



Acute Mountain Sickness and Importance of Acclimatization

How many times have you noticed that when traveling to the high altitude places, either you or people around you had complained shortness of breath, nausea, headaches or vomiting, etc.? They generally relate to acute mountain sickness. Let's look at a few tips that will undoubtedly help you in better acclimatization.

1

Increase the altitude gradually

The acclimatization rules state that after 10,000 feet, we must stay overnight for every 1000 feet or 300 Mtrs of elevation to properly acclimatize our body. This schedule in between shall allow a whole day acclimatization rest after 3000 feet or 915 Mtrs with an overnight stay at the same altitude.

2

Keep your body properly hydrated

Do take plenty of intake of water with ORS or fluids like milk tea, juice, soup (garlic one will do wonders). Also, garlic flavored water (keep garlic in water bottles) will help much more than drinking plain water. Adequate hydration will help keep the oxygen level standard in the body. You should avoid too much black tea or coffee as well.

3

AVOID overhydration

Too much water is harmful and can dilute your body's sodium levels (hyponatremia), causing weakness, confusion, seizures, and coma. It might also lead to vomiting.

4

Avoid sleeping at high altitudes

As your sleeping decrease, the respiratory drive of our body, it is recommended that one shall hike to high elevations in the day but should always come back to by the evening to sleep at a lower altitude.

5

Avoid overexertion

Do not over exert your body with any additional physical activity which may lead you to pump more breath.

6

Avoid tobacco and smoking and alcohol and other depressant drugs

Avoid tobacco and smoking and alcohol and other depressant drugs including, barbiturates, tranquilizers, and sleeping pills. These depressants further decrease the respiratory drive during sleep resulting in a worsening of the symptoms.

7

Keep your body warm

Keep your body warm with woolens, and do not let it cool. Make sure your clothes are always dry.

8

Eat lots of Carbohydrates

Eat a high carbohydrate diet (more than 70% of your calories from carbohydrates) while at altitude. Chocolates and energy bars are some excellent sources.

9

Avoid sleep during the day

Try not to sleep during the day and keep yourself involved in some light activity during the day. Respiration decreases during sleep, which further exacerbates the symptoms.

10

Sleep in an upright position, if possible

Try to lay down or sleep by resting your back against the wall. If you cannot sleep in such mode, then do not flatten your head on the bed instead place a bag below your head and then one or two pillows and then relax in such a posture. It will help you keep your head much lighter.

11

Carry preventive medicines for AMS

Do take preventive AMS medicines along with you, but only after consultation with your doctor or physician because the AMS medicines may lead to some side effects too.

12

Carry Small Oxygen Kit

If possible, you may also carry an oxygen cylinder to counter the AMS symptoms. It will certainly help as a supplement but do take proper consultation from your doctor about the intake amount of oxygen, before the trip.

13

Immediately descend, if symptoms increase

Last but not least, if the AMS symptoms start to grow, then you should consider immediate go down to lower altitude. Traveling to low height is the only cure in some conditions when the symptoms have reached moderate levels and are not decreasing.

A point to note!

Majority of people suffer from Acute mountain sickness (AMS) when they travel to places above the altitudes of 10,000 Feet or 3000 Mtrs. Higher is the elevation and rate of ascent; more will be the effects of AMS. The best cure is to either acclimatize properly or descend. If the person is suffering a lot and not even able to walk in a straight line, IMMEDIATELY DESCEND!!

Altitude categorization for reference:

- High (8,000 - 12,000 feet [2,438 - 3,658 m])
- Very High (12,000 - 18,000 feet [3,658 - 5,487 m])
- Extremely High (18,000+ feet [5,500+ m])

Himalayan Travel Tips

- Have Buffer Days
- Stay Warm & Hydrated
- Avoid Alcohol
- Carry Required Clothing, Food & Water
- Drive with Caution & Care
- Start Early, Sleep Early



#SaveOurHimalayas

- Spread Smiles Not Plastic
- Stop Littering
- Bring Back Your Own Trash
- Avoid Plastic Water Bottles