



Innovation to the Rescue

As first aid products see sales slump, manufacturers develop helpful new items

By Nora Caley

Consumers are shopping for fewer first aid products, but that's not due to a shift in cautious behavior. People are still injuring themselves, especially now that they are outside and engaging in more activities. Manufacturers pointed to several reasons for the sales decline, and are innovating to counteract the slump.

"Last year, we saw more consumers shopping in the first aid category," said Lauri Gosline, director of customer development and insights at Pleasant Prairie, Wis.-based Quest Products. "Driven by a cold spring, pantry loading in 2020 and 2021, and rising prices, the first aid segment has slowed down versus the prior two years."

Citing Nielsen figures, Gosline noted that in 2021 consumers purchased first aid products more frequently, purchased more units per trip and repeated purchases at a higher level than now. On the bright side, those declines are being offset by gains within nonantibiotics, tape and wraps, lice treatments and petroleum jelly. That trend is one of the main drivers behind the company's development of Alocane Burn Spray. "Through our research, we learned that 41% of burn shoppers actually prefer a spray format," Gosline said.



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While innovation can help spur sales, so can educating consumers. Quest offers the Ask Alocane chat line, which provides real-time advice for people who get burned during their summer activities, and includes information about which retailers carry products. Also helpful, Gosline said, is for manufacturers and retailers to offer information about the effectiveness of using first aid products after their expiration dates.

Geolyn Gonzalez, vice president of sales and marketing at Total Resources International, said there is increased demand for certain first aid products due to increased safety regulations in work sites, as well as the continued need for at-home first aid kits. There has been a shift from traditional products to advanced wound care. "Products that stop the bleeding, accelerate skin and wound healing, and even prevent a doctor or hospital visit, are necessary to keep up with the active lifestyle of consumers," she said. "It is apparent now more than ever that self-medication is not only our present, but the future of first aid."

This year TRI, which makes first aid kits, is launching SILVEX Antibacterial Wound Wash and Diabetic Care Kits. The kits are designed to



Nutricare

Patch Natural Bamboo Bandages

SRP: \$6.99 for a tube of 25 strips, \$7.99 for a 10-pack of large bandages

Bamboo fibers are eco-friendly but also safe for sensitive skin. Patch by Nutricare offers hypoallergenic wound care designed for people who get allergic reactions to other adhesive bandages, a sensitivity that the company said affects one of four people. The bamboo bandages, which are vegan friendly and cruelty free, are available in a range of latex-free strips, squares and rectangles.



Quest

Alocane Burn Spray

SRP: \$11.99

A new offering in the burn segment, Alocane Burn Spray uses 3.5-oz. Bag on Valve Technology, which allows for 100% use-up rate in a continuous spray, coupled with max FDA-allowed 4% lidocaine to relieve pain. Alocane Burn Spray also contains aloe to soothe and vitamin E to heal.



help treat foot and leg ulcers and manage wounds.

In more routine care, consumers are looking for new forms of current items. “These new products often have a higher per unit selling price, which helps drive both top and bottom line growth for retailers,” said Doug Arnold, senior vice president of Kleen Test Products, which makes the newly rebranded The Pharma-C items. Among the company’s offerings are wet wipes, a convenient form of delivering witch hazel or hydrogen peroxide, two time-tested solutions that can be messy if applied with cotton balls. New from Kleen Test is a 100-ct. jar of 70% isopropyl alcohol pads for first aid use.

Retailers should offer a balance of legacy products and innovative new items. “Consumers will always have a need for the products in this category,” Arnold said. “While they often turn to the tried-and-true products that have been around for generations, they are also looking for new solutions to their problems.”

Another entry in the wipes category comes from Tec Labs, which makes Tecnu wipes and Licefreee lice products. The company launched Tecnu Detox Wipes, which are waterless and remove poison ivy and oak oil and other oily substances from skin. The wipes are portable, which is a big demand now. “During the pandemic people were staying closer to home, hiking, camping and gardening,” said Larry Burris, director of sales. “Now with higher gas prices, people are tending to stay closer to home.” **dsn**



Curad

Kendra Dandy Bandage Variety Pack

SRP: \$6.99

For people looking for more style in their first aid, this bandage pack features exclusive, fashion-forward designs from renowned artist Kendra Dandy and Curad Flex-Fabric material that stretches for comfortable protection.



Tec Labs

Tecnu Detox Wipes

SRP: \$18.99 for a 12-pack

Waterless Tecnu Detox Wipes are made of rayon derived from bamboo fiber, and they remove poison ivy and oak oil, pitch, tar and other oily substances from skin, equipment, tools, pets and more. The sooner one removes urushiol (rash-causing resin from poison ivy, oak and sumac) from skin with a poison ivy wipe, the better chance of avoiding a poison ivy rash. Tecnu Detox Wipes are individually wrapped, and no water is required.



Band-Aid Band-Aid Brand Sensitive Skin

SRP: \$5.79 for an assorted 20-count size pack or a 7-count extra-large pack

These hypoallergenic bandages are designed to provide wound care for sensitive and eczema-prone skin. They utilize Sensi-Layer technology for painless removal of the bandage with no damage to the skin. The bandage is durable and stays in place for 24 hours even when wet, and is recommended for use after cleaning the wound with an antiseptic wash.



3M

Nexcare Duo Adhesive Gauze Pads

SRP: \$5.99 for a 4-pack

Nexcare has expanded its new Duo Adhesive line, which the brand launched last year. The bandages feature a flexible, breathable and water-resistant fabric bandage with a solvent-free, skin-friendly silicone adhesive that delivers all-day hold and pain-free removal without irritating the skin. The original line features bandages of traditional sizes for smaller cuts and scrapes, and the new Duo Adhesive Gauze Pads measuring 3 by 4 inches.



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