

The Airline Emergency Medical Kit

By Allan Schwartz, CRNA

During a recent American Airlines flight, I was studying my ACLS manual, for an upcoming renewal of my ACLS certification. With visions of epinephrine, amiodorone, ventricular fibrillation, and sugarplums in my head, I asked the flight attendant if I could see the Emergency Medical Kit. They were very happy to bring it to me, when I explained that I wanted to write this article for you. A prepared CRNA is a great CRNA!

The Emergency Medical Kit is a rectangular professionally wrapped box with a clear plastic cover. There is a list of its contents showing through the cover. The kit is prepared and packaged by a medical company. Here is what a typical kit contains:

- Epinephrine 1:1000
- Diphenhydramine HCL
- Dextrose 50%
- Nitroglycerine Tablets 0.4mg
- Antiseptic Wipe
- Tourniquet
- Syringes
- Needles
- B.P. Cuff
- Stethoscope
- Airways – large, medium, small
- Nitrile gloves

The flight attendant told me the kit is typical of any airline kit. The kit is supposed to be opened by an M.D. or D.O. with a DEA prescription number. The captain of the flight is authorized to allow other persons to open and use the kit, if necessary. Many airlines use a radio network called Medlink. During an in-flight medical emergency, a member of the flight crew contacts a Medlink emergency medical physician, and the decision is made whether to divert the flight to the nearest airport, or allow it to continue to its intended destination.

The kit is being updated and changed in the coming months. I will update you to the contents of the new kit.

Be aware, there is also an **AED** on most flights.