

Handy tools for better health

"It's just a graze," I calmed myself as I squirmed at the crimson stream, oozing out through the small cut on my index finger. Calling out to my mother, who is usually my saviour in such situations, I rummaged through the first aid box for a band-aid and instantly realised that things like these usually tend to disappear when you need them the most."

Medical treatment and healthcare in today's fast-paced world is costly. Most of us tend to dodge unnecessary medical bills at the hospital or clinic by treating the occasional small ailment or minor bruise on our own. Whether it's a tiny cut or a soaring fever, certain household medical tools can act as real lifesavers if they are at your disposal.

CLINICAL THERMOMETERS

From infants to the elderly, this handy device is used by all to detect changes in body temperature. Unlike a decade ago, today's thermometers come in both manual and digital types, where the latter is much more convenient to use. All you have to do is place the end of the device under your tongue, wait a minute or so, and voila! The screen gives a temperature reading by itself, allowing you to skip the hassle of squinting at a mercury-filled tube.

Manual thermometers can be bought at around Tk 50 while the digital versions cost approximately Tk 200.

GLUCOSE METER

To put it simply, the glucose meter (a.k.a. glucometer) is a diabetic's best friend. It helps the patient monitor their blood glucose level and remind them to keep their sweet tooth urges at bay. The package includes test strips, a meter and lancet.

The lancet is used to pinch the user's finger to draw out merely a drop of blood that is absorbed by the strip. Then the strip is placed in the meter and it gives a reading for the glucose level.

Different brands of glucometers are available including Accu-Check, VivaChek, Kare, etc. and prices range between Tk 700 and Tk 3,000.



BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS

With a gadget like this at home, one can easily keep track of their blood pressure levels and it is absolutely indispensable for patients suffering from high/low blood pressure problems. Traditional BP monitors are less pricey and you can buy the full set including the sphygmomanometer (cuff, manometer, inflation bulb) and a stethoscope for Tk 1700 to Tk 2000.

Although digital ones do not require users to listen to the beat and are much more user friendly, the readings are less accurate than the manual ones. Omron

carries a trustworthy reputation for digital BP monitors and cost around Tk 2500.

NEBULISER

Patients with asthma or other respiratory troubles are often recommended by doctors to buy nebulisers for use at home. This equipment compresses liquid medicine and turns it into a vapour that can be inhaled by the user through a mouthpiece or mask. It is usually sold on doctors' prescriptions only, and prices start at Tk 2000.

INFRARED HEAT LAMP

For pain in the joints or muscles, this lamp is a divine healer. Using the infrared lamp is uncomplicated. Just plug it in and expose

the achy regions to the glowing red light. This treatment soothes the patient's pain after some time. However, the duration of exposure should be based on a doctor's advice.

Different brands manufacture these lamps — Beurer and Health Assure are commonly known foreign brands here and cost around Tk 3000 and Tk 3400 respectively.

BONUS: ASSISTIVE TOOLS

An array of medical tools, including crutches, wheelchairs, and elbow-support can be extremely handy in cases of sudden trauma or injuries. Wheelchairs, for instance, may be used if a person feels ill at an odd hour and may be used to steer them from their home to an ambulance. Prices of wheelchairs start at Tk 3000. For leg injuries, one can count on crutches that cost Tk 650. Elbow support, anklet bandages and knee caps are other miscellaneous protective items and are priced between Tk 100 and Tk 250.

WHERE TO FIND THEM?

Most of these items are available at any large medicine shop. Besides, you can explore the lane of shops leading to National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation in Shyamoli to find the best assistive tools. Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Bhaban (locally known as 'Surgical Market') also sells a number of the aforementioned items.

By Nafisa Faruque

Photo: Collected

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