

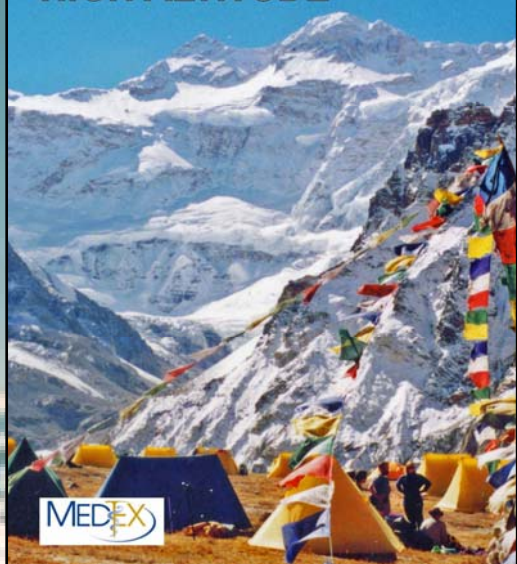
# TRAVEL AT HIGH ALTITUDE

## A guide to staying healthy

Written by members of Medical Expeditions & Medex

[www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk)

### TRAVEL AT HIGH ALTITUDE



#### Planning a trip to the mountains?

Will you be going higher than 3,000m?

How much do you know about high altitude, the 'thin air' and how it can affect your body?

If you are going high and want to stay happy and healthy, you need to know about:-

- Conditions that are 'uncomfortable' and conditions that can kill you.
- How to acclimatise properly so you stay well.
- What you should do if you become unwell.

Don't let your trip be spoilt because of things you didn't know.

### 'TRAVEL AT HIGH ALTITUDE'

is a new,

easy to read,

pocket sized guide

on how to stay healthy at altitude.

Whether it's a family holiday, adventure travel or a mountaineering expedition – this guide is for you.

### 'TRAVEL AT HIGH ALTITUDE'

can be downloaded

free-of-charge

from [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk)

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#### THE BRAIN

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

High Altitude Cerebral Oedema (HACE) is caused by brain swelling and can kill very quickly if not treated. Some people feel no effects. Others may

suffer any (or all) of the following:

**Headaches** - very common at altitude, especially if you suffer headaches or migraine at home.

**Loss of balance** - co-ordination and balance may be affected. Older people and those who are acclimatised feel less effect. 'Clumsiness' and bad judgements increase the risk of accidents.

**Mood changes** - on a 'trip of a lifetime' there will be good days and bad days. Bad days can trigger disappointment and depression. Be prepared for mood swings!

**AMS / HACE** - see other pages.

**Stroke** - developing sight or speech problems and / or a weak arm, leg or face are signs of a stroke. (Some migraine sufferers have similar effects during an 'aura').

**Before you go:**

- Learn the signs of HACE & stroke.
- Prepare medical supplies.
- Consider expectations / fears and who will support you on bad days.

**At altitude:**

- Headache (AMS) avoid triggers - dehydration, exhaustion, alcohol - treat with painkillers.
- Stroke - treat with 1/2 a 300mg aspirin & descend. See a doctor.
- Be honest about how you feel.

*I set off at the back, with a sore head, coughing. My cough and head got worse. A 'dreg' feeling began in my mouth. When I met the others, I plucked up the courage to ask if 'my speech was slurred'. The shock hit me. I had heard myself mumble incoherently. They looked horrified, my words just dribbled out. I couldn't use my left arm, no power, my left hand tingled, the left of my face was paralysed and my head sore. I was done for!!! Expert medical care and rapid descent saved my life.*

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