

The information presented here is intended as a quick reference for those in a position to medicines in a remote environment, under the direction of a health care professional with the authority to prescribe.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented but the information cannot be considered as authoritative or definitive. Anyone who is in a position to administer medicines should be in possession of the most recent copy of the British Nursing Formulary

This guide should also be read in conjunction with the following articles:

[Medicines - Administering and Handling](#)

[Medicines - Licensing](#)

Common Abbreviations	
od	Once daily - preferably at the same time each day. Check instructions for further information e.g. morning or before bed, with or without food or drink.
bd	Twice daily - usually 12 hours apart
tds	Three times daily i.e every 8 hours
qds	Four times daily i.e. every 6 hours
prn	As and when required

Units	Meaning	Conversion
dL	Deciliter	1dL = 10cl = 100ml
g	gram	1kg = 1000g
gtt(s)	drop(s)	1 gtt = 0.5ml
kg	kilogram	1kg = 1000g
mcg	microgram	1mg = 1000mcg
mg	milligram	1g = 1000mg
mg/dL	milligrams per deciliter	
mL	millilitre	1000ml = 100dL = 10cl = 1l
oz	ounce	28.35g
tbsp	tablespoon	1tbsp = 4 tsp (UK)
tsp	teaspoon	

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Altitude	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Acetazolamide 250mg tab	<i>Diamox</i>	Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) prevention, AMS treatment, HAPE and HACE, breathing / sleep problems at altitude	Preventative for ascent above 500m: 125-250mg td starting 12hrs prior to ascent.	Takes 12hrs to start work. NOT to people with Sulpha allergies, numbness and tingling of fingers toes and face, dry mouth. Increased risk of sunburn.
		Sleep problems at altitude	125mg 2hrs before bed.	
Dexamethasone		HACE / Severe AMS, Asthma, Anaphylactic shock, spinal or head (intracranial pressure) injury	Refer to BNF or physicians advice	Masks the effects of altitude illness - does not treat. Only stop treatment after at least 3 days of treatment and below 2500m
Nifedine Modified Release (MR) Or Long Acting (LA)	<i>Adipine MR</i> <i>Coroday MR</i> <i>Adalat LA</i>	HAPE where supplementary O ₂ is not available the casualty is seriously ill or to prevent the recurrence of symptoms once the casualty has received oxygen.	Refer to BNF or physicians advice	Sudden fall I blood pressure - especially if cold or dehydrated. Treat for Shock. Fainting, dizziness, flushing, headache

Analgesia / Sedatives	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Aspirin 300mg tab	<i>Aspirin</i>	Mild pain relief, altitude adjustment, flu, headache, arthritis, inflammation	300-900mg every 4-6 hours. Max 4g daily	Side effects: indigestion, retinal bleeding at high altitude. Take with food. Avoid if stomach ulcer, stomach bleeding, allergy or asthma. Avoid under 16 years old.
Codeine 15mg tab		Preferable for head injuries/reduces bowel mobility	10mg - 60mg every 4 hours. 240mg max. daily. Start low, increasing if necessary. Can be supplemented with paracetamol or ibuprofen for greater effect.	Avoid if abdo pain is due to constipation. Causes constipation, drowsiness, dizziness, alcohol enhancement. Respiratory depressant at high doses. Avoid with sedatives, sleeping pills, sedating antihistamines or Prochlorperazine as these combinations depress breathing further. If given at altitude, consider adding 125mg acetazolamide to stimulate breathing at night.
		Cough, Diarrhoea	15-30mg 8-12 hourly	
Diazepam 10mg vial IM, suppository or rectal tubes.		Severe muscle spasm	2.5mg 8 - 12 hourly	Controlled drug - refer to BNF

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Analgesia / Sedatives <i>continued</i>	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Diclofenac 50mg suppository	<i>Voltarol</i>	Moderate to severe pain. Muscle, bone, joint, trauma, dental pain, kidney stones, gout.	50mg 12-hourly.	An NSAID. Avoid in asthma or indigestion.
Fentanyl 800mcg Lozenge	<i>Actiq</i>	Severe pain.	One application over a 15 minute period, repeat after 30 minutes if needed. Maximum of four doses daily.	Same as codeine.
Ibuprofen 400mg tab	<i>Brufen</i>	bone/joint injury, migraine, sore throat, toothache.	200-400mg 8 hourly. For severe pain the first two doses can be 800mg - not for more than two days.	An NSAID. Occasional stomach upset - take with food. Caution with stomach ulcers, asthma and aspirin sensitivity, pregnancy, heart disease. Increases bleeding: Avoid in the first two days of injury - start with paracetamol or codeine the replace (or substitute with) ibuprofen.
Methoxyflurane	<i>Penthrox</i>	Inhaled pain killer providing short term pain relief.	Do not exceed two 3ml ampules in 1 day and a total of five 3ml ampules in 1 week.	May cause nausea and dizziness. Does not suppress breathing, even at altitude. Do not use with tetracycline antibiotics.
Morphine 15mg tab (+ 15mg/ml amp)		Severe pain.	10-30mg max. every 4 hours (s/c or i/m) 5mg every 5 mins until pain eases. (i/v)	Avoid in head injury, chest injury, asthma, breathing difficulty and at altitude. Respiratory depression, constipation, urine retention, nausea. ANTIDOTE: Naloxone.
Naloxone 20mcg/ml amp		Restore normal breathing after morphine	40-200mcg (i/v) + 40mcg every 2 mins to restore normal breathing	Nausea and vomiting
Naproxen 250mg	<i>Feminax Ultra</i>		500mg first then 250mg 6-8hrs later. 250mg tds on 2nd and 3rd day	Do not take more than 750mg in one day. http://www.drugs.com/dosage/naproxen.html
Paracetamol / acetaminophen 500mg tab	<i>Panadol</i> <i>Tylenol</i>	Headache/muscular/skeletal/fever	500mg-1g every 4-6 hours. 4g Max. daily	Can be used with Ibuprofen or Codeine. Rare hypersensitivity and rashes. Avoid if liver problems.
Tramadol 50mg	<i>Zamadol</i> <i>Zydol</i>	Moderate to severe pain.	50-100mg 4 hours to a maximum 400mg in 24 hours.	Similar to Codeine. Consider giving with an antiemetic(e.g. Metoclopramide)

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Antibiotics	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Amoxicillin 250mg tab	<i>Amoxil</i>	Sinusitis, kidney, urinary, ear,	250mg – 500mg every 6-8 hours for 3-14 days	Avoid if allergic to penicillin. Side effects: Rashes, nausea, fainting, diarrhoea. Where available, Co-amoxiclav should be carried in preference to Amoxicillin
		Pneumonia	500mg tds	
		Pneumonia with bright yellow sputum	500mg + Flucloxacillin 250mg qds	
		Throat infection, tonsillitis, laryngitis	250mg qds for 5 days	
		Tooth abscess, mouth infection	500mg tds for 4 days	
		Tooth abscess - no improvement or severe pain	500mg tds + Metronidazole 400mg bd for 7 days	
		Wound infection (severe)	Amoxicillin 250mg tds + Flucloxacillin 500mg qds	
		Infection around eye.	Amoxicillin 250mg qds + Flucloxacillin 250 qds	
		Appendicitis	Amoxicillin 1000mg qds + Metronidazole 400mg qds	
		Meningitis	Amoxicillin 1000mg qds	
		Meningitis - with seizures	Amoxicillin 1000mg qds + Ciprofloxacin 500mg bd	
		Azithromycin	<i>Zithromax</i>	
Throat infection, tonsillitis, laryngitis				
Bacterial diarrhoea (2nd choice after Ciprofloxacin)				
Tick-borne diseases	200mg bd for 3 weeks			
Chlamydia	1000mg once only			
Typhoid	500mg daily for 7 days			Mild typhoid only – for severe typhoid use Ciprofloxacin

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Antibiotics <i>continued</i>	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Cefalexin Cefaclor	<i>Ceporex Keflex</i>	Open fractures	500mg tds within 3 hours	Avoid in severe penicillin allergy. Side effects: skin rash, nausea, fainting, diarrhoea.
		Pneumonia		
	<i>Distaclor</i>	Pneumonia <i>with bright yellow sputum</i>	500mg tds + Flucloxacillin 250mg qds	
		Appendicitis	500mg qds + Metronidazole 400mg qds	
		Throat infection, tonsillitis, laryngitis	250mg qds for 5 days	
		Kidney infection	500mg qds for 10-14 days	
		Septicaemia	500mg tds +	
		Fever (unknown cause).	Metronidazole 400mg tds for 10-14 days	
Ciprofloxacin Or Norfloxacin (<i>Noroxin</i>) the dose is 400mg, same frequency.	<i>Cipro Cifran</i>	Meningitis - with seizures	500mg bd + Co-amoxiclav 500mg qds OR Amoxicillin 1g qds	Avoid in quinolone allergy. First choice in bacterial diarrhoea. Give on an empty stomach, drink plenty. Avoid under 16 unless necessary as it may cause arthritis. Avoid with NSAIDs. Avoid in pregnancy or epilepsy. Side effect include an increased risk of sunburn. May cause convulsions of tendonitis (stop immediately if this occurs).
		Open fractures	500mg bd within 3 hours	
		Bacterial diarrhoea - 1st choice	1000mg once only	
		Bacterial diarrhoea - no improvement in 12 hours.	Continue with 500mg bd for 2 to 3 days	
		Typhoid	500mg tds for 10-14 days	
		Kidney infection	500mg bd for 10-14 days	
		Pelvic infection	750mg once + Metronidazole 400mg bd for 14 days + Doxycycline 100mg bd if very ill	
Co-amoxiclav	<i>Augmentin</i>	Open fracture - <i>Heavily contaminated</i> , Septicaemia, fever	Co-amoxiclav 500mg tds + Metronidazole 400mg tds for 10-14 days	Co-amoxiclav is a broader spectrum version of amoxicillin.
		Appendicitis, Meningitis, Wound infection - <i>Severe</i>	500mg qds	
		Meningitis - with seizures	500mg qds + Ciprofloxacin 500mg bd	
		Animal bites, boils / abscesses	250mg tds	
Co-trimoxazole 960mg tab		Burns of skin and soft tissue/ bone and joints/lower respiratory tract/urinary tract	960mg bd doubled in severe infection.	Nausea, vomiting, rashes, various blood disorders
		Cyclospora diarrhoea	960mg bd for 7 days	

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Antibiotics <i>continued</i>	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Doxycycline	<i>Vibramycin Doxylin</i>	Tick-borne diseases	200mg bd for 3 days THEN 100mg bd for 4 weeks	Take with food (but not milk). Swallow whole and do not lie down within one hour of taking a dose. Avoid in pregnancy or breast-feeding or under 8 years old. Side effects: increased risk of sunburn, diarrhoea, heartburn.
Erythromycin 250mg tab	<i>Erythrocin ERC</i>	Open fractures	500mg tds within 3 hours	Alternative when allergic to penicillin or amoxicillin. Take with food. Side effects: skin rashes, nausea, diarrhoea.
		Wound infection - <i>only if severe allergy to penicillin</i>	500mg tds	
		Pneumonia	500mg qds	
		Pneumonia <i>with bright yellow sputum</i>	500mg tds + Flucloxacillin 250mg qds	
		Throat infection, tonsillitis, laryngitis	250mg qds for 5 days	
Flucloxacillin		Wound infection - <i>Moderate</i>	500mg qds	Used when Staphylococcus Aureus is suspected (bright yellow pus). Take an hour before food.
		Wound infection - <i>Severe</i>	500mg qds + Amoxicillin 250mg tds	
Metronidazole 250mg tab	<i>Flagyl</i>	Giardia	400mg tds for 5 days	Take 1 hour before food. Side effects: metallic taste, causes depression, nausea, heartburn. Avoid Alcohol, under 5 years old and pregnancy
		Tetanus	400mg tds for 8 days	
		Amoebic Diarrhoea	800mg tds for 10 days	
		Open fractures - <i>Heavily contaminated</i>	400mg tds + Co-Amoxiclav 500mg tds	
		Septicaemia, appendicitis	400mg tds + Co-Amoxiclav or Cefalexin 500mg for 10-14 days	
Tinidazole	<i>Fasigyn Tinibar</i>	Giardia	2000mg once only, repeated on Day 3	Same as Metronidazole but is longer acting hence different dose timings and the need to avoid alcohol for 2 days after
		Amoebic Diarrhoea		

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Antihistamines / Anti-inflammatory	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Calamine Lotion		Allergic reaction, rashes	As directed	
Chlorphenamine 4mg tab	<i>Piriton</i>	Allergic reaction, rashes	4mg qds. Max 24g daily	Sedating; avoid alcohol and in pregnancy Respiratory depressant – avoid at altitude. Dry mouth, headache, blurred vision.
Hydrocortisone 1% Cream 15g	<i>Hydrocort</i>	Allergic reaction, rashes, bites, mild sunburn, piles	Apply directly 8 hourly	Use sparingly on face, sensitive or broken skin.
Prednisolone 5mg tab		Allergic reaction, rashes, severe Asthma attack, Anaphylactic shock.	40mg immediately then 40mg each morning until symptoms improve (usually 3 days or more)	Takes 3-4 hours to start working. Many serious side effects but is generally safe for short term use: Indigestion, nausea, suppresses healing, thrush, depression, psychosis Used in anaphylactic shock to prevent relapse.

Digestive System drugs	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Aluminium hydroxide 500mg tab		Allow healing of peptic ulcers	500mg tab as needed	Refer to BNF
Antacid tabs	<i>Gaviscon</i>	Heartburn, indigestion.	As directed	Not to be taken with other medications as it may inhibit their absorption.
Bisacodyl 5mg tab	<i>Ducolax</i>	Laxative	5-10mg by mouth after meals	Abdominal cramps, diarrhoea. Avoid if intestinal obstruction is suspected.
Bismuth subgallate 200mg suppos	<i>Anusol</i>	Haemorrhoids	200mg twice daily	Avoid prolonged use
Domperidone 10mg tab or 30mg suppositories	<i>Motilum</i>	Nausea, vomiting	1-2 tabs 6-8 hourly or 1-2 suppositories 8-12 hourly	Less likely to cause spasm and less sedating than Prochlorperazine (Stemil).
Hyoscine Butyl-bromide 10mg tab	<i>Buscopan</i>	Irritable bowel syndrome	20mg qds	Refer to BNF
Loperamide 2mg tab	<i>Imodium</i>	Diarrhoea	4mg followed by 2mg every 6 hours	Dry mouth, rashes. Avoid in pregnancy. Use while breast feeding only if severe
Metoclopramide 10mg tab	<i>Maxalon</i>	Nausea, vomiting	10mg tds. 30mg max daily	Safe in second half of pregnancy and when breast feeding.
Prochlorperazine 5mg tabs 25mg suppositories	<i>Stemetil</i>	Nausea, vomiting, acute vertigo May be useful for acute anxiety, agitation in psychosis	5-10mg 8 hourly or 1 suppository followed by tabs 6 hourly	Side effects: severe spasm of neck, face and eye muscles, especially in the young (antidotes: cogentin or diphenhydramine). Avoid in pregnancy. May cause
Ranitidine	<i>Zantac</i>	Heartburn, indigestion.	150mg 12 hourly	Stops acid reduction in the stomach, use only if simpler antacids don't work.

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Respiratory system drugs	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Phenylephrine 2.5% drops or spray		Decongestant. May be useful (although not licensed) for anaphylactic shock.	3-4 drops or one spray 6-8 hours. Lasts 3-4 hours	Maximum of 4 days treatment. Side effects: increases blood pressure, palpitations, can destabilise diabetes or glaucoma. Avoid pregnancy.
Salbutamol 4mg tab		Asthma	4mg by mouth every 6-8 hours.	Rapid pulse, anxiety, tremor
Salbutamol 100mcg inhaler	<i>Ventolin</i>	Asthma. May be useful (although not licensed) for anaphylactic shock or HAPE.	2 Puffs of aerosol every 6-8 hours	Use a spacer to increase effectiveness. Keep warm in very cold conditions.

Eyes & Ears	Trade Name	Use	Dosage	Side Effects / Cautions
Benoxinate Hydrochloride 0.4% drops	<i>Oxybuprocaine</i>	Local anaesthetic	0.4% drops as indicated	Delays healing - avoid long term use. Pad eyes until sensitivity returns to prevent further injury.
Chloramphenicol 1% oint 5g		Antibiotic for eyes and ears	1% every 6 hours	Local allergic reaction, stop if symptoms get worse.
Dexamethasone 0.1% oint	<i>Maxitrol</i>	Steroid against iritis	0.1% every 6 hours	Avoid prolonged use
Eye wash	<i>Optrex</i>	Eye was	As directed	n/a
Fluorescein Sodium 1mg strip		Detection of eye damage	As directed	Rare cases of irritation. Remove contact lenses before use. Not to be used with soft contact lenses.
Tropicamide 1% 5ml	<i>Mydracyl</i>	Dilates pupil for 24 hours/eases reflex iris spasm/corneal lesions	As directed	Refer to BNF

Local anaesthetic				
Lignocaine 1% 5ml amp		Local anaesthetic	No more than 2-3ml using orange needle	Refer to BNF

Misc. Drugs				
Disinfectant	<i>Dettol Savlon</i>	General disinfectant, wound cleaning	1 tbsp. spoon on 250ml water.	External use only
		Sterilizing instruments	1 tbsp. in 100ml water	Leave for 10 mins
Hydrogen Peroxide 100ml		Cleaning head wounds		
Povidone Iodine	<i>Betadine</i>	Antiseptic / disinfectant	Use on a gauze square for wound dressing or as a jet-wash solution	Not to be routinely used on all wounds; only to be used on very dirty wounds or wounds already infected.

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