



**Ecumenical  
Pharmaceutical Network**



**ICRC**



# **The Interagency Emergency Health Kit 2006**



**International Organization  
for Migration**

Medicines and medical devices  
for 10,000 people for  
approximately 3 months



## **An interagency document**



First edition 1990

Reprinted 1992

Second edition 1998

Third edition 2006

Each agency collaborating in the distribution and use of the interagency emergency health kit will support the implementation of the interventions recommended in this booklet only in so far as they are consistent with the existing policy and mandate of that agency.

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## Introduction

The organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and international and nongovernmental organizations are called upon to respond to an increasing number of large-scale emergencies and disasters, many of which pose a serious threat to health. Much of the assistance provided in such situations is in the form of medicines and medical devices (renewable and equipment).

During the 1980s, the World Health Organization (WHO) took up the question of how emergency response could be facilitated through effective emergency preparedness measures. The aim was to encourage the standardization of medicines and medical supplies needed in emergencies to permit a swift and effective response with medicines and medical devices using standard, pre-packed kits that could be kept in readiness to meet priority health needs in disaster situations.

The Interagency Emergency Health Kit 2006 (IEHK 2006) is the third edition of the WHO Emergency Health Kit which was the first such kit when it was launched in 1990. The second kit, "The New Emergency Health Kit 98" was revised and further harmonized by WHO in collaboration with a large number of international and nongovernmental agencies. This updated third edition takes into account the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, the increasing parasite resistance to commonly available antimalarials and the field experience of agencies using the emergency health kit.

Over the years the concept of the emergency health kit has been adopted by many organizations and national authorities as a reliable, standardized, affordable, and quickly available source of the essential medicines and medical devices (renewable and equipment) urgently needed in a disaster situation. Its content is based on the health needs of 10,000 people for a period of three months.

This document provides background information on the composition and use of the emergency health kit. Chapter 1 describes supply needs in emergency situations and is intended as a general introduction for health administrators and field officers. Chapter 2 explains the selection of medicines and medical devices - renewable and equipment - which are included in the kit and also provides more technical details intended for prescribers. Chapter 3 describes the composition of the kit, consisting of the basic and complementary units. The annexes provide more details on treatment guidelines, sample forms, a health card, guidelines for suppliers, other kits for emergency situations, guidelines for medicines donations, a standard procedure for importation of controlled medicines, references, and useful addresses. A feedback form is also included to report on experiences when using the emergency health kit and to encourage comments and recommendations on the contents of the kit from distributors and users for consideration when updating the contents.

The WHO Department of Medicines Policy and Standards (formerly known as the Department of Essential Drugs and Medicines Policy) has coordinated the review process and has published this interagency document on behalf of all collaborating partners.

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