ALTITUDE SICKNESS

There are different degrees of altitude sickness: mild, moderate and severe, each with typical symptoms. If you have symptoms of mild or moderate AMS (acute mountain sickness), it doesn’t mean you have to give up the climb. If you suffer from severe altitude mountain sickness you should immediately stop climbing and start to descend as soon as possible. Our knowledgeable guides will advise and assist you accordingly.

**Symptoms of AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness)**
- Headaches
- Nausea, vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Insomnia, sleeplessness
- Dizziness, light headaches, confusion
- Weakness, fatigue, heavy legs
- Slight swelling of the hands and face
- Breathlessness and irregular breathing
- Reduced urine output

**Symptoms of HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema)**
- Water in your lungs
- Increasing shortness of breath even while resting
- A severe cough - dry/productive
- Severe fatigue while walking
- High pulse rate
- Blueness of face, lips, fingernails (a sign of the body’s inability to transport oxygen into the blood)

**Symptoms of HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema)**
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Walking like an intoxicated person
- Mental confusion/altered mental status
- Irritable - does not want to be bothered by other people
- Unconsciousness or coma
**Diamox** (generic: Acetazolamide) does reduce the symptoms of acute mountain sickness. However, IT DOES NOT PREVENT you from getting altitude sickness. It only allows your body to acclimatise better. Remember, Diamox has a number of side effects. Please be sure to try it before you climb. The golden rule is to not use anything on the mountain that you haven’t tried before. Please consult your doctor regarding the use of Diamox, as it is only available on prescription.

**How to try and prevent altitude sickness on Mount Kilimanjaro:**
- Hike slowly – “pole-pole” (the Kilimanjaro shuffle)
- No alcohol, sleeping pills or smoking
- Drink enough liquids (3-4 litres a day) to prevent dehydration
- Do not carry heavy daypacks (preferably 10-12 kg)
- Climb higher, sleep lower (routes are planned accordingly)
- Drink Diamox (please consult your doctor)

**Golden rules to follow:**
- Before your trip, please educate yourself about altitude sickness so that you can help yourself and others if needed.
- If you feel any altitude sickness symptoms, TELL SOMEBODY and especially your guide as he knows how to deal with it.
- Should you experience mild altitude sickness symptoms, stay at the same altitude until the symptoms are completely gone. Descend 100m or more if needed and try again once all previous symptoms have completely subsided.
- Start descending immediately if your symptoms get worse.
- Even when losing your appetite, it is of utmost importance that you eat to sustain your strength.
- Do not climb Kilimanjaro without travel insurance, which includes an evacuation option.

**Fitness**
Although a very fit person may be just as prone to AMS as an unfit person, the unfit individual is more likely to encounter worse symptoms of mild AMS. An overweight person needs more oxygen than a skinny person. Fatigue, which is a common symptom of AMS, will be particularly bad, leaving you twice as exhausted if you are unfit or very overweight.

**When you book with eXplore Plus Travel & Tours,** you will receive a comprehensive altitude guide that will help you prepare for Mount Kilimanjaro. You will also receive our exclusive fitness program, ensuring your climb is as pleasant as possible.

“eXplore Africa... our playground!”