

Woodland Park, CO

Elevation 8465 feet



THE GREATER WOODLAND PARK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Altitude Awareness

Altitude Sickness The Golden Rules

Every year millions of people go to the mountains for backpacking, skiing, mountain climbing and other activities. Sometimes people get sick at high altitudes. This is called high altitude sickness.

Altitude sickness is caused by the lack of oxygen in our thin mountain air. It can effect anyone, regardless of age or physical condition in elevations above 6000 feet. The higher you climb above sea level, the less oxygen there is in the air. The oxygen level becomes very low at altitudes above 8000 feet. People who normally live at lower altitudes have problems at high altitudes because their bodies aren't used to functioning on so

little oxygen. If you stay at a high altitude for a long time, your body will adjust to the low oxygen level and you will feel fine.

Some of the first signs of altitude sickness are headache, lightheadedness, weakness, difficulty sleeping and an upset stomach. If you have these symptoms, go back down to a lower altitude until your symptoms go away. More severe symptoms include difficulty breathing even while you are resting, coughing, confusion, and the inability to walk a straight line. If you get these symptoms, go to a lower altitude right away and seek help from a doctor.

Do not ignore signs of high altitude sickness. People

can die of high altitude sickness if they don't recognize the signs or if they don't believe their illness is caused by high altitude.



Water, Water, Water!

Our crisp mountain is exhilarating, but it is also very dry. You lose much more water than you realize in your exhaled breath and from perspiration. It is very important to maintain the body water.

You should drink two or



three times more than usual.

Fill your water bottle in your hotel. Do not drink from streams.

Water and juices are better than coffee and alcohol.

Remember, at altitude, one alcoholic drink does the work of two!

How to Enjoy Your Visit

- *Increase your fluid intake*
- *Decrease your salt intake*
- *Moderate physical activity*
- *Reduce alcohol and caffeine*
- *Have Fun!*

Altitude Sickness Symptoms

- *Headaches*
- *Light Dizziness*
- *Mild Shortness of Breath*
- *Mild Palpitations (rapid heart rate)*
- *Restless Sleep*
- *Fatigue*

Temperature

Since you are more than one mile above sea level most everywhere in Colorado, the sun here is quite intense. This increases a person's vulnerability to ultraviolet ray damage. Sunscreens and hats should be used for protection. A sunburn will begin quicker and it can be more severe at a high altitude...even in winter skiing.

The chill of winter, and the potential complications of hypothermia, can be avoided by wearing layers of loose clothing and also by wearing warm headgear. As much as eighty percent of your body heat escapes through your head, making hats a smart part of your wardrobe. Skiers and hunters should take special precautions to remain warm and dry while outside during the

cold days and nights of winter. Most people dress appropriately in winter, but be sure your boots and gloves are fit appropriately. If you lose sensation in your face, fingers, or toes, stop, look for frostbite (numb, cold, white areas) and take time to warm up.



Regardless of the season, Colorado visitors who become overheated during physical activity should allow for a "cool-down" period before

resuming any activity.

The temperature falls about three degrees Fahrenheit for every 1000 feet of altitude, and it can get cold very fast. Take extra clothes. Hypothermia (low body temperatures) can occur even in the summer if you are wet or wind-chilled, hungry, tired, or poorly dressed. The warning signs are clumsiness, trouble thinking or talking clearly, irritability and confusion. Watch for these in each other. If in doubt, stop, warm up, eat and drink—and if necessary send or call for help.

A bright and sunny morning can quickly turn to a cold and windy afternoon. Bottom line is you need to be prepared for all kinds of weather conditions when playing in the

Children and High Altitudes

It is usually safe for children to go to high altitudes, but they're more likely to get high altitude sickness because their bodies have a hard time adjusting to the low oxygen level. A child may not be able to recognize the symptoms of high altitude sickness, so parents and other adults must carefully watch for any signs of symptoms in children.

Typical symptoms in very young children

include increased fussiness, decreased appetite, vomiting, decreased playfulness, and difficulty sleeping. These symptoms usually appear 4 to 12 hours after ascent to altitude.

A slow ascent, allowing time for acclimatization is helpful. An emergency

"Wilderness travel with children is a rewarding experience."

contingency plan should be made by all groups traveling to a remote altitude location prior to travel. Part of the emergency plan should include provisions for communication to

facilitate an evacuation of a sick member of your party.

Quick Hiking Tips

- Always wear sunscreen
- Bring a hat
- Carry warm clothing and rain gear
- Start hikes early in the morning to avoid the afternoon thunderstorms
- Consult a map and guidebook before beginning your hike
- Keep pets leashed
- Know your physical limitations
- Tell someone where you are going
- Stay on the trail
- Do not litter
- Expect and respect other hikers

- Bring plenty of water

