First Aid

Our personal vehicles aren't just a way to get to work or to run errands, they are the way we get to vacations, family gatherings, our kids' soccer games, picnics and adventures. They are your home away from home and keeping a first aid kit close at hand is a way to help ensure the safety and health of your friends and family, even strangers who run into trouble. Most automotive first aids kits are equipped to help get you through minor emergencies or injuries but if you're in a severe accident or if someone has a serious condition call 911 immediately. Most automotive first aid kits provide you with the basics but you can always add additional items on a regular basis, especially topical ointments that have expiry dates. Here are a few tips to keep in mind the next time you are dealing with a small injury.

Minor cuts:

- If you have access to clean water, rinse the cut with water, but avoid getting soap, iodine or peroxide in an open cut as it can cause irritation. Instead remove any foreign debris with water and tweezers then apply a thin layer of ointment/antibiotic (like Neosporin) and cover with a bandage if the cut or wound is large. **if you aren't sure of ingredients, allergies or expiry dates don't apply anything to the cut/wound.*
- For small scrapes use gentle pressure to stop the bleeding and then leave it uncovered.
- Covering a larger wound keeps it clean until it starts to heal. Always seek medical attention if the bleeding doesn't stop or if it doesn't heal or gets worse. Make sure you change the dressing daily or when it gets wet or soiled. Checking the wound when you get home is also a great time to change the dressing and apply any additional care like ice or topical treatments if needed.
- If you aren't up to date on your tetanus shots or aren't sure when you had your last one make sure you check with a medical professional to get one.

Dehydration/Heat Exhaustion:

- Get out of the heat immediately and into a cool place or shade and lay down (if you can elevate your feet and legs)
- Rehydrate with cool fluids (avoiding alcohol and caffeine)
- Place a cold pack or wet cool cloth on the forehead or back of the neck, it will help cool you down – replace as they lose their cooling sensation
- Make sure to monitor symptoms to ensure heat exhaustion doesn't turn into heat stroke
- Seek medical attention if you feel nauseous, faint, experience confusion or high fever

For Any Other Random Minor Accidents

- When you get a first aid kit, update your emergency contacts in your phone and keep a copy in your 1st aid kits including the family doctor, pharmacist, local hospital and poison control.
- Keep your medical information on hand and up to date, if you have a serious condition or severe allergy consider a medical warning wearable such as bracelet or ID band in case you are ever in an accident or unable to communicate.

Pro Tip:

Keep a first aid kit in all the family vehicles as well as at home. Check for expiry dates and depleted supplies every 6 months (or if you live in a 4-season climate, whenever you change or rotate your tires). Register yourself and any family members in a first aid course they will instruct you on how to handle emergencies, teach you the proper technique for CPR and other first aid procedures.