

High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema

Because the air is thinner at high altitude there is less oxygen available so breathing gets deeper and quicker to compensate. This acclimatisation' helps you cope with the altitude better. Occasionally fluid may collect in the lungs causing a problem known as HAPE.



HAPE Can and Does occur in the Drakensberg

Signs and Symptoms: What To Do About It:

- Trouble Breathing
- Tired & Weary
- Coughing
- Froth and later blood in spit
- Lips, tongue & nails become blue. (Cyanosis)
- All the same signs and symptoms as AMS but worse.
- Stay with the person at all times - do not leave them on their own.
- Descend **NOW**
- Sit upright and keep warm.
- Give nifedipine if you have it. (Lowers blood pressure)
- Give acetazolamide (Diamox) if you have it.



HAPE Can occur anywhere above 2400 m

What To Check For If You Are Not Sure:

- Have they had AMS symptoms for a while?
- Has there been recent ascent?
- Does it take a long time to get breath back after exercise?
- Are they breathless when resting?
- Is the breathing rate increasing?
- Can 'wet' / crackling sound be heard in chest? Put your ear to their back below shoulder blades.

At altitude:

Walk slowly

Take plenty of rests

**It's not a competition! Some people adapt better than others
Do not ignore signs of HAPE.**

Seek medical help if possible and if in doubt DESCEND!

If You Ignore HAPE...

Breathing will stop

DEATH WILL OCCUR

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

Info from MEDEX - Travel at High Altitude Booklet