



## Ask Dr. Spoke

*Dear Dr. Spoke: I have often wondered what I should do in the event of a cycling mishap. On more than one occasion my group and I have been a bit off the grid, and immediate medical response isn't available. Your thoughts.*

*Concerned*

Dear Concerned,

Well, you raise the same question I have had. It is an essential question, and not without precedent in our club. During the years our fellow cyclists – perhaps you too – have experienced injuries ranging from abrasions to more serious, life-threatening injuries. First steps can make a critical difference.

First, I recommend getting first aid training to include CPR. The second is do not needlessly endanger yourself to render aid. Third, before proceeding assess the situation.

A nagging question in any emergency requiring first aid is, should I? So, let's start here, if the victim is conscious you should ask permission before rendering aid: "May I help you?" If the victim is unconscious and in danger (not breathing for example) then his/her consent is implied. Generally "Good Samaritan" laws protect aid givers in these most severe circumstances. Here is a link to New Mexico's law: <http://www.cprinstructor.com/NM-GS.htm>. If in doubt, one should review laws associated with the state or country one is in.

One may ask, what can I do to prepare for these emergent situations? At the November NMTS meeting, Dr. Don Fisher presented an overview on cycling first aid. It was not a first aid course, but he did provide a good discussion on items we should carry. He also discussed some medical procedures from resetting a dislocation to surgical intervention for a pneumothorax. I'll stay with Dr. Don's miracle first aid kit. As you will note, he has included some medications he carries. Whether one should carry or use these has the caveat, don't use it if you don't understand its use. One thing Don emphasized was cleaning a wound using water. He went on to say the chlorinated water we drink from our water bottles is a great choice.

### Don's first aid kits contents:

#### Day travel, non-remote:

Cell phone  
Bandana for tourniquet, sling, larger wounds,  
tying splints  
Squeezable water bottle for wound irrigation  
Larger adhesive bandages (3"x3" or larger)  
Tweezers / scissors / knife (Swiss army type)

#### Meds:

Acetaminophen  
Pepto-bismol  
Lomotil  
Benadryl  
Albuterol inhaler

#### Multi-day, remote:

Same as day travel, plus  
Space blanket  
SAM splint (2) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SAM\\_splint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SAM_splint))  
Gauze pads, 4"x4"  
Bacitracin or triple antibiotic, small packets or tube  
Cleansing wipes  
Steri-strips  
Super glue  
Finger bandages  
Blister bandages  
Duct tape / waterproof adhesive tape (wrapped around a tongue  
depressor to save space)  
Forceps to control smaller arterial bleeding  
Cold compress  
Exam gloves, non-sterile

Alternatively, one may purchase wilderness First Aid Kits at sports stores such as REI. I have one I carry in my bike pack. Never used it on myself; I have used it for others. As the scouts advise: Be Prepared.

Cheers, Dr. Spoke

If you have a question for Dr. Spoke, send an email to "[DrSpoke@nmts.org](mailto:DrSpoke@nmts.org)" and watch for a response in a future newsletter.

An archive of this and prior "Ask Dr. Spoke" articles is available on the NMTS web site at <https://www.nmts.org/spoke.php>.

