**Backyard Docs and Body Shops**
Adventurers in trouble might not have the option of seeking legitimate medical help – often because they’re short on cash or wish to avoid trouble with the authorities. Enter the “backyard doc.” This might be an unlicensed dentist operating out of a filthy tenement and preying on the poor . . . or a hotshot surgeon treating celebrities at a private mountain resort. Costs can run from cut-rate to exorbitant; quality, from first-class to quackery.

The best backyard doc is an able former professional with a troubled background. Perhaps he lost his license after a messy court battle, or was set up by a vindictive employee. Maybe he’s an immigrant whose foreign credentials aren’t officially recognized. He probably has a white-collar day job – but on the side he runs a tidy little medical practice, doing favors for licensed doctors in exchange for equipment and supplies, and providing services to those in the know at 10% of the going rate. He’s likely to have clean facilities and modern tools, but a limited supply of drugs. He might even have a key to a licensed doctor friend’s clinic in case some serious need crops up. It’s estimated that thousands of unlicensed doctors operate such businesses in the U.S., avoiding taxes and regulation, and gaining clients by word of mouth.

There are seedier options, of course. A washed-out alcoholic with shaky hands may be the only doctor who will treat a gunshot wound at 3 a.m., no questions asked. The risks are high: dirty, obsolete tools, antibiotics (if any) well past their expiration date, and aslug of whiskey as “anesthesia.” His sutures might look like the work of Dr. Frankenstein. He can, however, save a life and keep his mouth shut.

**Surgical Kit** (TL6). Instruments include precision locking forceps, small and specialized scalpels, and other all-metal tools that are easy to clean and sterilize. The reusable needles and scalpels require occasional sharpening. The included suturing material is sterilized. $300, 15 lbs. LC4.

**Surgical Kit** (TL7). These light, ergonomically designed instruments allow lengthy procedures that don’t fatigue the surgeon, and include micro-tools for dealing with tiny vascular problems. Many components are disposable; needles and scalpels, sharpened to a keen edge at the factory, are discarded after a single operation. Everything is hypoallergenic and easily sterilized. +1 to skill. $300, 15 lbs. LC4.

**Surgical Kit** (TL8). As TL7, but adds micromanipulators for handling nerves, plus scalpels and scissors with micron-thin cutting edges. Rechargeable batteries power a sizable portion of the tools, allowing quicker, less labor-intensive, and more finely tuned work. Many items are constructed from titanium and exotic alloys. Interestingly, catgut is still used for suturing. +2 to skill. $300, 15 lbs. LC4.

**Surgical Theaters** (TL5)
Sometimes a surgeon needs more than just a bone saw and a scalpel. Generally, treating a major wound or performing reconstructive surgery (e.g., repairing a crippled limb) demands a surgical theater. Such equipment requires external power at TL6-8.

**Operating Theater** (TL5)
This is an entire room full of specialized gear – including the best anesthesia equipment (see Anesthesia, pp. 224-225) for the TL. It gives +2 (quality) to Surgery. $200,000, 1,000 lbs. LC3.

**Portable Surgery** (TL5)
This complete surgical setup typically travels in a utility vehicle, a trailer, or a large hospital cart, and includes portable anesthesia equipment appropriate to the TL. The military often uses it as a mobile field surgery. Packing or unpacking it takes at least five minutes; half an hour is more typical. It gives +1 (quality) to Surgery and +2 (quality) to First Aid. $50,000, 500 lbs. LC3.

**Specialized Operating Theater** (TL6)
As Operating Theater (above), but dedicated to a single Surgery specialty; e.g., neurosurgery or heart surgery. It gives +TL/2 (quality) to that specialty but counts as basic equipment for other purposes. $1,000,000, 1,000 lbs. LC3.

**Suturing Kit** (TL6)
Commonly found in paramedic bags and crash kits, and sometimes sold as a “surgical kit” by military surplus stores, this gear counts as basic equipment for simple applications of Surgery; e.g., stitching non-major wounds. It’s improvised equipment – giving -5 (quality) – for all other purposes, including treating major wounds. The GM decides which tasks are “simple.” $20, 1 lb. LC4.

**Surgical Laser** (TL8)
This multi-purpose tool can cut flesh, debride a burn, or administer cosmetic surgery (p. 225), and counts as fine-quality Surgery equipment. It inflicts at most 1d-3 tightbeam burning damage. $100,000, 200 lbs., external power. LC3.

**Anesthesia**
After 1850, anesthesia for surgery was commonly available in Europe and the U.S. – including at most American Civil War field hospitals, contrary to popular myth. Inhalant anesthetics are volatile, and require storage in airtight containers until shortly before use. It takes about a minute to put a cooperative patient under, or three to five minutes for an uncooperative one. If the roll to administer anesthetic fails, Surgery skill is at -2, just as for no anesthetic (see Surgery, p. B424).

These rules cover general anesthesia. Local anesthetics for minor surgery are available after 1885, and are included in medical kits that need them.

**Chloroform or Ether Mask** (TL5)
Make a Physician roll to use this device to administer chloroform or ether. Each dose costs $5. $50, 2 lbs. (plus anesthetic). LC3.