



Altitude Illness

Aliases

Acute mountain sickness (AMS)
High altitude cerebral edema (HACE)

Altitude sickness
High altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE)

Definitions

1. Acute mountain sickness: Headache plus one or more of the following: anorexia, nausea or vomiting, fatigue or weakness, dizziness or lightheadedness or difficulty sleeping. (In infants and young children, symptoms include pallor, fussiness, vomiting, decreased appetite, poor sleep, decreased playfulness.) These symptoms must occur in the setting of recent arrival to high altitude (generally considered greater than 5000 – 7000 feet)
2. High altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE): Progressive dyspnea, cough, hypoxia, and weakness in high altitude environments (considered greater than 8000 feet). (In infants and young children, symptoms again include pallor, fussiness, vomiting, decreased appetite, poor sleep, decreased playfulness.) Patients may or may not exhibit new symptoms if acute mountain sickness precedes symptoms of HAPE
3. High altitude cerebral edema (HACE): Heralded by mental status changes in patients with symptoms of acute mountain sickness including altered mentation, ataxia, or stupor and progressing to coma. Typically seen in high altitude environments (greater than 8000 feet)
4. Feet to meters conversion reference:

Feet	Meters
8000 ft	Approximately 2400 m
7000 ft	Approximately 2100 m
5000 ft	Approximately 1500 m
1000 ft	Approximately 300 m
500 ft	Approximately 150 m

Patient Care Goals

1. Improve oxygenation through a combination of descent and supplemental O₂
2. Safe but rapid transport from the high-altitude environment to a lower altitude environment

Patient Presentation

Inclusion Criteria

1. Patients suffering from altitude illness, including
 - a. Acute mountain sickness
 - b. High altitude pulmonary edema
 - c. High altitude cerebral edema

Exclusion Criteria

When protocol is inapplicable.