



Kilimanjaro Altitude Symptom Checklist

Recognize altitude illness early. Early detection and clear guide communication improve the chance of a safe, well-managed climb.

Version: June 2026 • Prepared by Kilimania Adventure, Moshi, Tanzania



Senior Guide Sabinus Msimba at high altitude on Kilimanjaro — 22 years guiding, 300+ summit ascents, KINAPA-licensed. This checklist reflects the symptom-monitoring routine our guides run with every client, every day, on the mountain.

Photo: Sabinus Msimba, frost-covered at altitude during a Kilimanjaro ascent.

NORMAL ACCLIMATIZATION SYMPTOMS — USUALLY EXPECTED

- Mild headache
- Slight loss of appetite
- Mild shortness of breath during exercise
- Light fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased urination

Note: These symptoms are common above 3,000m and usually improve with rest, hydration, and gradual ascent.

WARNING SIGNS OF ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS (AMS)

Symptom	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Headache	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nausea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vomiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dizziness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of appetite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FIELD SAFETY DOCUMENT

Altitude Symptom Recognition & Reporting Tool

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Symptom	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Instruction: If symptoms worsen despite rest, notify your guide immediately.

EMERGENCY SYMPTOMS — TELL YOUR GUIDE IMMEDIATELY

- Severe headache not relieved by medication
- Vomiting repeatedly
- Shortness of breath at rest
- Extreme weakness
- Confusion or unusual behavior
- Difficulty walking in a straight line
- Persistent cough
- Chest tightness
- Blue or gray lips
- Loss of consciousness

DESCEND IMMEDIATELY IF THESE SYMPTOMS DEVELOP.

HACE WARNING SIGNS (High Altitude Cerebral Edema)

- Confusion
- Hallucinations
- Loss of coordination
- Staggering walk
- Slurred speech
- Altered mental state

Emergency Note: HACE is life-threatening. Immediate descent and medical treatment are essential.

HAPE WARNING SIGNS (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema)

- Breathlessness at rest
- Wet or persistent cough
- Pink frothy sputum

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- Chest congestion
- Crackling sounds in lungs
- Inability to keep pace

Emergency Note: HAPE is a medical emergency requiring immediate descent.

DAILY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Day: _____ Camp: _____

Altitude (m): _____ SpO₂ (%): _____

Pulse Rate (bpm): _____

Hydration Level: Good Fair Poor

How do you feel today: Excellent Good Fair Poor

Guide Comments:

Never hide altitude symptoms from your guides. Early reporting improves the chance of safe descent, better decision-making, and timely guide intervention.

Prepared by: Senior Guide Sabinus Msimba
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Disclaimer: This checklist is educational and does not replace professional medical advice. Always consult a physician before high-altitude travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing heart, lung, or other chronic medical condition.