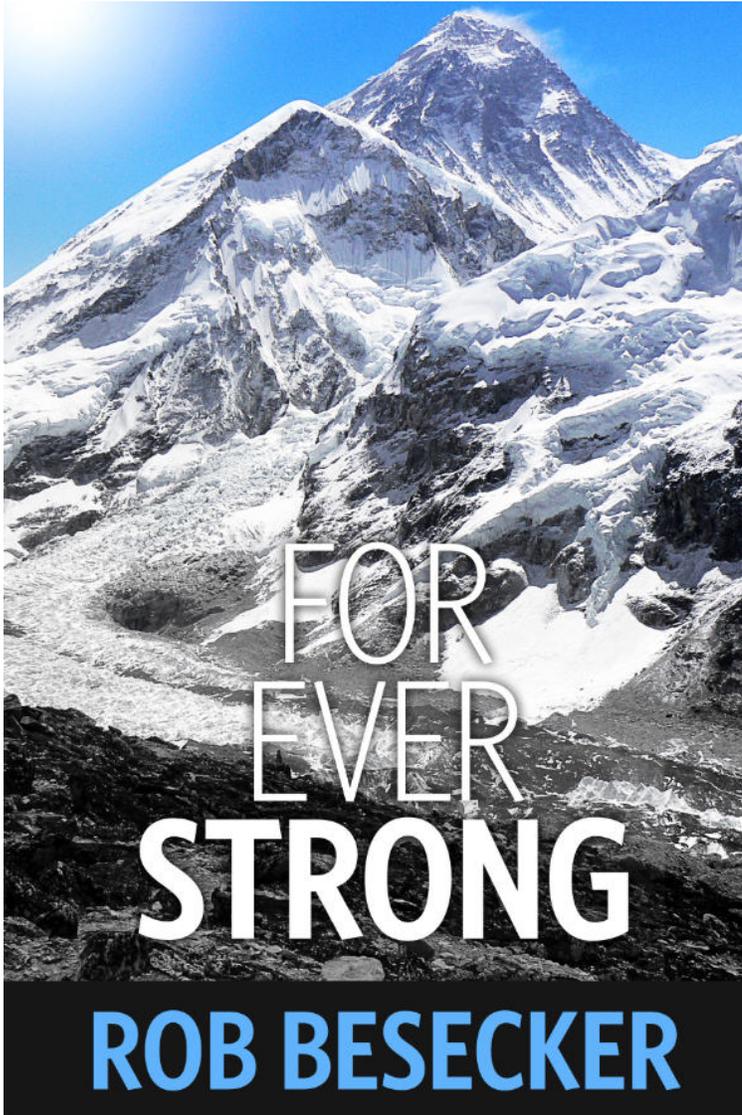


# MT. EVEREST BASE CAMP TREK:

2015



My name is Rob Besecker. My sister, Chris Griffin, and I will be taking an amazing journey in the spring of 2015 that we would like to share with you. We are going on a hiking expedition to the base camp of Mt. Everest!

This trip has a deep meaning to me as it represents both a physical and mental challenge. I believe that each one of us has our own personal "Everest" to climb. In my case, along with my symbolic Everest, I am actually venturing to the highest mountain on Earth.

Due to genetic predisposition, I have been suffering from chronic and progressive heart ailments and muscular dystrophy for years. In 2011 alone, I endured 20 Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) shocks, 5 cardiac related surgeries, 7 ER visits, 6 ambulance rides, 5 calls to 911, and a collapsed lung.

Many people, including some of my physicians and closest friends, questioned my recovery and whether or not I would survive. Although 2011 was a horrible year for me, I was determined to move forward by living my life one day at a time.

Mt. Everest represents a major goal for me.

This hiking expedition is going to be the exclamation point on my recovery. At the same time, it will also conclude another project I have been working on for more than 10 years. In fact, I am in the process of writing my memoir, which is also meant to be a motivational and an inspirational book.

The title of my memoir, "For Ever Strong", has a deep meaning to me. It embraces several aspects of my life: my turning 40, setting a goal to trek to the base camp of Mt. Everest, and remaining strong throughout the obstacles I have had to overcome. By sharing my story, I would like to show people that no matter what life throws at you, you can still be in charge of who you are, what you do, and where you go.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all to join me on this incredible journey. With your help and support, I am sure both the book and hiking expedition to Mt. Everest will be a huge success!



We will follow the classic route through the Sherpa heartland to the foot of the world's highest peak of Mt. Everest (8848m). There is no greater mountain on earth and this lodge-based trek follows in the footsteps of the great climbing parties attempting to ascend the mountain from the Nepalese side. Trekking through Sherpa country past cultivated fields and small villages, the trail follows the Dudh Kosi before the hard work begins as we climb up to Namche Bazaar. Above the tree-line, the scenery is stark but spectacular. The incredible monastery at Thyangboche is a photographer's paradise and a highlight of the trek set against the backdrop of Ama Dablam, Mt. Everest and other huge, snowcapped peaks. With time for acclimatization en route, our goal is Mt. Everest Base Camp on the Khumbu glacier and the opportunity to climb Kala Pattar (5545m) for a breathtaking view of Everest and one of the greatest mountain panoramas on earth.



## TENTATIVE ITINERARY for EVEREST BASE CAMP TREK: SPRING 2015

### DAY (DURATION) ITINERARY (ALTITUDE) (OVERNIGHT)

- 1 (ALL DAY) Depart Home
- 2 (ALL DAY) Travel Day / Time Difference
- 3 (All Day) Arrive in Kathmandu (Hotel Yak & Yeti)
- 4 (All Day) Trip meeting / Gear Check / Sightseeing Tour / Welcome Dinner (Hotel Yak & Yeti)
- 5 (4-5 Hrs.) Flight to Lukla / Lukla <sup>(9300)</sup> to Monjo <sup>(9300)</sup> (Mt Kailish Lodge or Monju Guest House)
- 6 (4-5 Hrs.) Monjo to Namche Bazaar <sup>(11286)</sup> (Hotel Namche)
- 7 (All Day) Acclimatization day in Namche Bazaar <sup>(11286)</sup> / Hike to Everest View Hotel (Hotel Namche)
- 8 (5 Hrs.) Namche Bazaar to Thame <sup>(12467)</sup> (Sunshine Lodge)
- 9 (5 Hrs.) Thame to Khumjung <sup>(12401)</sup> (Amadablam Lodge)
- 10 (6 Hrs.) Khumjung to Tengboche <sup>(12664)</sup> to Deboche <sup>(12532)</sup> (Rivendell Lodge)
- 11 (4 Hrs.) Deboche to Dingboche <sup>(14450)</sup> / (Everest Resort)
- 12 (All Day) Acclimatization day in Dingboche <sup>(14450)</sup> / visit HRA clinic (Everest Resort)
- 13 (4-5 Hrs.) Dingboche to Lobuche <sup>(16109)</sup> (Eco Lodge)
- 14 (4-5 Hrs.) Lobuche to Gorek Shep <sup>(16863)</sup>
- 15 (4-5 Hrs.) Gorek Shep to Kala Pattar <sup>(18514)</sup> / back to Gorek Shep <sup>(16863)</sup> (Buddha Lodge)
- 16 (6 Hrs.) Gorek Shep to Everest Base Camp <sup>(17508)</sup> to Lobuche <sup>(16109)</sup> (Buddha Lodge)
- 17 (6-7 Hrs.) Lobuche to Pheriche <sup>(13911)</sup> (Himalayan Lodge)
- 18 (8 Hrs.) Pheriche to Namche Bazaar <sup>(11286)</sup> (Hotel Namche)
- 19 (6 Hrs.) Namche Bazaar to Lukla <sup>(9300)</sup> (Namaste Lodge)
- 20 (All Day) Fly to Kathmandu (Weather Permitting) (Hotel Yak & Yeti)
- 21 (All Day) Morning city tour of Kathmandu / Farewell Dinner (Hotel Yak & Yeti)
- 22 (All Day) Depart Kathmandu
- 23 (All Day) Arrive Home

**COST – US \$3,200 PER PERSON:**

**COST INCLUDES:**

- 4 nights hotel accommodation at Hotel Yak & Yeti in Kathmandu
- 2 dinners in Kathmandu—Welcome and Farewell Dinner
- Accommodation and food will be provided in lodges
- Airport transfers
- Ground transportation and domestic airfare (Kathmandu to Lukla) as per the itinerary
- Sightseeing in Kathmandu Valley's major sights with a tour guide
- Tips for local staff members
- Trek staff fees such as trekking guide, assistant guides, porters and their accommodations, food, insurance, and salary
- Trekking permit and National Park entry fees

**COST EXCLUDES:**

- Any government revenue/airfare changes without notice
- Any personal expenses – E.g. telephone calls and laundry
- Extra expenses per member will be approximately US\$ 300, which includes a few souvenirs / water bottles / drinks
- First aid kit, personal insurance, rescue flights, airport taxes
- Hard and soft drinks, including water (water should be boiled, bottled, or UV purified)
- Helicopter flight in case of bad weather (US\$ 4, 000 one way for 6 people)
- International airfare and excess baggage fees
- Personal trekking gear

**NOTES:**

- It is highly recommended that each traveler **purchase trip cancellation insurance and evacuation insurance.**
- ***A non-refundable deposit of \$500 must be sent to Chris Griffin by January 1, 2015.***

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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## NEPAL FACTS:



Official Name:	Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
Abbreviation:	NPL
Capital:	Kathmandu
Head of State:	President Ram Baran Yadav
Population:	32620000 (2011 estimate)
Area:	147,181 sq. km. (54,633 sq. mi.)
Time Zone:	5 hours 45 minutes ahead of GMT
Language:	Nepali (official)
Religion:	Hinduism (major) and Buddhism, Islam and Catholic.
Unit of Currency:	Rupee
National Emblems:	The rhododendron; a white cow; a green pheasant; two Gurkha soldiers, one carrying a khukri and a bow and an arrow and the other a modern rifle; peaks of the Himalaya Mountains; the moon and the sun, both with faces showing Hindu caste marks, two crossed Nepali flags and khukris; the footprints of Gorakhnath, the guardian deity of the Gurkhas; and the royal headdress. At the base of the design a red scroll carries the national motto in Sanskrit: "The Motherland Is Worth More than the Heaven."
National Anthem:	"Sayau Thunga Phool Ka"
National Holidays:	Republic Day: May 28th State Declaration: January 15th
Independence Day:	February 18th
National Calendar:	The Nepali year begins in mid-April and is divided into 12 months: Baisakh, Jestha, Asadh, Shrawan, Bhadra, Aswin, Kartik, Marga, Poush, Phalgun, Chaitra.

Saturday is the official weekly holiday.

Date of Unification: 1768 (by Prithvi Narayan Shah)

Date of Constitution: The constitutional Assembly of 601 parliament members is in process of drafting the country's constitution under the provision provided by Interim constitution drafted on May 28th, 2007. (1951, 1959, 1962, 1990 are previous constitution enacted dates).

Weights and Measures: Traditional measures are commonly used.  
The most important of these are ropani = 0.05

### **DO'S AND DON'TS IN NEPAL:**

- Try not to point with a single finger, but use a flat extended hand... especially to indicate a sacred object or place.
- To show appreciation and respect, use two hands rather than one when giving or receiving something, even money.
- Remove your shoes when entering a home, temple, or monastery (and leather items in Hindu temples).
- Public affection is frowned upon.
- Please refrain from giving candy, pens, and money to children, but instead donate to a school, monastery, or hospital.
- Most Nepalese don't mind being photographed, but some do. Ask first, especially with older people or ceremonies.
- Men should wear shirts at all times
- It is illegal to export anything older than 100 years.
- Among Hindus, avoid touching women and holy men. The traditional palms together "Namaste" greeting is preferable.

## **EQUIPMENT LIST:**

A wide array of clothing will be necessary for this trip. You will need clothing for dining in Kathmandu, for cold weather protection in the high altitudes, and for trekking in the humidity and heat. You are expected to arrive with the all of the equipment listed below, as it is the minimum required for the trip—particularly the cold weather items which are essential for comfort and warmth in the mountains.

The brand of gear you choose is entirely up to you and there are many options available. A good place to start is REI (Recreational Equipment Inc., [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)). Sale prices are often found at [www.rei.com/outlet/](http://www.rei.com/outlet/). Patagonia ([www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com)) has very high quality gear and a strong environmental commitment. It is probably best to find an outdoor store in your area so you can ensure a good fit before you purchase your gear.

Equipment for mountain travel should follow two simple purposes: lightweight and functional. Items that you pack should be lightweight, dependable, and adaptable to a variety of harsh conditions. Cotton clothing should be avoided because it dries slowly and is a poor insulator when it gets wet. Instead, choose wool or synthetic fabrics that “wick” moisture and sweat away from your skin to keep you warmer.

The layering system outlined below is sufficient for most people. However, if you tend to get cold easily, bring one extra medium layer, such as a vest, which will provide additional warmth around camp. Please remember that figuring out what to pack is a balance between taking just enough clothes to keep you warm and comfortable, yet not overburdening yourself or others with items you probably won't use.

*All clothing should be kept dry using waterproof stuff sacks or large plastic bags.*

### **UPPER BODY:**

- 4 long sleeve synthetic or wool shirts (lightweight and light colored for sunny days)
- 2 women's sports bras (synthetic, not cotton!)
- 1 expedition down parka with hood - E.g. Mountain Hardwear Sub Zero SL Hooded Jacket
- 1 pair of liner gloves (thin wool or polypropylene) - E.g. Mt. Hardwear Power Stretch Glove
- 1 pair of warm gloves with water resistant shell - E.g. Mountain Hardwear Spearhead Mitt
- 1 synthetic or wool t-shirt
- 1 warm fleece or synthetic sweater or jacket – E.g. Patagonia R3 Jacket
- 1 warm wool or synthetic hat (beanie) that covers your ears
- 1 waterproof outer jacket with hood (Gore-Tex is strongly recommended) - E.g. Mountain Hardwear Typhoon Jacket
- 1 wind and water resistant soft shell jacket - E.g. Mountain Hardwear Alchemy Jacket, Patagonia Guide Jacket or Patagonia Wind Shield Jacket

- ☐ 100% UV protection glacier glasses with side shields and a hard-sided storage case (Don't spend \$200; you can get glasses from Walgreens that work great!)
- ☐ Buff ([www.buffwear.com](http://www.buffwear.com))
- ☐ Shade hat or baseball cap

### **LOWER BODY:**

- ☐ 4 pair of lightweight synthetic or wool trekking socks
- ☐ 2-4 pairs of liner socks (polypropylene or synthetic) - Optional
- ☐ 2 pair of lightweight long underwear (polypropylene or capilene)
- ☐ 2 pair of lightweight zip off trekking pants – E.g. REI Sahara Convertible Pants
- ☐ 2 pair of warm, medium to heavy weight synthetic or wool socks
- ☐ 1 Pair of hard-shell pants (waterproof / breathable with ankle zip for easy on and off) - E.g. Mountain Hardwear Epic Pant
- ☐ 1 pair of light to medium weight trekking boots (should be warm and fit well over light and heavy sock combinations, too tight of a fit will lead to cold feet, fit is more important than brand, please break in boots before the trip!)
- ☐ 1 pair of lightweight sandals for spending time at camp or in Kathmandu - Optional
- ☐ 1 pair of running shoes (some prefer over boots for hiking at lower elevations) - Optional
- ☐ 1 pair of warm pants, ideally with side zips for easy venting – E.g. Mountain Hardwear Windstopper Tech Pants
- ☐ Compact down booties - E.g. North Face NSE Tent Bootie - Optional

*Women should plan to wear skirts or pants when in Kathmandu for cultural reasons (all clothing should be kept dry using stuff sacks, large trash bags, or a water proof duffle bag.*

### **SLEEPING GEAR:**

- ☐ 1 down sleeping bag rated between 10° and -20°F

### **PACK GEAR:**

Please bring the following 3 types of bags

- 1) 1 bag or sack of any type to leave behind

On the morning that we fly to Lukla (Day 3), you will bring this bag to the secure storage at the Hotel lobby with any items not needed during the trek (Items may include: non-trekking clothes, items purchased shopping, electronics etc.)

- 2) 1 large (7,500+ Cubic inch duffel bag for gear)

Must be durable for use on pack animals, but may not be rigid, contain hard elements (such as handles), or have wheels (this bag will be delivered to your room each afternoon, you will not have access to it while on the trail) Less than 32 lbs. limit for this bag (Lukla flight).

3) 1 large daypack (approximately 2,400 cubic inches)

Although we will be using Yaks and porters to carry our gear, you will want everything needed for a full day in this pack – E.g. rain gear, water, snacks, camera etc. (this bag may be packed with a max of 12 lbs. for the plane flight to Lukla)

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

- 4 small containers of waterless hand sanitizer (important!!! – Keep one in your pocket)
- 3-4 large plastic bags for keeping miscellaneous gear dry
- 2 one-liter, wide-mouth water bottles and 1 insulator (Nalgene is recommended)
- 2 sticks of lip balm, at least SPF 20 (taping a string to the tube allows it to hang around your neck and increases ease of use)
- 1 pair of adjustable trekking poles (one or two folding system)
- 1 personal first-aid kit
- 1 watch with an alarm function or compact alarm clock
- 1 waterproof cover for your daypack
- 1 lightweight point and shoot camera or 1 large SLR - Optional
- Binoculars for viewing the route from the lower camps - Optional
- Camp towel, soap, and hand wipes
- Fanny pack or wallet for travel documents, money, and passport
- Favorite snack foods (no more than 2 pounds)
- Headlamp, spare bulbs, and batteries (Petzl Myo 3 or Black Diamond Gemini are recommended)
- Hydration bladder with drinking tube and tube insulator - Optional
- Insect repellent
- Instant hand warmers
- Nylon Stuff Sacks for food and gear storage (large Ziplocs are also useful)
- Paperback books, playing cards, mp3 player, etc...
- Pocket knife (small, Swiss Army type)
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 is recommended)
- Toilet paper stored in a plastic bag (most toilets in Nepal do not have toilet paper)
- Water purification chlorine dioxide tablets and SteriPen UV water purifier (enough for 50 liters)

## **FURTHER PLANNING AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

### **IMMUNIZATIONS:**

We suggest you check with a travel doctor 6 weeks before your trip to find out what vaccinations are recommended when traveling to Nepal. When this packet was written there were no required vaccinations for entry into Nepal. However, please refer to U.S. Government Center for Disease Control website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) or call the CDC international travelers hotline at 1-877-394-8747 for up to date information on vaccinations. Currently, there is no risk of Malaria in the areas of Nepal where we will be traveling.

### **WATER:**

Although it takes a little extra caution when drinking fluids in Nepal, it is essential to stay well hydrated. We advise that you do not drink any of the tap water in Nepal without boiling, purifying, or treating it. Bottled water is fine to drink and can be ordered at most restaurants. When ordering sodas, it is best to request them without ice as the ice can be made from tap water. We highly recommend a personal water pump or iodine or UV purification system so you will not have to worry about not having enough water.

### **FOOD:**

If you are wary of getting sick, then play it safe and eat only cooked foods or fresh fruit that you have peeled yourself when in Kathmandu. The best hotels and restaurants typically have high standards for hygiene and food preparation. “Cook it, boil it, peel it, or don’t eat it” is a good rule to follow in developing countries. In general, stay cautious, eat what appeals to you, and trust your senses.

### **DIARRHEA:**

Traveling to Nepal is going to be a big change for your body. Despite the many precautions we all take to stay healthy, occasionally one may experience diarrhea. The major problem associated with diarrhea is fluid loss leading to severe dehydration, so it is important to maintain sufficient fluid intake. Avoid caffeine and alcohol because they further dehydrate you. The best drinks are weak tea, mineral water, and caffeine-free soft drinks. Ideally it is best to let diarrhea run its course. However, this is uncomfortable and difficult on a trekking trip. You may want to bring an over-the-counter diarrhea remedy to minimize your discomfort or talk to your doctor about prescribing an antibiotic for travelers’ diarrhea such as Cipro. We also advise that you carry your own supply of toilet paper, as some of the restrooms in Nepal may not have any toilet paper.

### **PRESCRIPTIONS:**

If you need to bring prescription medications, be sure to have a plentiful supply along with the doctor’s prescription in case something happens to them. It is best to carry medications in your carry-on bag in case of lost luggage. If you wear prescription glasses or contacts, we advise that you bring a spare set.

### **VOLTAGE:**

Nepal’s electricity is 220 volts and most sockets allow for 2 or 3 round prongs (type C and D). If you plan on using your own 110-volt appliances, you will need a voltage converter—unless your appliance is designed to also work with 220 volts electricity (dual voltage). For example, most laptops and some electric shavers are designed to work both at 110 and 220 volts. Plugging in an appliance that is not designed to run on 220 volts electricity without using voltage converter will most likely kill it. Regardless of voltage, if your appliance has flat prongs, you will need a plug adapter as most Nepal

sockets are designed to accept round prongs. We recommend getting a plug adaptor before you leave!

#### **TIME:**

Nepal is 05:45 minutes ahead of GMT Standard Time.

#### **MONEY & EXPENSES:**

With regards to personal expenses, please note that American dollars are the preferred method of payment. Cash or cash in conjunction with a small amount of traveler's checks is another good option. Kathmandu also has over 20 ATM machines and many travelers simply withdraw money as needed. With regards to which type of money and how much—please bring what you are comfortable with. The list below should help with this. **Please call your bank and credit card companies and let them know that you will be in Nepal so that they will not freeze your account when you use your card.** Credit cards are accepted only at larger hotels. Smaller places do often accept credit cards, but charge a fee. We will work with you closely in Nepal to change money to Nepalese rupees for the trek and for use in Kathmandu.

- Most trekkers change \$500 in Nepal before departing on the trek. This money will be used for bottled drinks, tips, purchases made along the trek and shopping
- In Kathmandu restaurants, tip 10% (if service charge is not already on the bill).
- Drinks: We provide boiled water throughout the trek. Some people prefer to supplement this with bottled water which runs from \$1- \$3 per bottle along the trekking route. Note: you will need 4 bottles a day per person. Many hot and cold drinks such as tea, Tang, cocoa, coffee and juice are provided as a part of the trek.

#### **SHOPPING:**

Bartering is expected from street vendors in Nepal. A good rule of thumb is to start with roughly 1/2 of the cost and work out a deal from there. It is important to respect the vendor in this process—if you offer a price and the vendor agrees to it, you should always buy the item. Most vendors in Nepal will either not accept US dollars or will give you a poor exchange rate.

#### **THIEVERY:**

Although the locals are warm and friendly people, poverty and therefore thievery, is a problem. Always keep your wits about you and be aware of your surroundings. When with other people, watch out for each other. Large crowds are prime locations for pick-pocketing to occur. Keep your money in a money belt or a hidden pouch that you wear around your neck and under your shirt. When purchasing items, do not pull out a lot of money. We advise that you leave all valuable jewelry, including fancy watches, at home. Thieves often work in pairs or groups—one tries to distract you (i.e., by squirting food on your clothing) and, in your ensuing confusion, another one makes off with your belongings.

#### **ENTRY VISA:**

The easiest way to obtain a visa is in the Kathmandu airport. Upon arrival in the KTM airport, fill out the necessary forms, and proceed to the visa line. As visa prices frequently change, we suggest taking a variety of cash denominations (US dollars), such as (2) \$20.00 bills, (1) \$10.00 bill, and (1) \$5.00 bill. We will obtain a trekking permit for you in KTM.

- The current cost of a visa is \$40 and is subject to change.

- Please obtain a one month visa.
- **Please bring passport and 3 additional passport photos** (2 for visa / permit and 1 extra).
- US\$ 1 = 94 Nepalese rupees

It is best to bring passport photos with you. If you forget, it may be possible to get one taken at the airport for an additional cost.

### **FLYING TO KATHMANDU:**

Recommended Flight (Exact arrival times may vary)

- Air Arabia, Bahrain, Etihad, Fly Dubai, Gulf, Oman, and Qatar Airways offer several flights every day.
- Cathy Pacific, Malaysia, Silk Air, Thai, and Air Asia also have everyday flights that can do connecting flights to Nepal.
- Please check with your travel agent for the best route to reach Kathmandu.

### **Early Arrivals and Late Departures:**

We are happy to make hotel and airport pick up arrangements for those arriving early or departing after the scheduled itinerary. Please contact us within one month of your departure if you would like us to make these arrangements for you.

U.S. State Department Travel Advisories: <http://travel.state.gov>

### **FITNESS LEVELS:**

Your upcoming expedition will potentially be quite strenuous. We will maintain a slow, easy pace on the climb that will fit with almost anyone's abilities. Nonetheless, it is a strenuous high altitude hike. We recommend that you begin a fitness routine—especially one that includes regular hiking—as soon as you can, in order to be in top shape. The most frequent comment we have received over the years is that trekkers have underestimated the fitness level needed to fully enjoy their trip. Physical conditioning should be approached on two fronts:

- **Cardiovascular conditioning:** Improved by activity sustained for at least 45-60 minutes. Suggested activities include: running, bicycling, swimming, stepping, etc.
- **Strength conditioning:** Improved by training with free weights or Nautilus machines, push-ups, and sit-ups.
- *Please check with your physician before embarking on any strenuous physical activity.*

### **ALTITUDE ILLNESS:**

We all enjoy that tremendous view from a high location, but there are risks in going to high altitude and it's important to understand these risks.

### **What is High Altitude?**

Altitude is defined on the following scale High (8,000 - 12,000 feet [2,438 - 3,658 meters]), Very High (12,000 - 18,000 feet [3,658 - 5,487 meters]), and Extremely High (18,000+ feet [5,500+ meters]). Since relatively few people have been to such altitudes, it is hard to know who may be affected. There are no specific factors such as age, sex, or physical condition that correlate with susceptibility to altitude sickness. Some people get it and some people don't. Most people can go up to 8,000 feet (2,438 meters) with minimal effect. If you haven't been to high altitude before, it's important to be

cautious. If you have been at that altitude before with no problem, you can probably return to that altitude without problems as long as you are properly acclimatized.

### **What causes altitude illnesses?**

The concentration of oxygen at sea level is about 21% and the barometric pressure averages 760 mmHg. As altitude increases, the concentration remains the same but the number of oxygen molecules per breath is reduced. At 12,000 feet (3,658 meters) the barometric pressure is only 483 mmHg, so there are roughly 40% fewer oxygen molecules per breath. In order to properly oxygenate the body, your breathing rate (even while at rest) has to increase. This extra ventilation increases the oxygen content in the blood, but not to sea level concentrations. Since the amount of oxygen required for activity is the same, the body must adjust to having less oxygen. In addition, for reasons not entirely understood, high altitude and lower air pressure causes fluid to leak from the capillaries, which can cause fluid build-up in both the lungs and the brain. Continuing to higher altitudes without proper acclimatization can lead to potentially serious, even life-threatening illnesses.

### **ACCLIMATIZATION:**

The major cause of altitude illnesses is going too high too fast. Given time, your body can adapt to the decrease in oxygen molecules at a specific altitude. This process is known as acclimatization and generally takes 1-3 days at that altitude. For example, if you hike to 10,000 feet (3,048 meters), and spend several days at that altitude, your body acclimatizes to 10,000 feet (3,048 meters). If you climb to 12,000 feet (3,658 meters), your body has to acclimatize once again. A number of changes take place in the body to allow it to operate with decreased oxygen:

- The depth of respiration increases.
- The pressure in the pulmonary arteries is increased, "forcing" blood into portions of the lung, which are normally not used during sea level breathing.
- The body produces more red blood cells to carry oxygen
- The body produces more of a particular enzyme that facilitates the release of oxygen from hemoglobin to the body tissues.

Prevention of altitude illnesses falls into two categories: proper acclimatization and preventive medications. Our trekking route maximizes acclimatization. There are a few ways you can help your body adjust to altitude:

- Stay properly hydrated. Acclimatization is often accompanied by fluid loss, so you need to drink lots of fluids in order to remain properly hydrated. Urine output should be copious and clear.
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and other depressant drugs (including barbiturates, tranquilizers, and sleeping pills). These depressants further decrease the respiratory drive during sleep resulting in a worsening of the symptoms.
- Eat a high carbohydrate diet (more than 70% of your calories from carbohydrates) while at higher altitude.

### **PREVENTIVE MEDICATION FOR ALTITUDE ILLNESS:**

Diamox (Acetazolamide) allows you to breathe faster so that you can metabolize more oxygen, thereby minimizing the symptoms caused by poor oxygenation. This is especially helpful at night when the respiratory drive is decreased. Since it takes a while for Diamox to have an effect, it is advisable to start taking it 24 hours before you go to altitude and continue for at least five days at higher altitude. The recommended dose of the Himalayan Rescue Association Medical Clinic is 125 mg. twice a day (morning and night). Possible side effects of Diamox include tingling of the lips and

finger tips, blurring of vision, and alteration of taste which subside when the drug is stopped. Contact your physician for a prescription. Since Diamox is a sulfonamide drug, people who are allergic to sulfa drugs should not take Diamox. Diamox has also been known to cause severe allergic reactions to people with no previous history of Diamox or sulfa allergies. Dr. Frank Hubbell, Co-founder and Executive Director at Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities, recommends a trial course of the drug before going to a remote location where a severe allergic reaction could prove difficult to treat.

#### **MILD ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS (AMS):**

AMS is common at high altitudes. At elevations over 10,000 feet (3,048 meters), 75% of people will have mild symptoms. The occurrence of AMS is dependent upon the elevation, the rate of ascent, and individual susceptibility. Many people will experience mild AMS during the acclimatization process. Symptoms usually start 12-24 hours after arrival at altitude and begin to decrease in severity about the third day, as the body acclimatizes. The symptoms of Mild AMS are headache, dizziness, fatigue, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, nausea, disturbed sleep, and a general feeling of malaise. Symptoms tend to be worse at night and when the respiratory drive is decreased. Mild AMS does not interfere with normal activity and ascent can continue at a moderate rate. When hiking, it is essential that you communicate any symptoms of illness immediately to your trip leader. Basic treatment of the symptoms of mild AMS includes pain medications for headache and Diamox (see above).

#### **MODERATE AMS:**

Symptoms of moderate AMS include a severe headache that is not relieved by medication, nausea and vomiting, increasing weakness and fatigue, shortness of breath, and decreased coordination (ataxia). Normal activity is difficult, although the person may still be able to walk on his or her own. At this stage, only advanced medications or descent can reverse the problem. Descending even a few hundred feet may help and definite improvement will be seen in descents of 1,000-2,000 feet (305-610 meters). Twenty-four hours at the lower altitude will result in significant improvements. The person should remain at lower altitude until symptoms have subsided (up to 3 days). The best test for moderate AMS is to have the person "walk a straight line" heel to toe. Just like a sobriety test, a person with ataxia will be unable to walk a straight line. This is a clear indication that immediate descent is required. It is important that the person descend before the ataxia reaches the point where they cannot walk on his or her own (which would necessitate an evacuation).

#### **SEVERE AMS:**

Severe AMS presents as an increase in the severity of the aforementioned symptoms, including shortness of breath at rest, inability to walk, decreasing mental status, and fluid buildup in the lungs. Severe AMS requires immediate descent to lower altitudes (2,000 - 4,000 feet [610-1,220 meters]).

There are two other severe forms of altitude sickness: High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE). Both of these happen less frequently, especially to those who are properly acclimatized. When they do occur, it is usually due to people going too high too fast or going very high and staying there. The lack of oxygen results in leakage of fluid through the capillary walls into either the lungs or the brain.

High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) results from fluid buildup in the lungs. The fluid in the lungs prevents effective oxygen exchange. As the condition becomes more severe, the level of oxygen in the bloodstream decreases, and this can lead to cyanosis, impaired cerebral function, and death. Symptoms include shortness of breath even at rest, "tightness in the chest," marked fatigue, a feeling

of impending suffocation at night, weakness, and a persistent productive cough bringing up white, watery, or frothy fluid. Confusion and irrational behavior are signs that insufficient oxygen is reaching the brain. In cases of HAPE, immediate descent is a necessary life-saving measure (2,000 - 4,000 feet [610-1,220 meters]). Anyone suffering from HAPE must be evacuated to a medical facility for proper follow-up treatment.

High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) is the result of swelling of brain tissue from fluid leakage. Symptoms can include headache, loss of coordination (ataxia), weakness, and decreasing levels of consciousness (including disorientation, loss of memory, hallucinations, psychotic behavior, and coma). It generally occurs after a week or more at high altitude. Severe instances can lead to death if not treated quickly. Immediate descent is a necessary life-saving measure (2,000 - 4,000 feet [610-1,220 meters]). Anyone suffering from HACE must be evacuated to a medical facility for proper follow-up treatment.

## **ADVENTURER PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST:**

*Please keep this sheet handy and check off each item when it is completed.*

- Complete and send in your Travelex travel insurance forms
- Find someone to take care of your pets and plants
- Leave the contact phone numbers in Nepal with a friend or family member
- Make photo-copies of your plane tickets, credit cards, travelers check receipts, and passport
- Make sure you carry-on the essentials that you cannot live without (don't check them in a suitcase!)
- Make sure you have a ride to the airport
- Pack an additional passport photo for your entry visa in Nepal
- Pack eyeglasses or contacts (keep them in your carry-on)
- Pack medications and prescriptions (keep them in your carry-on)
- Pack money and credit cards (keep these close to your body, in a well-concealed place) You will need spending money to cover meals, gifts, tips and any incidentals not covered in the trip cost. Please check the itinerary to see what meals are not covered
- Pack passport and valuable documents
- Pack reading material for on plane and relaxing in Nepal
- Reconfirm your flights 72 hours in advance

**Please get to the airport at least 2-3 hours before any international flight!**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

### **1) Who should I contact with more questions about the trip?**

Chris Griffin  
[clgriff44@yahoo.com](mailto:clgriff44@yahoo.com)  
708-903-3781

Rob Besecker  
[Ramman2474@aol.com](mailto:Ramman2474@aol.com)  
708-224-8173

### **2) What happens if I miss my plane or if it is delayed - whom should I contact?**

Chris Griffin  
[clgriff44@yahoo.com](mailto:clgriff44@yahoo.com)  
708-903-3781

Jiban Ghimire of Shangri-La  
Nepal Trek  
+977-1-481-0373  
Mobile: +977-985-103-5161 or  
+977-980-103-5161

**OR** you may also call:

*Be sure to contact us so we can arrange a different time to pick you up from the airport*

### **3) What if no one is at the airport to pick me up in Kathmandu – whom should I contact?**

This is unlikely, but please call:

Jiban Ghimire of Shangri-La Nepal Trek  
+977-1-481-0373  
Mobile: +977-985-103-5161 or +977-980-103-5161

**OR** you may also call:

Hotel Yak & Yeti near the Royal Palace in Kathmandu (where we are staying) at  
+977-1-424-8999

### **4) What is an emergency number where I can be reached?**

The best way to have family and friends get a message to you is through the Shangri-La Nepal at +977-1-481 0373.

For an urgent matter during non-business hours, they may call Jiban Ghimire at +977- 985-103-5161 or +977-980-103-5161

### **5) What if I want to travel in Nepal before or after this trip?**

Great! Depending on how early you arrive, we may be able to pick you up at the Kathmandu Airport. You also may enjoy a couple extra days in Kathmandu and the surrounding area following the trek.

### **6) Where are we staying in Kathmandu?**

Hotel Yak & Yeti  
[www.yakandyeti.com](http://www.yakandyeti.com)

### **7) How much weight can I take for the trek?**

You are allowed to carry 15 kg per person including your trekking & personal gear. The rest of your travel clothes and suitcase can be stored in the hotel without additional cost.

**PARTICIPANT PROFILE:**

*Please print this page and send back to Chris Griffin with your deposit*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (W): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (C): \_\_\_\_\_

Passport #: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest altitude I have been to before: \_\_\_\_\_

***Initial each item:***

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I have read this document and want to go on the trip.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I know the price and know there are no refunds.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I know there are inherent risks in any activity like this and that I might get severely sick and even die.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I know Chris Griffin is not liable for any of this and will not hold her responsible. This is in lieu of a standard release of liability form.

***Check the appropriate answer:***

I am getting / have Travel Insurance/Trip Cancellation: \_\_\_\_\_ **YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Chris Griffin:

- 2 Copies of this form – one paper version (send with check) and an electronic version
- Deposit
- A color copy of your passport (a digital scan is best either JPG or PDF)
- A copy of your complete flight itinerary

Include recent photo here (electronic version only):

**MEDICAL CLEARANCE FORM:**

**Everest Base Camp Trek- Nepal  
Spring 2015**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (patient name) will be participating in a Mt. Everest Base Camp Trek that involves very strenuous activities such as hiking / trekking at very high altitudes over the course of several days and weeks in extremely remote and austere wilderness environments which are usually isolated from hospitals and medical facilities.

Would you please assist us by signing below indicating that the person named above is medically fit to participate in such a program? Your additional comments or concerns will also be appreciated.

This is to state that \_\_\_\_\_ (patient name) is medically capable of very strenuous physical exertion and work for several days and weeks in extremely remote and austere wilderness environments at altitudes up to 18,514 feet above sea level. These areas are usually remote from hospitals and other medical facilities.

Thank you.

Doctor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name Address City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **RECOMMENDED PERSONAL MEDICATIONS / SUPPLIES:**

*We strongly recommend that each participant bring a small personal medical kit containing useful medications and supplies. This should be done in consultation with your physician.*

A few recommendations for your personal medical kit: Please bring basic wound and minor soft tissue injury supplies, dressings (e.g. Band-Aids, moleskin, etc.), topical antibiotics, etc.—soft tissue wounds are very common!

### **Some Non-Prescription Medications to consider for your kit:**

*It is essential that you consult your own physician regarding the use of, hazards, adverse effects and dosages of all medications.*

**Warning:** A physician should be consulted before any medication is taken. Read the instructions carefully on the medication package and do not use if you think you may be allergic to the drug.

- Ibuprofen (Motrin®)**
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)**
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®)** cholinergic medications (consult physician before use)
- Aloe Vera Gel**
- Aluminum hydroxide and simethicone tablets (Mylanta®)**
- Imodium® 2 mg Capsule** (available over-the-counter)
- Oral rehydration salt packets** (electrolyte salts and glucose)
- Zinc Oxide**

### **Some Prescription Medications to consider for your kit:**

*It is essential that you consult your own physician regarding the use, hazards, side effects, and dosages of all medications.*

**Warning:** A physician should be consulted before any medication is taken by a child, pregnant woman, or nursing mother. Make sure that you are not allergic to any drugs that you plan to use. Sharing medications with others is potentially hazardous and is not recommended. Do not treat yourself or others unless there is no alternative and you are comfortable with the problem. Carefully review the dose, indications, and adverse effects of all drugs that you plan to carry.

- Epi E•Z Pen® (Epinephrine auto-injector) or Epi E•Z Pen® Jr.**

### **Antibiotics**

Some of the antibiotics listed below have similar uses and overlapping spectrums of antibacterial activity. Before departing on your trip, discuss with your physician which antibiotics best suit your needs.

- Azithromycin (Zithromax®) 250 mg capsules**
- Amoxicillin Clavulanate (Augmentin®) 500 mg tablets**

- **Ciprofloxacin (Cipro®) 500 mg tablets**
- **Cefuroxime (Ceftin®) or Cephalexin (Keflex®) 250 to 500 mg tablets**
- **Metronidazole (Flagyl®) 250 mg tablets**
- **Nitazoxanide (Alinia®) 500 mg tablets**
- **Trimethoprim/Sulfamethoxazole**—Common brand names include **Sepra DS®** and **Bactrim DS®**. Each tablet contains 80 mg trimethoprim and 400 mg sulfamethoxazole
- **Cortisporin® Otic Suspension** for nausea and vomiting
- **Ondansetron (Zofran ODT®) 4 mg**, for control of severe nausea and vomiting. *Dosage:* Place 4 mg tablet on tongue immediately after opening blister pack and allow it to dissolve. Handle with dry hands. Do not cut/chew tablet
- **Tobrex® Ophthalmic Solution 0.3% Pain Medication**
- **Vicodin®**
- **Acetazolamide (Diamox®) 250 mg tablets** *Indications:* May help to prevent altitude illness when used in conjunction with graded ascent and to treat altitude illness in conjunction with descent. Useful in diminishing the sleep disorder associated with mountain sickness. *Dosage:* For prevention, 125 mg (1/2 tablet) twice a day, beginning the day before the ascent. For treatment, 250 mg twice a day until symptoms resolve. *Warning:* Diamox is not a substitute for graded ascent and acclimatization, nor a substitute for descent in the event of severe altitude illness. Side effects include increased urination, numbness in the fingers and toes, and lethargy. Carbonated beverages will also taste terrible. Do not use if allergic to sulfa medications.
- **Dexamethasone (Decadron®)** *Indications:* For the treatment of High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) in conjunction with immediate descent to a lower altitude, and prevention of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). *Dosage:* 8 mg initially, followed by 4 mg every six hours.
- **Clotrimazole or betamethasone dipropionate cream (Lotrisone®)** for treating fungal infections
- **Permethrin 5% cream and 1% shampoo** for treating lice, bedbugs and scabies

**FLIGHT ITINERARY:**

<p>Arrival: Flight 1 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>	<p>Flight 2 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>
<p>Flight 3 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>	<p>Flight 4 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>
<p>Departure: Flight 1 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>	<p>Flight 2 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>
<p>Flight 3 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>	<p>Flight 4 Airline/operated by: Flight number: Departure City Arrival city Departure date Arrival date Departure time Arrival time</p>