



## Make the most of your medicine cabinet

It's the middle of the night and you have a splitting headache. Or you were working in the garden and a splinter somehow worked its way into your green thumb. Maybe you overindulged on Aunt Louise's lasagna and now your stomach is sending off some warning rumbles.

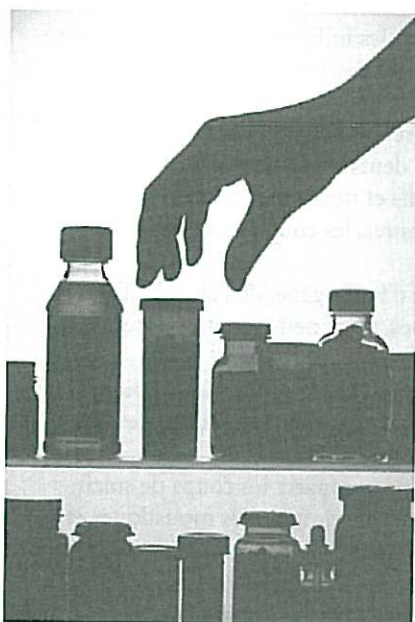
How many times have you gone to your medicine chest for relief only to discover you don't have the remedy you need? You can avoid this situation by creating a well-stocked medicine chest that will enable you to overcome each of these common problems and then some.

This edition of Health News will name a few essential tools and over-the-counter medications that everyone should have on hand, and some precautions you should take with their storage and use.

It goes without saying that all medications must be stored out of the reach of curious children and pets... but did you know that the bathroom is the worst place to store medications? The moisture and heat in an average bathroom will cause medications to break down very quickly. Consider storing your medicines in an alternate

location such as a kitchen cabinet that is not easily accessible (and that's not too close to the stove) or the highest shelf of a linen closet.

Make sure to keep your medications in their original packaging as this will provide you with directions on their correct use and application, as well as their expiry date.



Don't take a chance—discard any medication that is past its expiry date, but don't throw it in the trash or flush it down the toilet. Doing so will pollute the environment. Instead, contact your local pharmacy and ask if they provide a disposal service for expired medications. If they don't, try your local hazardous waste facility—they may accept expired medications for disposal.

Keeping these tips and precautions in mind, here are some basic items to consider when you stock your medicine chest. Even though these remedies are all available without a prescription, it wouldn't hurt to consult with your pharmacist to determine which one will work the best for your symptoms—and more importantly, your pharmacist can advise you if there is a potential for dangerous interaction with any other medications you may be taking.

### A well-stocked medicine chest should include:

- Pain medication (aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen)—For relief of headaches, cramps, muscle strains or inflammation.
- Cold medication and lozenges—To ease stuffy noses, coughs, sinus congestion and sore throats.
- Allergy medication—For itchy, watery eyes and other allergy symptoms.
- Indigestion relief—For relief of gas, heartburn, diarrhea and upset stomach.
- Toothache remedy—For canker sores, toothaches and sore gums.
- Adhesive and non-adhesive bandages and tape—For nicks, cuts and scrapes.
- Iodine, hydrogen peroxide, rubbing alcohol and topical skin ointments—To clean and disinfect cuts and scrapes.
- Cotton balls and swabs—Use to apply topical skin treatments.
- Sunscreen—To protect delicate skin from harmful UV rays.
- After-sun remedy—For relief in the event that sunscreen didn't quite do the job.
- Insect repellent—To keep mosquitoes and other pests at bay.
- Tools—Tweezers, scissors, nail clippers and a thermometer.