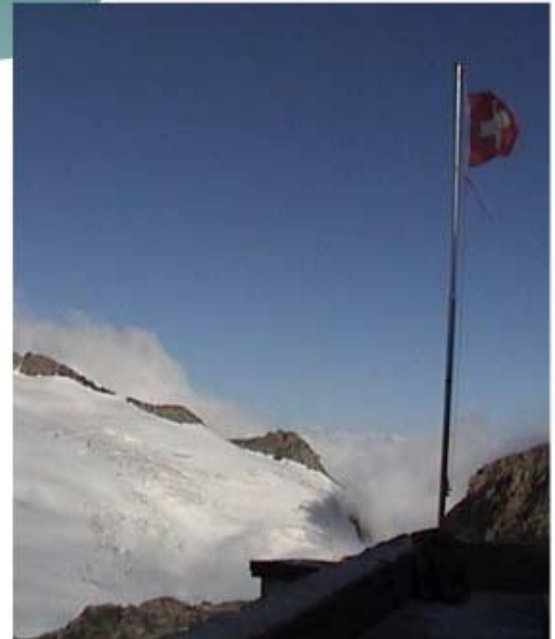


Acute Mountain Sickness



Most people going high have to deal with altitude related illnesses. Dealt with correctly, they are unlikely to be a major problem. Dealt with incorrectly they can be disastrous - spoiling the trip for the person who is ill and those with them. The most common is AMS.

Signs and Symptoms: What To Do About It:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Headache ◆ Loss of appetite ◆ Tired or weakness ◆ Dizzy or light headed ◆ Difficulty sleeping ◆ Feeling of slurring speech ◆ Difficulty concentrating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Rest if you can ◆ Drink lots of fluids ◆ High carbohydrate diet ◆ Don't go up any higher till it passes ◆ Vitamin B12 two weeks before a trip can help |
|---|--|

Taking Drugs

Acetazolamide (Diamox) is the drug of choice for most people going high, but consider the following.

Diamox works by blocking an enzyme in the kidneys which makes the blood acidic and fools the brain as a signal to breathe more. It therefore works by increasing the rate and depth of breathing and acts as a mild diuretic resulting in slightly thicker blood increasing the risk of stroke or heart attack.

However the reason you are suffering from AMS is because your body cannot cope and is under stress. Using any drug to be able to continue ascending means you have used up your last resource which you may need to get off the mountain in an emergency. If you continue up and get worse, how are you going to get down, when you have exhausted your last available safeguard.

A safe rule would be to only use Diamox in order to get you **DOWN** the mountain, not up it.

If you take a pill start **down** immediately

AMS Scorecard

AMS Scorecard			Total
Headache	None	0	
	Mild	1	
	Moderate	2	
	Severe / Incapacitating	3	
Stomach / Guts	Good Appetite	0	
	Poor appetite / Nausea	1	
	Moderate nausea / Vomiting	2	
	Severe / Incapacitating	3	
Fatigue / Weakness	Not tired or weak	0	
	Mild fatigue / Weakness	1	
	Moderate	2	
	Severe / Incapacitating	3	
Dizziness / Light Headedness	None	0	
	Mild	1	
	Moderate	2	
	Severe / Incapacitating	3	
Difficult Sleeping	As Well as Usual	0	
	Not as well as Usual	1	
	Woke many times, a poor night	2	
	Could not sleep at all	3	

At Altitude

- If you have a **headache** and a total of 3 or more for the others, do not go any higher.
- If you have a **headache**, and a total of 3 or more for the others, have got no better or got worse - **go down**.

