

Acclimatization In High Altitude For Adults And Kids

Ladakh, the land of high passes, of pristine beauty, and of fortress-like Buddhist monasteries, is an extraordinary holiday destination. This high-altitude region offers so much, and domestic as well as international travellers come here to experience a unique holiday.

The average altitude of more than 3,500 metres, however, demands some preparations so that the body adjustment can be a successful one for both adults and children.

In this article, we are sharing with you some easy precautions as well as few hints to meet the altitude, so that you can fully enjoy a journey to Ladakh, or any other mountain destination in high altitude.

The journey starts in your mind

It is important that we, no matter whether travelling individually or with our kid(s), keep an attentive and open mind. We often have the tendency to think too much, right? This leads to sorrows that can lead to a negative decision making.

Carelessness, on the other hand, is no option either. Therefore, we have to try to find a good balance between a positive attitude and a «healthy» respect in front of the high altitude.

Preparations before the journey

When embarking to any destination, some arrangements have to be done, like checking the own travel insurance, procuring the necessary visa(s), thinking what to pack etc. But besides the administrative and practical preparations, there is also a possible physical preparation that can be done, for example:

a) get/stay fit and healthy

A healthy life-style is essential, not only for travelling, but generally for your well-being. However, if you are planning to do a trekking or to climb a peak in Ladakh, a good constitution is an absolute must. People with sleeping difficulties, pulmonary diseases, heart problems or any serious injury to their body (back, neck, joints) should consult their doctor before undertaking any booking to high mountain regions.

People coming to Ladakh already having influenza symptoms or a cold will face more difficulties to adapt to the altitude. Our experience has shown that these visitors often spend the first few days in bed to get better before they can start to undertake any activities in Ladakh.

Also, if you are working a stressful job with a high amount of hours per day or the preparations for your holiday vacation increases your work load massively, you may find that once arrived at your destination you probably will feel the exhaustion which in

turn can have a possible negative impact in your well-being in high altitude. In this case, try to start the preparation in good time, seek help from work colleagues etc.

b) regular hikes in the mountains at home

Does your timetable allow you to visit the mountains before travelling to Ladakh? If so, then take this advantage and enjoy beautiful walks in the mountains of your country, preferably at 2,500 metres and higher. Travelers whose last visit has been done shortly before their departure often had an easier acclimatization.

c) sessions in pressure chambers

Previously reserved for research purposes only, the session in pressure chambers is now available for common people with the adequate financial means, too. This is useful only when done shortly before the trip.

Flight travel vs. road journey to Ladakh

People have been asking many times what is better for acclimatization. Fly or travel by road into Ladakh? The journey by road is a tough yet beautiful trip. Travelers were often struggling because the journey was long, they were tired, and additionally had to cope with their acclimatization to the altitude.

We therefore propose: Fly into Ladakh in the most direct way possible, acclimatize, and do your program here. When your schedule allows it, you can leave Ladakh by road via Keylong, and Manali to Delhi, and then fly back home. We are sure that in this way you can enjoy your holiday to the fullest, and cherish your memories of the entire journey for a long time.

Follow some simple rules after arrival

Flying into Ladakh means that you will reach Leh early in the morning. This city with approximately 30,000 inhabitants lies on an altitude of about 3,500 metres. You may will feel not well rested because of the long journey from home, so relax in your room or even take a short nap during the morning. Eat a good meal, and try to walk a little (no climbs!) after your light lunch to get some easy exercise. For example, you can explore the main market, get accustomed to the area, and have a nice cup of tea or coffee in one of the many cafes. After an early and warm dinner, go to bed in good time so that your body gets a good night's rest.

We agree that "just doing nothing" after arrival, is quite difficult. You are excited, and want to explore the surroundings, right? Which is ok if it is done consciously, and calmly. Concentrate on your breath, and listen to your body. You will find out what suits you and what does not.

If you are travelling with your little ones, keep a watchful eye on them, too, to see how they react to the altitude. Are they their usual self or do they behave differently? If need be, there are enough pharmacies in the market, and the hospital is not far away.

It is also important, that you and your family members drink a lot. Water, tea, preferably with little sugar or honey, and salted soups should be consumed in good quantity. Your intake should reach around two litres daily, and please be aware of, and check your liquids regularly. In this way, your body stays hydrated, and receives enough electrolytes.

Oxygen is equally important, so sitting around in the accommodation is not really an option. Walk around, slowly and steady, and try to breathe as deeply as possible. Sleeping during the night with your elevated upper body or with an open window might help, too. If you are a light sleeper, than ear plugs are a good option to bring along.

Additionally, do keep an eye on your diet the first two to three days. Avoid too heavy food, like fried things, meat, eggs, dairy products as they are heavy to digest. Please remember that your body already has to adapt to the altitude and is quite busy with it. Do not put it additionally under pressure with digestion problems. Also, do not expose your body too much, keep warm as that helps with staying well.

Should you or any of your family members feel unwell on the day of arrival, and needs to vomit, please do not feel ashamed of doing so. Vomiting actually releases pressure in your body, besides that it does get rid of something that your body does not accept, and you will feel immediate relief afterwards. The same applies also to farting or to passing stool.

If you or anybody of your group should feel unwell for more than one day, kindly consult a medical doctor at the hospital. They are a competent source, and will advise you accordingly. Needed medication can be bought in the pharmacies in front of the hospital or in Leh main market.