



# altitude sickness

At Eagle Rock's altitude of 7,522 feet, oxygen is about 45% less dense, and there is 50-80 percent less humidity in the air. Most people will notice a shortness of breath; some may experience dizziness, headaches and nausea. Most people will adjust to the altitude within a few days. Tips for the first few days include: eat lightly, drink plenty of water, get plenty of rest, keep physical exertions to a minimum and avoid any intake of alcohol. You will want to pack a refillable water bottle.

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate! Eagle Rock School is perched in the mountains at a higher altitude than you are accustomed to. Combat the potential affects of altitude sickness by drinking an abundance of water (twice the amount you normally consume). It is also wise to limit the intake of alcohol and caffeine the first couple of days at altitude as they can cause dehydration.

Dr. Peter Hackett, an altitude specialist well known for his work on Everest and a primary caregiver at the Telluride Medical Center advises the following:

- Before traveling to altitude you may wish to ask your doctor about any current illnesses or conditions affecting you now that could be exacerbated by altitude, such as high blood pressure, angina, or pregnancy.
- Avoid over exertion upon arrival. Take it easy on the first day.
- Drink extra water - enough so urine is clear.
- At first sign of a headache, take ibuprofen, 400-600 milligrams can be very helpful.
- Best to avoid alcohol your first 24 hours.
- If you are coming straight from sea level, and do not have time to acclimatize at an intermediate altitude, you may want to consider using Diamox (by prescription), 125 mg. twice a day one day before travel or Ginkgo Bilboa (over the counter) 100 mg. twice a day starting 5 days before. Ibuprofen right before arrival prevents headaches.

Headache, nausea, trouble sleeping, dizziness are the symptoms. Seek treatment if symptoms continue longer than 24-48 hours or the symptoms are severe, such as vomiting, severe headache or difficulty breathing. It is quite common to have minor symptoms or difficulty breathing the first few hours at altitude.

Medical care may include the use of oxygen or medication. Although traveling to lower altitudes treats altitude sickness, very rarely do sufferers need to resort to these measures. Altitude sickness is often compared to sea sickness.

To see Eagle Rock's Family Nurse Practitioner please reach Eileen at x1018 or call Salud Clinic at 970.586.9230.