



# The Greatest Expedition Partner

## Altitude Sickness Guide

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## Understanding Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness, also known as acute mountain sickness (AMS), can affect trekkers at high elevations. It's crucial to understand the different types and how to manage them. Here are the three main types of altitude sickness:

**Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS):** The most common form, with flu-like symptoms.

- **High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE):** Fluid accumulation in the lungs.
- **High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE):** Fluid accumulation in the brain, a life-threatening condition.

## Symptoms to Watch For

Recognizing symptoms early is vital. Symptoms range from mild to severe and can vary from person to person:

### Mild Symptoms:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping

### Severe Symptoms:

- Severe headache unrelieved by medication
- Persistent vomiting
- Shortness of breath even at rest
- Confusion
- Loss of coordination (ataxia)
- Cough with pink, frothy sputum (HAPE)
- Coma (HACE)

## Prevention Tips

Prevention is key to a safe and enjoyable trek. Follow these guidelines to minimize your risk of altitude sickness:

- **The 500m Rule:** Avoid increasing your sleeping altitude by more than 500 meters (1640 feet) per day above 3000 meters (9842 feet).
- **Climb High, Sleep Low:** If possible, climb higher during the day and descend to a lower altitude to sleep.
- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of fluids (3-4 liters per day) to stay hydrated.
- **Acclimatization Days:** Include rest days in your itinerary to allow your body to adjust to the altitude.
- **Diamox (Acetazolamide):** Consult your doctor about taking Diamox, a medication that can help with acclimatization. Start taking it 1-2 days before ascending to high altitude. Be aware of potential side effects.

## Treatment Steps

If you or a member of your group develops altitude sickness, take immediate action:

- **Rest:** Stop ascending and rest at your current altitude.
- **Medication:** Take pain relievers for headaches and anti-nausea medication if needed.
- **Descent:** If symptoms worsen or do not improve with rest, descend to a lower altitude immediately. This is the most effective treatment.
- **Oxygen/PAC Bags:** In severe cases, administer supplemental oxygen or use a portable altitude chamber (PAC) if available.

## Important Note

**Never Hide Symptoms:** It's crucial to inform your guide or trekking companions if you experience any symptoms of altitude sickness. Early recognition and treatment can prevent serious complications.

## Summary

This guide provides essential information on altitude sickness, including its types, symptoms, prevention, and treatment. Remember to prioritize acclimatization, stay hydrated, and never ignore symptoms. Safe trekking!