

Altitude Sickness

Travelers ascending rapidly to altitudes greater than 8,000 feet are at increased risk for altitude sickness. This can occur with flights into cities at high elevations and with rapid ascents climbing and hiking. Risk for altitude sickness can be reduced by taking medication.

Acetazolamide 125 mg twice a day should be started on the day before ascent and continued for two days after reaching the destination altitude. If further ascent is planned, medication should be continued for two days after reaching the highest elevation. While acetazolamide will prevent high altitude illness it will not speed acclimatization. Travelers will still be short of breath until they adjust to the lower oxygen levels.