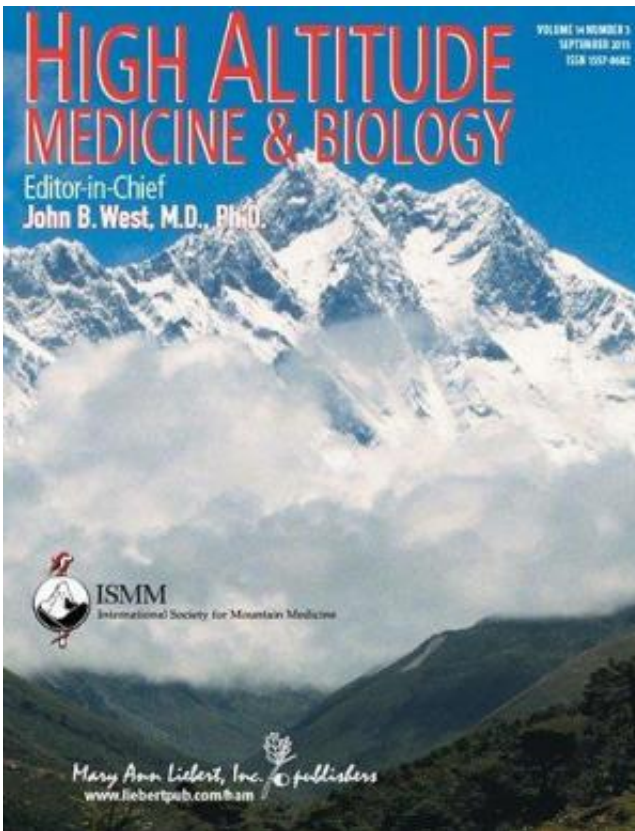


Is travel to high altitudes more risky for people with diabetes?

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Many factors can affect blood sugar control at high altitudes, and people considering a mountain journey need to understand the potential risks of the environmental extremes, extensive exercise, and dietary changes they may experience. Insulin needs may increase or decrease and individuals

with poorly controlled diabetes are especially at risk for hypothermia, frostbite, and dehydration, for example. These and other dangers are described by two doctors who have diabetes and are avid mountaineers in an article published in [*High Altitude Medicine & Biology*](#).

Paul Richards, Centre for Altitude, Space and Extreme Environmental Medicine, University College (London, U.K.) and David Hillebrandt, President, International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation Medical Commission (Bern, Switzerland), discuss the harmful effects that altitude, temperature extremes, reduced oxygen levels, and physical exertion may have on people with diabetes when they travel to destinations at [high altitude](#) for business or pleasure.

In the article "[The Practical Aspects of Insulin at High Altitude](#)" the authors explore issues related to diabetes management, such as the risk that insulin may become less effective when exposed to heat or cold and how to store it properly. They also caution that blood glucose measuring devices may be less accurate at high altitude.

"With the rising prevalence of [diabetes](#), its management is increasingly becoming an issue at high altitude," says John B. West, MD, PhD, Editor-in-Chief of *High Altitude Medicine & Biology* and Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine. "This statement by two experts in the field is a valuable contribution in a difficult area."

More information: The article is available free on the [*High Altitude Medicine & Biology*](#).

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