



Maccabi USA

Medical Advisory Committee

Altitude Guidelines for Pan Am Maccabi Games 2019- Team Members

Acclimatizing to elevation takes some time. Your body will usually adjust surprisingly quick to the change of altitude given the right amount of rest and hydration. If you know that you have difficulty with altitude, please make us aware before we depart for the Games by indicating in the space provided on your Team USA Medical Forms in CareMonkey. Most medical literature shows that arriving almost immediately prior to competition, less than one day, or over 1 week prior are the two best options; our Games, timing, and finances will not allow for this. The Maccabi USA Medical Team will guide you on best practices for competing at altitude in Mexico City.

At altitudes above 5000 feet there is less oxygen. Mexico City is just above 7000 feet; therefore, some people may have symptoms that affect both how they feel and how they perform. These include, but are not limited to:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Increased heart rate

Many will be shorter of breath than usual when exercising. Please notify your coach or our medical team if any of these symptoms or others are occurring.

Here are some key tips to help you acclimatize at elevation:

Take it easy upon arrival – Do not plan an abundance of activity for your first day or two. Give your body time to acclimatize to the change in altitude and lower oxygen levels. We plan to arrive on Friday and don't compete until Sunday. Take advantage of this time to rest, enjoy Shabbat, and get a full night's sleep. Take a short nap in the afternoon if you like, or at least rest; light practices are recommended initially without full exertion.

Drink lots of fresh water – Drink a minimum of 1 quart of water every three hours or 4-6 quarts per day. You can add a pinch of salt or use a sports drink to help maintain hydration and boost recovery. Staying thoroughly hydrated is really important at high elevations, even if you don't feel thirsty. If your urine is clear or light yellow you are likely hydrated; if it is darker, please drink more water.

Maintain a healthy diet – Hydration and energy can be maintained through consumption of fruits, vegetables, carbohydrates, and low-fat foods. When first arriving at high altitude your body uses more blood sugar as a fuel source during rest and during exercise. Fatigue and low blood sugar levels will occur more quickly at the same intensity of activity at altitude compared to sea level, if increased carbohydrate intake does not occur. Energy bars are a great source of protein and carbohydrates.

Stay protected against the sun – Wear a sun-hat and use protective sun lotion; you will be closer to the sun and can burn easier. Stay protected even on overcast days, as UV rays penetrate cloud cover.

Stop your alcohol intake – Wine, beer, and liquor will process faster and the effects will last longer when you drink alcohol in places with high elevation. Alcohol also contributes to dehydration, so you should cut out alcohol use until after you have completed all your competitions. Within a few days, most people find that their body has acclimatized to higher elevation and the side-effects diminish. It is important to keep yourself well hydrated and watch your alcohol intake even after you have acclimatized. As a reminder, the Team USA drinking age is 21.

Finally, and possibly most important, altitude will likely cause you to feel less conditioned. It is critical to maximize your training and conditioning to its highest level prior to arrival at the Games. Again, the coaches and medical team will guide you in this process.

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August 2018