

# SAFETY altitude sickness

## Tips to prevent and treat

*Most altitude sickness is mild but it should not be taken lightly*

*by Gene Fulkerson*

Altitude sickness occurs when you cannot get enough oxygen from the air at high altitudes.

Symptoms tend to occur within hours after arrival at high altitude and include headache, nausea, shortness of breath, and inability to exercise.

Most cases of altitude sickness are mild, but some may be life-threatening.

Mild cases may resolve in one to three days. Severe cases may require oxygen, medications and moving to a lower altitude.

### Common symptoms

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fatigue/loss of energy
- Insomnia

### How to Avoid

#### Hydrate

- Drink at least twice the water you normally do
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine

#### Replenish

- Load up on potassium
  - Some good staples to eat include broccoli, bananas, avocado, cantaloupe, celery, greens, bran, chocolate, granola, dates, dried fruit, potatoes and tomatoes
- Decrease salt intake
- Add complex carbohydrates to maintain energy
  - Eat plenty of whole grains, pasta, fruits, and vegetables



#### Take It Easy

- Limit physical activity if you are short of breath or fatigued

#### Cover Up

- At altitude, there is less protection from the sun
  - Cover up
  - Use plenty of sunscreen

#### Acclimate

- Spend time at intermediate altitude before
- Ease into the physical activity for first 24-48 hours

#### Prepare

- See a doctor before leaving
  - Get drug for altitude sickness prevention

- Ibuprofen can relieve altitude headaches
- Ginger chews, capsules or tea can settle the stomach

#### Seek Help

- Note that altitude sickness is real and can be debilitating
- If symptoms continue to plague you
  - Visit nearest medical clinic
  - Go to lower altitude
  - Get some oxygen

Every year, people die of altitude sickness. All of these deaths are preventable. If you are travelling above 8,000 feet, follow these three simple **Golden Rules**.

1. If you feel unwell, you have altitude sickness until proven otherwise.
2. Do not ascend further if you have symptoms of altitude sickness.
3. If you are getting worse then descend immediately. ■

## boat SAFETY

### Carbon Monoxide

“Teak surfing” or being dragged closely behind a boat is illegal and can be deadly! Those being dragged can inhale the colorless, odorless, tasteless and DEADLY gas called Carbon Monoxide. Avoid the death zones!

Swimming near or under the back deck or swim platform while the motor is running is dangerous. You can inhale Carbon Monoxide.

Did you know that all boats need to display a Carbon Monoxide safety

sticker on their boat? You can obtain the sticker from the California Department of Boating and Waterways.

### Drinking

Bring your life jacket, but leave the alcohol at home. The side effects of alcohol— impaired judgment, reduced balance, poor coordination— can be magnified by the boating environment.

Designating a driver is not enough on boats. Drunken passengers on boats can easily fall overboard, swim near the propeller or cause loading problems by leaning over the side or standing up in small vessels, causing vessels to capsize. If you do drink, wear a life jacket. ■