



## **RISK ADVISORY**

Camp Firewalker has an excellent health and safety record over the last 20 years. Camp Firewalker strives to minimize risks to participants and advisors by emphasizing proper safety precautions. Most participants in Camp Firewalker programs do not experience injuries because they are prepared, are conscious of risks, and take safety precautions. If you decide to attend Camp Firewalker, you should be physically fit, have proper clothing and equipment, be willing to follow instructions and work as a team with your unit and take responsibility for your own health and safety. Like other wilderness areas, Camp Firewalker is not risk free and you should be prepared to listen to safety instructions carefully, follow directions and take appropriate steps to safeguard yourself and others.

Parents, guardians and potential participants in Camp Firewalker programs are advised that journeying to and from Camp Firewalker, and one's stay at Camp Firewalker, can involve exposure to accident, illness, or injury associated with a high elevation, physically demanding, high adventure program in a remote mountainous area. Campers may be exposed to occasional severe weather conditions such as lightning, hail, and heat. Other accidental possibilities include injuries from tripping and falling, motor vehicle accidents, asthma and diabetes related incidents, heart attacks, and heat exhaustion.

Wild animals such as bears are native and usually present little danger if proper precautions are taken.

Camp Firewalker's staff are trained in preventing accidents, in first aid and CPR, and are prepared to assist in recognizing, reacting, and responding to accidents, injuries and illnesses.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CHRONIC ILLNESSES**

### **Cardiac or Cardiovascular Disease**

Adults who have experienced any of the following should undergo a thorough evaluation by a physician before considering participation at Camp Firewalker.

- Angina (chest pain caused by coronary artery disease or congenital heart disease)
- Myocardial infarction (heart attack)
- Surgery or angioplasty to treat coronary artery disease
- Stroke or transient ischemic attacks
- Claudication (leg pain with exercise caused by hardening of the arteries)
- Family history of heart disease under age 50
- Smoking

The altitude at Camp Firewalker and the physical exertion involved may precipitate either a heart attack or stroke in susceptible persons. Participants with a history of any of the conditions listed above should have a physician-supervised stress test. Even if the stress test is normal, the results of testing done at lower elevations and without the strain of the events at, do not Camp Firewalker guarantee safety. If the test results are abnormal, the individual is advised not to participate.

## **Hypertension (high blood pressure)**

The combination of stress and altitude appears to cause significant increase in blood pressure in many individuals. Occasionally hypertension reaches such a level that it no longer is safe to engage in strenuous activity. Persons whose blood pressures are increased mildly (greater than 135/85) may benefit from being treated before coming to Camp Firewalker and continuing on treatment while at Camp Firewalker. Those persons who are hypertensive before coming to Camp Firewalker (blood pressure greater than 150/95) are strongly urged to be treated and to have a normal blood pressure (less than 135/85) before coming. Medications should be continued while at Camp Firewalker.

## **Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus**

Exercise and the type of food eaten affect insulin requirements. Any individual with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus should be able to monitor personal blood glucose and know how to adjust insulin doses based on these factors. The diabetic person should also know how to give a self-injection. Both the diabetic person and one other person in the group should be able to recognize indications of excessively high blood sugar (hyperglycemia or diabetic ketoacidosis) and to recognize indications of excessively low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). The diabetic person and at least one other individual should know appropriate initial responses for these conditions. It is recommended that the diabetic person and one other individual carry insulin during hikes or treks away from the main camp (in case of accidents) and that a third vial be kept at the main camp with the staff for backup. Insulin can be carried in a small thermos which can be re-supplied with ice or cold water as needed.

A diabetic person who has had frequent hospitalizations for diabetic ketoacidosis or who has had frequent problems with hypoglycemia should not participate at Camp Firewalker until better control of the diabetes has been achieved.

## **Seizures (epilepsy)**

A seizure disorder or epilepsy does not exclude an individual from participating at Camp Firewalker. However, the seizure disorder should be well controlled by medications. The Camp Firewalker staff may place some restrictions on activities (i.e. rock climbing, rappelling, and high ropes) for those individuals who are approved for participation but whose seizures are incompletely controlled.

## **Asthma**

*Individuals with asthma must consult with a physician in order to establish "good" control of this condition.* The asthma should be controlled to essentially normal lung function with the use of oral or aerosol bronchodilators. The patient should bring ample supplies of medication to Camp Firewalker.

Asthmatic individuals whose exercise-induced asthma cannot be prevented with bronchodilator premedication; individuals requiring systemic corticosteroid therapy or who have required multiple hospitalizations for asthma should not attempt to participate in the strenuous activities encountered at Camp Firewalker. At least one other unit member should know how to recognize an asthma attack, how to recognize worsening of an attack, and how to administer bronchodilator therapy. Any person who has required medical treatment for asthma within the past six years must carry a full size prescription inhaler if that person is approved to go on a high adventure activity.

## **Recent Orthopedic Surgery**

Every Camp Firewalker participant will put a great deal of strain on feet, ankles, and knees. Experience has demonstrated that a participant who has had orthopedic surgery *including arthroscopic or other musculoskeletal injuries* within the past six months, may find it difficult or impossible to negotiate some of Camp Firewalker's high adventure activities. A person with a cast on any extremity may participate only if approved by a physician.

## **Psychological and Emotional Difficulties**

Parents and advisors should be aware that Camp Firewalker is not designed to assist participants to overcome psychological or emotional problems. Experience demonstrates that these problems frequently become magnified, not lessened when a participant is subjected to the physical and mental challenges of high adventure at high elevation. *Any condition should be well controlled without the services of a mental health practitioner. Under no circumstances should medication be stopped immediately prior to a Camp Firewalker adventure. Participants requiring medication must bring an appropriate supply.*

## **Medications**

Each participant at Camp Firewalker who has a condition requiring medication should bring an appropriate supply. In certain circumstances, duplicate or even triplicate supplies of vital medications are appropriate. *People with an allergy to bee, wasp or hornet sting must bring an epi pen or equivalent with them to Camp Firewalker.*

An individual should always contact the family physician first and then call Camp Firewalker if there is a question about the advisability of participation. Camp Firewalker reserves the right to make decisions regarding the participation of individuals at Camp Firewalker.
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