

First Aid At Disney: A Vacationers Guide

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Guest Contributor

You've planned a magical vacation to the Happiest Place on Earth, Walt Disney World! You've planned, packed and primped; you are anticipating a wonderful vacation as you embark on your journey.

But what happens when things don't go exactly as planned? What happens if you have an illness or an injury while on vacation? It's comforting to know that Walt Disney World First Aid can help get your vacation back on track.

Several years ago, my husband Steve did a not-so-smart thing. We enjoyed a delightful dinner at Fulton's Crab House, and Steve really wanted to have the lobster. So he did. Problem is - he is allergic to lobster. While it is not a severe allergy, it is enough to cause him discomfort. About an hour after eating, we were strolling around Pleasure Island when he began to have symptoms. We decided to look for some help and found that Pleasure Island has paramedic teams walking around, waiting to help people! They took us to a quiet area where they assessed Steve and took his vital signs. I actually had Benadryl with me, and he was stable enough that he could take the medication and not require any further intervention. It was extremely reassuring to know that even in a night club area such as Pleasure Island, help was so close.

Any park can produce a team of EMS professionals from seemingly out of nowhere. While they are not quite as evident in the Magic Kingdom or the other parks as at Pleasure Island, the many secret and side doorways throughout the parks offer entry to the help you might need. They also have access to transport vehicles if you need assistance to get to help. Serious emergencies that require a trauma center are transported to Orlando Regional Medical Center; less emergent cases are transported to Celebration Hospital. If you'd like to read more about emergency response at Walt Disney World, you can read about the Reedy Creek Emergency Services team here:

http://www.rcid.org/Dept_Emergency.cfm

Suppose you are walking around and develop a headache? You enter a gift shop and see lots of Mickey ears but no aspirin. What do you do? Ask the Cast Member at the front desk. At the larger gift shops, he or she can produce a large box of first aid remedies. (They call it "candy for grown-ups" because it actually looks like a candy box!) They average

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about \$2.00 a packet and only contain one dose, but it is much easier than heading back to your room. They carry almost all over-the-counter medications.

First Aid is located in several places in the parks, and these are noted on the maps in your PassPorter. It's a good idea to make note of the locations. You don't want to be ill or trying to care for a sick child and trying to find First Aid all at the same time. If you need assistance and cannot make it to First Aid or do not know where first aid is, alert any Disney employee and they will call for help for you.

[Editor's Note: You can request small doses of medicines like ibuprofen and acetomenophen for headaches and other pains at the First Aid Stations, free of charge.]

But what happens if you get 1200 miles from home and find you have left your blood pressure medication on your night stand at home? Please, don't try to go the entire trip without your medication. There are numerous pharmacies in the area that can help. My personal recommendation is Turner Drugs. They are located on Vineland Road, and for a small fee will deliver a prescription to your resort. You call them, they call your pharmacy back home to verify your prescription, and they deliver the amount you need till the end of your vacation right to your resort. They will charge the fee right to your room! Your prescription will be held for you at the front desk.

And what if you get sick on the Disney Cruise Line? I can tell you from firsthand experience that the care here, like everything else, is exemplary. Tucked way down in the bowels of the ship (Deck 1) is a non-descript doorway that says "Health Center" with the standard Red Cross on the door. When you open that door, you are greeted by a standard doctor's waiting room. A nurse takes your information, and soon you are in to see the doctor. He will give you an exam, but there is so much more available if necessary. A Disney Cruise ship has the equivalent of a small emergency room hidden away down there. Emergencies ranging from a seasick child to a minor cardiac event can be handled. And in the unlikely event that you need to be airlifted off of the ship, this is where your journey and treatment would begin.

Steve once again was the recipient of medical care on our 2007 cruise. He injured his neck somehow and could not move when he woke up. We hobbled down to Guest Services, where we explained the situation. They sent us off to the Health Center, where the physician actually opened a bit early to be able to accommodate us. After some treatment and some medication, Steve began to feel better, and was back to his old self by the next day.

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Now, this is not a free service, nor do they take insurance. The staff will give you a copy of your bill to submit to your insurance company, but be prepared to have a minimum of \$112 added to your stateroom charges.

You never think that bad things can happen while on vacation, but they can, and they do. It's nice to know that you will be in competent hands if the need arises!

About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

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