

Risk Factors for Altitude Sickness

Risk	People Who...	Tibet Itinerary Example
Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have not had altitude sickness before ascending to less than ~ 9100 feet / 2800 meters. • People who take at least 2 days to ascend to 8200 – 9800 feet / 2500 – 3000 meters, and who don't increase their sleeping elevation more than about 1600 feet / 500 meters a day after reaching 8200 feet / 2500 meters, and take an extra day of rest for acclimatization every 3300 feet / 1,000 meters (by not ascending any higher that day) 	A trip to Amdo in which you train or fly into Siling/Xining (7200 feet / 2200 meters), sleep in Siling, and take day trips to Kumbum Monastery, Kokonor Lake (Chinese: Qinghai), Guide, Yoningsi Monastery, the Datong Forest and Cha Han Hotsprings.
Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have not had altitude sickness before ascending to between 9200 feet/2800 meters and 11,400 feet/3500 meters in one day. • People who have had AMS previously, and who ascend to 8200-9200 feet/2500-2800 meters in one day. • Anyone ascending over 1600 feet/500 meters a day (in sleeping elevation) above 11,400 feet/3500 meters. 	A visitor on a second trip to Tibet who experienced mild AMS in Lhasa on her first trip now flies from Chengdu into Dartsedo (Chinese: Kangding, 8500 feet/2590 meters). If she remains in Dartsedo for 2-3 days to acclimate, the risk would remain moderate, but if she were to move on to Lhagang (Chinese: Tagong, ~ 12,000 feet/3700 meters) on her first day, her risk would increase to high.
High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone ascending to more than 11,400 feet/3500 meters in one day. • Anyone who ascends more than 1,600 feet/500 meters per day in sleeping elevation at altitudes above 11,400 feet/3500 meters. • People who have had AMS previous, and who ascend to ~ 9200 feet/2800 meters or more in one day. • Anyone who has already had HAPE or HACE. 	Flying from near sea level (like Beijing, Shanghai or Chengdu) into Lhasa.

Disclaimer

The information provided here is for educational purposes only, to give you general information and understanding of altitude sickness, not to provide specific medical advice. By reading this you understand that there is no professional relationship between you and the authors. It is critical that you consult with your physician before you decide that it is safe for you to travel to Tibet, and before you take any of the medicines or steps mentioned here.

Credits

- International Society for Mountain Medicine ISMM
- Wilderness Medical Society Consensus Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Acute Altitude Illness
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's CDC Health Information for the International Traveler, chapter on altitude sickness

