydrocortisone cream): This is a good, general, mild steroid cream for any skin rash or if hives develop. It is safe to apply to all parts of the body (except directly in the eyes)

Topical medications:

Cortaid 10 (hydrocortisone cream): This is good for general irritations and itches topically (see above)

Bacitracin ointment: This is the best of the over-the-counter anti-infectives and is good for scrapes and burns or bites.

Hydrogen Peroxide: This is good for topical application to scrapes and wounds or bites. Use it with the initial injury, but it is not ideal to use on a repeated basis. Pouring this on a scrape or bite initially can act to remove bacteria and cleanse debris material from the area.

Motion Sickness:

Dramamine or Bonine (meclizine): Either of these medications are effective for nausea that develops from any type of motion sickness (car, boat, plane). The Dramamine is sedating, the Bonine less so.

ADDITIONAL NOTE:

Although there is an 'official' expiration date for medications, I feel comfortable taking medications for up to 3 years after the official expiration date. This will allow you to fill your home kit and not feel the need to renew the medications on a constant basis and can be done safely and will save you money.