



## Be Prepared for an Emergency with an Equine First Aid Kit

**B**e prepared for the unexpected with these tips for a well-stocked first-aid kit from Brazos Valley Equine Hospitals.

The rodeo road is paved with unexpected ups-and-down that often times leads to bumps-and-bruises, so it's best to be prepared for when such instances occur with a well-stocked and easily accessible first-aid kit.

**Drugs:** Every first-aid kit should contain basic pharmaceuticals and the means to administer them. Common drugs such as Phenylbutazone (Bute) and Banamine® come in many forms that make them easily to use. If you're uncomfortable with injections, opt for the paste form.

As paste medication takes longer to be absorbed through the digestive system, often times it's in your horse's best interest if you know which drugs can be safely administered via intermuscular injection or must be given intravenously.

Before you head out on the road have your veterinarian explain how to give the various types of injections and the specific use of the medications in your first-aid kit safely, as well as, check the WPRAs medication policy regarding usage and timing.

In addition to your Bute and Banamine, other medications and supplies to have on hand include Dexamethasone for allergic reactions, syringes (3ml, 12ml, 35ml, 60ml), needles (18G x 1½" and 20G x 1½"—use the larger needles to administer the thicker medications), sterile saline solution and betadine or Nolvasan® solution for clean wounds,

Nitrofurazone® dressing, AluSpray® aerosol bandage, a basic antiseptic cream or ointment, a triple-antibiotic eye ointment, and sulfamethoxazole trimethoprim (SMZ) tablets.

Don't forget the gloves—It's helpful to glove up during wound cleaning. Latex or non-latex, in case someone has a latex allergy.

**Bandages:** Quilts and polo wraps are staples in most barrel racers' trailers, but it also helps to have some saved specifically for the first-aid use.

Other bandage material is readily available at your local pharmacy. Other materials you want to have handy are sheet cotton, rolled gauze, large non-adhesive Telfa® pads, diapers, Elastikon® tape, duct tape and Vetrap®.

Abscesses are so very common. You want to make sure you have the means to treat them on the road too—Epsom salts, Ichthammol drawing salve or MagnaPaste and the means to wrap a foot.

**Equipment:** Also available through your local pharmacy are basic health care items, like digital thermometers and stethoscopes. Other basics include a knife, scissors, flash lights, batteries and a note pad.

Hoof testers are also handy to have. You can pick up a pair at your local farrier supply. They can come in handy when an abscess is suspected.

It is a good idea to have your farrier fit and shape a full set of shoes that you can take with you while on the road. That way, if you were to pull a shoe, you already have a set ready to be tacked on by a local farrier.



Another odd, and hopefully never needed item, is a short piece of water hose. A nose is often the first place for a Rattlesnake to strike and the hose can be inserted and used to help keep their horse's swollen nostril open.

**First-Aid Know How:** When you have to pop out your first-aid kit, you are your horse's emergency medical technician until a veterinarian arrives or you can safely get your horse to one. With that responsibility comes a little basic knowledge. Always ask your veterinarian for their guidance whenever possible. This is particularly important when it comes to administering medications.

If you don't have time for a first-aid 101 with your veterinarian, there are many first-aid books that are available. But, again, never be afraid to ask.

Last, but not least, your kit should include contact information. Have your veterinarian's contact information handy.

Call your vet. If they can't get to you, odds are they know who you need to get to even if its out-of-state and far from home. The equine veterinary family works much like the rodeo family in general. They don't have to know you to go out of their way to help you if they can.

**For a full list of our First-Aid Kit recommendations, please visit [bveh.com](http://bveh.com).**