

0. MOUNTAIN SICKNESS - Story Preface

1. K2

2. ICE CAVES AND CREVASSES

3. MOUNTAIN SICKNESS

4. AVALANCHES

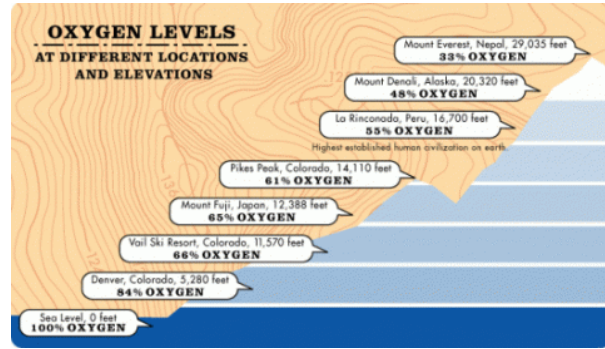
5. FIRST TO THE SUMMIT

6. DEATH ON THE MOUNTAIN

7. THE MYSTERY CONTINUES

8. ED VIESTURS

9. VERTICAL LIMIT ON LOCATION



The people at “Your Hike Guide” remind us how higher altitudes cause problems for hikers and mountain climbers: “As we gain elevation we may not initially realize that we have less oxygen around us, but our bodies do.” And ... that lack of sufficient oxygen to our bodies can cause serious problems (or even death). Remember ... our brains do not store oxygen.

Mountain sickness, with its prevalent symptoms of dry cough and shortness of breath, can strike above 8,000 feet. It’s especially common in people who ascend too quickly.

Even climbers who are used to high altitudes can get acute mountain sickness (often referred to as AMS). *Vertical Limit* presents a realistic picture of the illness.

The best medicine for a bad case is to descend the mountain, before symptoms worsen. Experienced climbers sometimes take dexamethasone (“dex”) instead of turning back. Extreme forms of AMS can be fatal.

High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE)—fluid in the lungs—is another mountain sickness often afflicting healthy, young males. The cure—a quick descent—can be complicated by extraordinary fatigue.

The same is true of High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE)—swelling of the brain. This life-threatening mountain illness can be fatal within a few hours.

Sherpas (in the Himalayas) and Balti Porters (in the Karakoram) are indigenous people who assist mountain climbers. Without them, it is doubtful whether many successful, summit-reaching climbs would have ever occurred. Without them, it is doubtful whether most base camps would have the necessary gear. But even Sherpas and Balti Porters can develop AMS.

To deal with these survivable maladies, Dr. David Shlim originated the “Golden Rules of Altitude Sickness.” The first rule:

*It is OK to get altitude illness.
It is not OK to die from it.*

There are plenty of other things to die from on K2—like killer avalanches.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MOUNTAIN-SICKNESS-Vertical-Limit-K2-The-Savage-Mountain)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MOUNTAIN-SICKNESS-Vertical-Limit-K2-The-Savage-Mountain>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MOUNTAIN-SICKNESS-Vertical-Limit-K2-The-Savage-Mountain)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MOUNTAIN-SICKNESS-Vertical-Limit-K2-The-Savage-Mountain>