

Chapter 13

QUANTITIES OF SUPPLIES NEEDED

The basic decisions about your trip should be made now.

1. The country you are going to visit..... (Chapter 6, Page 33)
2. Who you will be working with in the country.....(Chapter 7, Page 47)
3. Whether or not you have permission to work.....(Chapter 8, Page 53)
4. Passport, Visa and vaccinations in order.....(Chapter 8, Page 71)
5. Transportation that will be available to you.....(Chapter 9, Page 93)
6. Availability of water and electricity at site.....(Chapter 10, Page 113)
7. The parameters of dental service for the trip..... (Chapter 11, Page 123)
8. Instruments, medicines, and supplies needed... (Chapter 12, Page 129)

A. Determine what type of dental equipment and supplies are available for you to work with on site. Listed below are some considerations.

1. Determine the specific supplies that are available at your work location. What are their expiration dates, brand and in what quantity?
2. Can you purchase other needed dental supplies in the country, rather than bringing them? It will certainly save on your packing and shipping weight. Supplies, which you can normally purchase in the country, would be:

cotton	pain meds	paper cups	water
alcohol	germicide	anesthetic	gloves
Clorox®	antibiotics	paper towels	H ₂ O ₂
Kleenex	wash basins	hand soap	2 x 2's

3. If you are working in an established clinic, be sure to ask if all the dental equipment components on site are in good working order. (Compressor, vacuum, x-ray, handpieces, autoclave, etc.) They may not be.
4. Try to have pictures of the equipment and clinic sent to you in advance to know what you'll be working with. Non-dental personnel may not describe what you need to know about the equipment and its usability.

5. Ask how old the equipment is and how long it has been since last used? Rheostats on old equipment have a tendency to freeze up with lack of use and never work again. This is extremely important to determine.
6. Will you need to pack specific repair supplies for this equipment? Belts, special lubrication, air lines and light bulbs are constant maintenance items needed for any used dental equipment. **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!**
7. Will you need to send or bring your own equipment? Make that determination early to save embarrassment if their equipment is not adequate to do the work you plan. You will need adequate lead-time if it is necessary to send any equipment in advance of your trip.

B. Quantity of supplies will depend upon factors such as:

1. What are the parameters of dental services to be rendered?
2. How many dentists and auxiliaries are working with you?
3. How fast are those individuals able to work?
4. How many people are expecting service in your time frame?
5. How efficient is the dental clinic for patient flow?
6. Is the equipment which you have efficient and dependable?
7. How much time (days) will be available to work on patients?

C. Try to gauge supplies by the number of people that your team intends to see each day times the number of days that the clinic will be open.

1. Extractions may vary from 30 to 80 patients per dentist per day; (50 patients per dentist per day is average). For planning purposes, multiply the number of patients, times the number of dentists, times the number of days to get the estimated number of patients you can expect.

Example: 50 patients x 2 dentists x 5 days = 500 patients

2. Your supplies will be directly proportional to the number of patients that you can treat. So, the quantity of disposable supplies will be figured on what you intend to use on each patient multiplied by 500 patients.

Example:	Bibs	1 Per Patient
	Anesthetic	3 Carpules Per Patient
	Needles	1 Per Patient
	2 x 2 Gauze	5 to10 Per Patient
	Pain Medicine	6 to10 Per Patient
	Suture	1 Per 25 Patients
	Topical	2 oz. Per 50 Patients
	Gel Foam	1 Bottle Per Every 400 Patients

And so on, depending upon your parameters of service.

3. A simple formula can be worked out for each of your supplies to estimate the quantities to pack. It is always best to finish with a little too much, than not enough. The excess can be donated to local health professionals. They will be grateful to get the free supplies.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

BE PREPARED!

TIPS ON SUPPLIES

1. Use common sense and keep it simple. (KISS)
2. Keep weight to a minimum. (Try to avoid liquids.)
3. Check in advance of your trip about the supplies, which you can buy in the country, then pack only the necessary supplies not available. Countries vary greatly in their availability of dental products. (Some do not have 2 x 2's.)
4. Be careful to check expiration dates on your supplies to avoid embarrassment at the customs check. In many countries expired medicines and supplies will be confiscated or impounded when discovered.
5. When possible, purchase your supplies in containers that will not break or leak. All of our bottles containing any liquid are placed in zip locked bags for double protection. Extra light bulbs are wrapped in bubble wrap.
6. We always purchase our dental anesthetic in the United States. On several occasions, we have had difficulty getting good anesthesia with the anesthetic, which we purchased overseas.
7. Take note of the supplies that you did not use on your last trip, so that you do not pack those supplies on future trips.
8. Make a personal checklist of supplies, which you needed and did not have with you. It will make your packing quicker and more efficient for the next trip.
9. Have a plan for safe disposal of your needles, carpules, and hazardous waste material on the field, such as burning it. Then, there is no temptation for local people to attempt salvaging your contaminated needles, anesthetic, gloves, etc. Be very aware of this practice overseas.
10. Pack according to your predetermined parameters of service. Limit the scope of your services to what is reasonable with the time frame and location.
11. Pack some extra batteries, bulbs, fuses, and film.
12. **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!** It will save you much frustration.

*This is a general guide that can be added to or adjusted to fit the needs of the individual practitioner. I keep my own personal packing list of supplies for each trip, but it varies from country to country.

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