THE AVIAN FIRST AID KIT

A. Basic First Aid Kit:

The following are items suggested for inclusion in a Basic First Aid Kit, with a brief description of their uses.

-- Towel - for wrapping and securing your bird
-- Scissors - for cutting tape, bandages...and strings which can wrap on birds toes
-- Quik-stop and/or Styptic Pencil (silver nitrate stick) - to stop bleeding from broken blood feathers or cuts. Avian blood has very few clotting agents in comparison to human/mammal blood. A bird can literally bleed to death from a broken blood feather.
-- Hemostats and tweezers - for removing broken blood feathers, and/or splinters
-- Needle nose pliers - for pulling blood feathers or unbending chains and quik links which birds are known to injure themselves with.
-- Wire cutters - once again, birds are known to wrap themselves in chain and/or wire.
-- Gauze pads - for covering wounds, burns
-- Cotton balls - for cleansing
-- Q-tips - for cleaning out small wounds, getting stuff out of a bird's mouth or throat.
-- Vet wrap (cut into strips and rolled) - for wrapping broken bones, wings, or binding gauze pads to wounds.
-- Micropore tape (paper surgical tape) - for holding gauze in place
-- Penlight or small flashlight (A head-mounted light is even better.)
-- Magnifying glasses or "jewelers loop" - especially necessary for those of us at "that certain age"...but since birds are so small and delicate, a pair of magnifying glasses can come in handy for anyone trying to do detail work.
-- Sterile water - for flushing wounds or mixing with food
-- Pedialyte (or generic equivalent)- for rehydrating a dehydrated bird. Can be mixed with food. Pedialyte contains sugars and electrolytes which avians quickly lose when dehydrated or sick. Must be discarded within 24 hours of opening since it is a wonderful media for bacteria to grow in. An alternate to Pedialyte such as Gastrolyte, Rappolyte powders can be used. These should be mixed with sterile water. Both are available through veterinarians. Pedialyte, however, is readily available at any grocery store in the baby food section.
-- Hand feeding formula, jars of human baby food such as veggies, cereals or squash. Often sick or injured birds will be too weak to eat on their own for a few days. During this period of time we may find ourselves having to spoon or syringe feed the bird to help keep their strength up.
-- Feeding syringes, spoon with bent up sides to facilitate feeding (for above.)
-- Pellets/seeds - If your bird needs to stay at the hospital, they may not have the type/kind of food your bird is accustomed to. It is a good idea to have several baggies of fresh seed and/or pellets available to take with you.
-- Betadyne or hibitane (chlorhexidine) - as non-irritating disinfectant. Avoid hydrogen peroxide which is caustic to skin
-- Aloe Vera - for very minor burns. Many creams and lotions made for humans are toxic to birds, so make sure that you get 100% pure Aloe Vera

Additional Supplies:

For those who are more experienced you may want to add:

-- Popscicle sticks - for immobilizing broken legs
-- Ophthalmic ointment - for scratched eyes, minor conjunctivitis
-- Suturing materials (surgical needles and thread)
-- Gelfoam - stops bleeding from flesh wounds. Available from your veterinarian.
-- Tegaderm dressing - helps healing for burns and certain open wounds. Encourages granulation (healing/scabbing.)
-- Lactated Ringer's solution - used for IV rehydrating of dehydrated avians and flushing wounds.
-- Syringes - for injectable medications and irrigation of wounds.