

High Altitude Cerebral Oedema

The brain is affected by altitude because it needs a good supply of oxygen and may swell causing pressure.

HACE is caused by brain swelling and can kill very quickly if not treated.



HACE Can occur anywhere above 2700 m

Signs and Symptoms: What To Do About It:

- ♦ Severe headache.
- ♦ Becoming clumsy.
- ♦ Act differently - unhelpful, violent, lazy.
- ♦ May have bad, non-stop vomiting.
- ♦ Blurred vision.
- ♦ See, hear, feel, smell odd things.
- ♦ Confused.
- ♦ Reduced consciousness
- ♦ Stay with the person at all times - do not leave them on their own.
- ♦ Descend **NOW**
- ♦ Sit them upright and keep warm.
- ♦ Give dexamethasone if you have it. (a potent anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressant)
- ♦ Give acetazolamide if you have it. (Diamox)
- ♦ Use Oxygen and a Pressure Bag if you have them.

“We have not yet seen a case of HACE in which the patient didn't ascend with AMS symptoms”

If You Ignore HACE...

*Loss of consciousness
Confusion, Drowsiness.
Reduced breathing.*

DEATH WILL OCCUR

*In serious cases, death can occur
within hours of the onset of
symptoms*

Info from MEDEX - Travel at High Altitude Booklet

What To Check For If You Are Not Sure:

- ♦ Can they touch their nose with index finger with eyes closed? Repeat rapidly.
- ♦ Can they walk heel to toe in a straight line?
- ♦ Can they stand upright, with eyes shut and arms folded?
- ♦ Can they do simple mental maths?

If not able to do or have difficulty doing any of the above, suspect HACE.

HACE can develop very quickly with no other problems or can follow AMS and HAPE.

