

High Altitude Preparation

Denver is the location of MPMA's 2017 conference. It is called the Mile-High City because it is located a mile up from sea level. That has implications for how you may feel when you come to Denver.

Please read the following guidelines so that you will know what to do if you don't "feel so well." Altitude sickness is NOT a disease and not everyone gets it. But if you do, you can quickly recover and feel better if you do a few things.

Note: Drink lots of water
One alcohol drink at sea level equals two at altitude

GUIDELINES

A general rule of thumb is the closer you live to sea level, the harder of a time you'll have when visiting higher altitudes. When flying into Denver at 5280 ft above sea level (and traveling into the mountains), it's a good idea to know how to prepare yourself for the transition. Also, be aware of the symptoms of altitude sickness or acute mountain sickness.

Hydration. Make sure to **drink plenty of water** before you arrive to Denver and throughout the conference. You cannot drink too much water, especially at altitude. This can also help alleviate headaches. Most importantly, you want to add water to your body, not deplete it. Coffee and alcohol intensify the negative effects of the altitude, so plan to curb your intake of both until you become acclimated. Don't like drinking plain water? Gatorade packets, Emergen-C, Nuun tablets are all electrolyte supplements that can be added to your water.

Acclimate Slowly. Those driving in will have more opportunity for this, but this is especially important if you plan on doing any physical activity with or without elevation gain. Once at your destination give yourself a day or so to catch up on hydration, acclimate to the elevation, and get some rest. If incorporating physical activities like hiking make sure to listen to your body; take a rest when you need it, have plenty of water and snacks with you and don't push it too hard. Your fitness level at sea level is not the same at altitude.

Eat! When all is said and done, complex carbohydrates allow you to use oxygen more efficiently and help maintain your energy levels—both important factors in preventing altitude sickness. So leave your Atkins Diet book at home, and plan on eating plenty of complex carbohydrates including whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes.

Know the Symptoms. Awareness is always the first step. And remember you are not a weenie, you are at altitude!

Symptoms of altitude sickness can surface with even the healthiest athletes and are NOT a sign of weakness!

- Headaches

- Dizziness
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fatigue/loss of energy
- Insomnia

All can be prevented with knowledge and care, but if any symptoms become unbearable do not hesitate to call for medical assistance. Always better to be on the safe side and get the care that you need than to let the symptoms worsen.

And please: consult your doctor well in advance of your trip to Denver for additional recommendations based on your medical history.