

High Altitude Illness

HIGH ALTITUDE TIPS

Big Sky's altitude ranges from 6,500 feet in the Meadow Village to 7,500 feet in Big Sky Mountain Village, up to 11,166 feet the summit of Lone Mountain. This can have a surprisingly powerful affect on you.

Altitude sickness is caused by dry air, a decrease in oxygen, and low barometric pressure when you travel to a higher altitude than you're used to. As a result, you may have problems, such as headaches, dehydration, and shortness of breath.

Altitude sickness can be minimized by a gradual ascent plenty of rest, light meals, lots of fluids, eat carbohydrates, avoiding alcohol, cigarettes and sleeping pills (especially on first day), and treating infections quickly (infections cause increase in need for oxygen). You can take Diamox prior to ascent to help you adjust more rapidly to altitude. This is a prescription medication, so check with a doctor before you go away for advice.

Laying off the coffee and tea since both are diuretics (causes your body to lose vital fluids). Liquor, aside from the fact that it is also a diuretic and clouds judgment is even worse for the body since symptoms of a hangover mimic those of altitude sickness confusing diagnosis.

Descending and reducing your level of activity are the standard remedies once you feel altitude sick. Do not push it! While mild symptoms are more a nuisance than a health threat, they are a definite warning to acclimatize.

A few precautions can help a lot:

- If you're not used to living at high elevation, take it slowly at first. With less oxygen available at high altitudes you may tire more quickly.
- Drink extra water. High, dry air accelerates dehydration.
- Don't forget your sunglasses and sunscreen! At around 10,000 ft. the effects of the sun can be 50% greater than at sea level.

Please check the following web sites for more information:

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/healthy/physical/injuries/247.html>

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4618>