

Medical Considerations

General

Experience has shown that in some cases this type of activity may cause or aggravate certain injuries. In almost all cases, however, these injuries have arisen due to inadequate preparation by participants.

The most common injuries are:

- Blistering feet
- Back abrasions from inadequate pack walking preparation
- Inflammation around ankles and knees (also generally due to poor preparation)
- Lower back complaints (once again usually caused through poor preparation)

Medical Guide

In line with all our guidance, as many contingencies as possible have been taken into account, endeavouring to ensure your safety and your enjoyment of the trek. The following advice is offered for your information:

1. Body Weight- participants should commence the trek with a small quantity of body fat. You can assess the amount of body fat you are carrying by pinching a fold of your skin. Too much body fat will compound the risk of heat illness and injuries. Too little fat results in inadequate energy reserves.

2. Heat Illness - the best preparation against heat illness is to be physically fit and as acclimatised to the heat as possible. Full acclimatisation is achieved by working/exercising under warm conditions, and drinking lots of fluids while doing so.

3. Blisters - blisters are caused by friction on the skin and occur at points where footwear puts pressure on points of the feet and where toes rub together. The best prevention is adequate training in the footwear to be worn on the trek. Rubbing or soaking the feet in methylated spirits every second day will help 'toughen them up'. Blistering between the toes can be prevented by applying Bepanthen Nappy rash cream between them. A 'hot spot' can be taped with plain Elastoplast to permit continuing activity while preventing blister formation. We recommend Our Spirit Socks to help prevent blisters.

Health

Looking after your own, and your trek mates, health is essential. Remember that one person becoming sick or lame will slow down or stop the entire group. To provide appropriate medical care all members of Our Spirit Pty Ltd staff are qualified in Wilderness and Remote Area First Aid.

However, the following points in regard to health must be noted:

1. Doctor's Examination – we recommend all participants must have a thorough check-up before commencing their training, ensuring there are no serious problems with their heart and lungs (respiratory system)..

2. Inoculations - advice should be sought from your doctor as to what precautionary 'shots' you should have. However, consultation with Travellers Medical and Vaccination Centre (TMVC) regarding the preventative requirements for New Guinea has revealed the following information:

- Hepatitis A - 6 weeks prior
- Typhoid - 6 weeks prior
- Tetanus - booster shot

TMVC can be contacted on (07) 3221 9066.

3. Malaria - Malaria is prevalent in the trek area. It is imperative that you seek the most up to date advice regarding antimalarial treatment from your doctor. The use of preventative tablets is essential. However, these tablets should be used in conjunction with mosquito nets and insect repellents. If the precautions suggested by your guides are followed carefully malaria should not be an issue.

Health Services Australia suggests the use of 100 milligrams (1 x tablet) of Doxycycline daily, 2 days before departure, daily during the trek, and 4 weeks after return. Doxycycline is a broad spectrum anti-biotic which has been found to be effective against malaria. Safe practice information on hygiene and water will be given prior to commencement of the trek.

Finally

Your Our Spirit Pty Ltd team is experienced in field health requirements; however, if you have any specific medical condition that your doctor considers should be brought to our attention you must ensure it is made available to us at Our Spirit..

If you have any allergies, are asthmatic, diabetic or are currently taking any medication, please note that information on the space provided on the information sheet. It is your responsibility to provide your own medications for any special conditions.