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Building Your Own First-Aid Kit:

- 1) Have a list of emergency contact numbers available and easily found.
I like to keep a copy in my Truck and taped to the front of my First Aid kit where it can be easily seen. I also keep them saved in my cell phone so if I need them on the trail I have them. Laminating the list is a good idea to prevent the numbers from smudging and smearing over time. Include Numbers such as:
 - a. A Close Friend or Relative in case you're incapacitated
 - b. Your Preferred Veterinarian
 - c. MERS Large Animal Rescue

- 2) Educate Yourself!
 - a. Know the common emergencies that occur and educate yourself in the proper first aid responses to these situations, these might include: Colic, Tying-up, Heat Exhaustion, Dehydration, Wounds and Trauma. Run drills and practice with your family just like you would a fire drill.

- 3) Be able to Access the Situation!!!
 - a. This means having the equipment you need to access your horse's vital parameters, and know what those parameters are. It's a great idea to print out these parameters and tape them to the front of your first aid kit right next to your emergency numbers.
 - i. Important Vital Signs:
 1. Heart Rate (Normal 20-40bpm)
 2. Respiratory Rate (Normal 12-24rpm)
 3. Temperature (Normal 98-100.5F)
 4. Mucus Membranes (Normal pink and moist)
 5. Capillary Refill Time (Normal less than 2 seconds)

4) Wounds and Trauma:

- a. Have something to clean the wound, a scrub and a solvent –
 - i. Betadine scrub works well with rubbing alcohol and chlohexidine scrub (also called nolvasan) works well with saline, but avoid using alcohol because denatures the chlorhexidine and makes it ineffective.
 - ii. Have fresh water on hand to aid in flushing the wound if needed (The solution to pollution is dilution!).
 - iii. Gauze 4x4s work great for scrubbing a wound or for trying to stop bleeding. A Clean towel on hand will also work well to stop bleeding on a larger scale.

- b. Have Something to Dress the Wound:
 - i. I like Silver Sulfadiazine best (SSD), but Chlorhexidine and PVP ointment also work well. I like powders a little less because they can be caustic to the wound.
 1. DO NOT use a dressing or powder if it's a wound that needs stitches, if in doubt, don't use a dressing and have your veterinarian access first. Once those ointments and powders are applied they are impossible to remove from the wound and will fester and prevent sutures from holding the wound closed.

- c. Have something on hand to protect a wound and prevent contamination. Here's how I bandage a wound:
 - i. The layer in contact with the wound – Telfa pads, maxi pads, gauze 4x4s work well.
 - ii. White Gauze is soft and stretchy, use it to hold the contact layer in place and prevent it from slipping.
 - iii. Roll Cotton goes on next – this acts for support but also helps compress the wound to help stop bleeding or decrease swelling.
 - iv. Brown Gauze – goes on tightly over the roll cotton, this is the compression portion of the bandage. The cotton prevents circulation from being cut off.
 - v. VetWrap – this goes over the brown gauze and protects the bandage from the environment, moisture, dirt, etc. VetWrap has a tendency to bunch up and turn into a tunicate, so don't go past the roll cotton when applying.
 - vi. Elastikon – Sticky and stretchy, this can be used on the ends of the bandage to help hold the bandage in place and can be applied directly to the skin without fear of cutting off circulation.

1. A Make shift bandage can be made on the trail with a maxi pad and Elastikon alone to help protect the wound from contamination until you get back to help.

5) Colic

- a. Access the heart rate, and presence or absence of gut sounds. As a general rule of thumb, if a colic goes on for more than an hour, or if you can't keep the horse up, it's worthy of calling your veterinarian to treat.
- b. It's a good idea to have either bute or Banamine paste on hand in case your veterinarian is far away.

6) Dehydration, Heat Exhaustion, Tying-Up:

- a. Call your veterinarian!!! Sometimes these conditions are associated with severe dehydration and electrolyte or metabolic disturbances – your horse may need IV fluids.
- b. WATER!!!! I like to keep a 5 gallon bucket with a lid and water just for my horse whether I'm at a show or on the trail. I also keep a large bathing sponge handy. This gives me something I can water her down with and something she can drink. If you think your horse is overheating, be sure to take his temperature. If it's really elevated a bottle or two of rubbing alcohol will more effectively cool a horse than water.
- c. Try not to move a horse that's tying-up until the episode has resolved itself – this may result in causing greater muscle damage.

First Aid Kit:

- List of Emergency Phone Numbers
- Cell Phone
- List of important Vital Signs and Normal Values
- Stethoscope
- Thermometer
- Bandage Scissors
- Dry Towel

- Scrub and Solvent
- Gauze 4x4s
- Latex (or Nitrile) Gloves
- Wound Dressing
- Bandage Material:
 - Telfa Pads/Maxi Pads
 - White Gauze
 - Roll Cotton
 - Brown Gauze
 - Vet Wrap
 - Elastikon
- Bute or Banamine Past
- Clean Water
- Large Bathing Sponge
- Rubbing Alcohol

Equine Medical Associates:

Phone Number: 1(800)475-3311

Website: www.emavets.com

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Missouri Emergency Response Service (MERS) - Large Animal Rescue:

Phone Number: (636)574-1700

Website: <http://www.mersteam.org/home.html>