



# An ECO Girls First Aid Guide

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Environmental and Cultural Opportunities for Girls in urban Southeast Michigan  
(ECO Girls)

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**WARNING:**

This guide is not meant to serve as medical advice. If you have a medical emergency, get an adult or call 911 right away.

### First Aid Essentials:

- **Tweezers** to remove splinters or ticks
- **1% hydrocortisone cream** and **calamine lotion** for bites or stings
- **Alcohol wipes** to clean scissors and tweezers
- **EpiPen** for allergic reactions
- **Non-latex gloves** to put on clean hands when treating a wound
- **Acetaminophen** (like Tylenol) or **ibuprofen** (like Motrin) for pain and fever
- **Thermometer** that does not have mercury and is not made of glass
- **Triple-antibiotic ointment** to prevent infection
- **Hand sanitizer** to clean hands in case water and soap aren't available
- **Blanket** to prevent heat loss after large burns and to treat for shock
- **Bottled water** to rinse wounds if there is no faucet nearby
- **Instant cold compress** to control **swelling** (when body parts that are injured get larger in size)

### Allergic Reaction:

- What causes allergic reactions?
  - It depends on the person, but common allergens are: food, some medicines, insect bites, and pollen.
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Sneezing
  - Itchiness
  - Redness of skin
  - Watery eyes
  - Red bumps (**hives**) anywhere on the body
- When someone has a **severe** (very bad and intense) allergic reaction:
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Difficulty swallowing
  - **Swelling** (body parts seem bigger in size)
  - Stomach pain or **vomiting** (throwing up)
  - Dizziness or fainting
- What can I do?
  - Tell a parent or an adult immediately
  - An EpiPen may be necessary

### Asthma Attack:

- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Coughing
  - Wheezing

- **Shortness of breath** (having trouble breathing)
- Trouble speaking
- Feeling tired or drowsy
- Blueness around the mouth
- What can I do?
  - Get an adult and call 911 immediately!
  - Find the **inhaler** (delivers medicine to the lungs) to help the situation

### **Broken Bones:**

- What causes broken bones?
  - Falling is the most common cause for a person to break a bone
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Pain
  - A snapping noise when you fell down
  - Unable to move body part
  - **Swelling** (body part gets bigger)
  - **Bruising** (skin changes color and hurts when touched)
- What can I do?
  - Get an adult and call 911 immediately!
  - DO NOT MOVE!
  - Wrap an icepack in a towel and then put the ice pack on the injury

### **Burns:**

- What causes burns?
  - Very hot water or other liquids and touching other hot things like fire.
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Redness
  - Pain
  - **Blisters** (small bumps on skin that have clear fluids in them)
- What can I do?
  - Get an adult and if the burn area is large call 911!
  - Run small burns under cool water (not cold water!)
  - Lightly apply gauze bandage to the burn
  - DO NOT put any creams on the burn!

### **Choking:**

- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Begins grasping for air

- Can't talk or make any noises
- Face turns blue
- Person grabs throat (the universal choking sign)
- What can I do?
  - Call 911 right away!
  - Get an adult immediately
  - Do NOT do the **Heimlich Maneuver** (abdominal thrusts)

### Common Cold:

- What causes colds?
  - A specific type of **virus** (a small particle that gets inside of our bodies) causes colds. People can catch a cold virus in many ways from other people, from touching things, and from germs in the air.
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Stuffy and runny nose
  - Sore throat
  - Coughing
  - Headache
  - Feeling tired
- What can I do?
  - Let a parent know so they can give you medicine to help you feel better
  - Drink lots of water or juice
  - Rest
  - Wash your hands frequently

### Cut or Scrap:

- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Bleeding
  - Pain
  - Tear in skin
- What can I do?
  - Rinse the cut or scrap with cool water and apply a little bit of pressure with a clean cloth or bandage (this helps to stop the bleeding)
  - Raise the injured body part (this also helps to stop bleeding)
  - Try to avoid touching the blood
  - Tell an adult if the cut looks big and deep

### Headaches:

- What causes headaches?
  - There are many things that can cause a headache. Some things that can cause a headache are: bumping of the head, loss of sleep, dehydration, or stress.
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Pain in the head
  - Feeling like your head is being squeezed
  - Dizziness
- What can I do?
  - Tell a parent or an adult. You may get medicine from them to help.
  - Lie down in a quiet area
  - Put a cool, moist towel over the forehead or eyes
  - Drink lots of water

### Insect Bite or Sting

- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Bump where sting or bite happened
  - Redness of skin
  - Itchiness
  - **Swelling** (body part gets bigger)
  - Dizziness
  - Difficulty swallowing or speaking
- What can I do?
  - Let an adult know immediately
  - Insect stinger can be removed with tweezers after an adult looks at sting
  - Wash sting with soap and water
  - Apply ice to area to help with swelling and pain

### Menstruation (Period):

- What is **menstruation** (“ a period”)?
  - It is when blood and tissue leave the body through the vagina of a girl or woman because it is no longer needed. It is a signal that a girl is growing up and her body is preparing for when she has a baby someday if she wants one. The blood and tissues leave the body for 2 to 7 days every month. Most girls get their first period (**menarche**) when they are between the ages of 10 to 15, but some girls may get theirs earlier or later.
- Symptoms (**signs**):

- **Cramping** (minor pain and tightness in abdominal area)
- Liquids coming from the vagina
- Blood coming from the vagina
- Mood changes
- What can I do?
  - It is normal to be nervous about having your first period, but feel proud, too, because periods are a sign of healthy development and normal growth.
  - To ease the pain of cramps, relax or apply a heating pad to where you feel pain.
  - Pads and Tampons are used to absorb the blood during periods. You may want to ask your mom, sister, or any other adult who you are comfortable asking on how to properly use a pad or a tampon the first time you get your period.
  - Alternatives to pads or tampons include feminine cups, which is a small rubber cup that you fold into the vagina. The cup needs to be taken out and rinsed twice within 24 hours. Feminine cups, like the Diva Cup, can be used for around 5 years, which saves a lot of money from buying tampons, and it is also environmentally friendly. More information about the feminine cup can be found here: <http://divacup.com>

Here are some examples of how different cultures celebrate **menarche** (the first period):

- Hindu Ritual (a ritual that is practiced in India): The girl is separated from the society. She returns to society as a woman after a ritual bath.
- Navajo People (a tribe of American Indians): The ritual of kinaalda is a 4-day ceremony. On each day, a girl takes on new responsibilities and each responsibility has a physical strength and special character, like running faster toward the sun, relationships, or cooking.
- Japanese Celebration: The family of the girl eats red colored rice and beans (called *sekihan*).
- Dagaaba people (an ethnic group in West African countries): A large celebration is held each year for all the girls who started their period that year.



1. Owen, L. (1998). Honoring menstruation: a time of self-renewal. (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press)

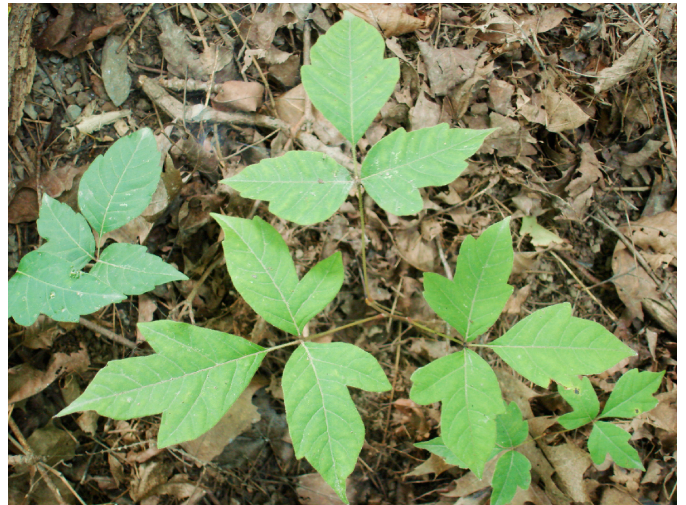
2. Siegel, Alice (1995). Information Please Girls' Almanac. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

### Nosebleed:

- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Bleeding from the nose
- What can I do?
  - Have the person with the nosebleed sit up and tilt his or her head a little forward
  - Get a tissue to catch the blood
  - Have the person pinch the soft part of their nose for 10 minutes
  - Let an adult know about the nosebleed

### Poison Ivy:

- What causes a Poison Ivy rash?
  - Touching a Poison Ivy plant or the oil of that plant
- How to avoid Poison Ivy:
  - Know what the plant looks like (see photo)
  - Wear long sleeved shirts and pants when present where Poison Ivy may be grow
  - Wash your hands after coming in from outside
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - An **allergic rash** (red itch patch of skin)
  - Bumps and **blisters** (small bumps on skin that have clear fluids in them)
  - Itchiness
  - Burning feeling of skin
- What can I do?
  - Remove the clothing that may have touched the Poison Ivy
  - Wash skin immediately with soap and water
  - No scratching of skin!
  - Oatmeal baths will help stop the itchiness



- Calamine lotion can also stop the itchiness (Warning: Don't use on face!)

### Splinter or Glass

- What is a splinter?
  - It is when a small object, like wood, glass, or plastic, gets under the skin.
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Pain
  - Seeing something under the skin
  - Redness
  - **Swelling** (body part becomes bigger)
- What can I do?
  - Find an adult that can help remove the object from under the skin
  - Wash your hands and the area around the splinter
  - Have adult remove the splinter with tweezers
  - Wash area again and cover it with a Band-Aid

### Strains and Sprains:

- What causes strains and sprains?
  - Strains are caused by over-stretching a muscle. Sprains are caused by a stretch or a tear in a **ligament** (the thing that connects two bones together).
- Symptoms (**signs**):
  - Pain
  - **Swelling** (injured body part gets bigger in size)
  - Bruising (skin changes color)
  - Can't move injured area
- What can I do?
  - Let an adult know immediately
  - Think R.I.C.E.
    - **R**est: rest the body part that is hurt
    - **I**ce: put ice on the injury for 20 minutes about 5 times a day
    - **C**ompression: support the injured area with an elastic compression bandage
    - **E**levation: raise injured area above heart area when possible

**Resources:**

<http://www.parents.com/health/injuries/first-aid/fast-first-aid-tips-for-6-common-accidents/>

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid\\_safe/#cat20221](http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/#cat20221)

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/body\\_stuff/menstruation.html#](http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/body_stuff/menstruation.html#)

<http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/devel/teen/devel-2.htm>

Use this page to write down important emergency contact information or rules an adult has given you for emergencies.