

# High-Adventure Risk Advisory to Health-Care Providers and Parents

Florida Sea Base

Phone: 305-664-4173

Website: [www.bsaseabase.org](http://www.bsaseabase.org)

**Sea Base Experience.** Each high-adventure base offers a unique experience that is not risk-free. Knowledgeable staff will instruct all participants in safety measures to be followed. Be prepared to listen to and carefully follow these safety measures and to accept responsibility for the health and safety of yourself and others. Climatic conditions at Florida Sea Base include temperatures ranging from 50 to 95 degrees, high humidity, heat indexes reaching to 110 degrees, and frequent, sometimes severe, afternoon thunderstorms. Activities include snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, hiking, and others; all of these have potential for injury. Refer to the Sea Base website for specific information.

**Risk Advisory.** The Florida Sea Base has an excellent health and safety record and strives to minimize risks to participants by emphasizing appropriate safety precautions. Each crew is required to have at least one adult member trained in wilderness first aid and CPR. Medical and search-and-rescue services are provided in response to an accident or emergency. **However, response times can be affected by location, terrain, weather, or other emergencies and could be delayed for hours.** The Florida Sea Base offers numerous activities, including snorkeling, sailing, camping, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, fishing, and scuba diving. If there is a question about the advisability of participation, contact the family physician first, then call the Sea Base at 305-664-5612. **The Sea Base health supervisor reserves the right to make medical decisions regarding the participation of individuals at Sea Base.**

**Food.** The Sea Base offers food appropriate for the experience. If a participant has a problem with the diet described in the participant guide, please contact the Sea Base food service department. **Please note: It may not always be possible to accommodate individual preferences (likes and dislikes) that are not of a medical or religious nature.**

**Medications.** Each participant who has a condition requiring medication should bring an appropriate supply for the duration of the trip. Consider bringing duplicate or even triplicate supplies of vital medications. People with allergies that have resulted in severe reactions or anaphylaxis must bring with them sufficient unexpired EpiPens to last for up to three hours.

**Recommendations Regarding Chronic Illnesses.** The Florida Sea Base requires that this information be shared with the parents or guardians and examining physician of every participant. There are no on-site facilities for extended care or treatment; therefore, participants who cannot meet these requirements will be sent home at their expense. **Staff and/or staff physicians reserve the right to deny the participation of any individual on the basis of a physical examination and/or medical history. Adults or youth who have chronic conditions should undergo a thorough evaluation by a physician before considering participation at the Sea Base or any BSA high-adventure activity.**

## Hypertension (High Blood Pressure).

**Participants should have a blood pressure less than 140/90.** Persons with significant hypertension (greater than 140/90) should have the condition treated and controlled before attending any high-adventure base and should continue on medications while participating. Those taking beta-blocker medications should consider a change of medication before participating in any scuba program.

**Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus.** Both the person with diabetes and one other person in the group need to be able to recognize the signs of excessively high blood sugar and adjust the dose of insulin. *An insulin-dependent person who has been newly diagnosed (within the last six months) or who has undergone a change in delivery system (e.g., insulin pump) in the last six months is advised not to participate.* A person with diabetes who has had frequent hospitalizations for diabetic ketoacidosis or who has had frequent problems with hypoglycemia should not participate until better control of the diabetes has been achieved.

**Diabetes and Scuba Diving:** Persons with diabetes who are 18 years of age or older who wish to scuba dive should be assessed by a physician familiar with both hyperbaric issues related to diabetes and medications used for the control and treatment of diabetes. **Persons 18 years old or older who are determined to be candidates for scuba diving must submit four hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) tests, each with HbA1c values less than 7, taken within the previous 12 months. Any test within the past 12 months with an HbA1c value greater than 7 disqualifies a person from scuba diving as part of a BSA activity. Persons younger than 18 years of age with Type 1 diabetes will not be allowed to scuba dive.** Persons under the age of 18 who control their diabetes with exercise and diet (no medications) and can provide three sequential hemoglobin tests with HbA1c values less than 6 may be approved to scuba dive.

**Seizures (Epilepsy).** A seizure disorder or epilepsy does not exclude an individual from participating at a high-adventure base. However, the seizure disorder should be well controlled by medication. A minimum one-year seizure-free period is considered to be adequate control. Exceptions to this guideline may be considered on an individual basis, and will be based on the specific type of seizure and the likely risks to the individual and to other members of the crew. **Any seizure activity within the past five years, regardless of control and/or medication, disqualifies an individual from participation in any scuba program.** A person with a history of seizure activity who has been asymptomatic AND medication-free for five years, as evidenced by a physician, will be allowed to dive.



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**Asthma.** Asthma should be well-controlled before participating at any high-adventure base. Well-controlled asthma means: **1)** the use of a rescue inhaler (e.g., albuterol) less than once daily; and **2)** no need for nighttime treatment with a rescue inhaler (e.g., albuterol). Well-controlled asthma may include the use of long-acting bronchodilators, inhaled steroids, or oral medications such as Singulair. You must meet these guidelines in order to participate. You may not be allowed to participate if: **1)** you have exercise asthma not controlled by medications; or **2)** you have been hospitalized or have gone to the emergency room to treat asthma in the past six months; or **3)** you have needed treatment with intravenous, intramuscular, or oral steroids (prednisone) in the past six months. *You must bring an ample supply of your medications and a spare rescue inhaler that are not expired.* At least one other member of the crew should know how to recognize signs of worsening asthma or an asthma attack and should know how to use the rescue inhaler. **Any person who has needed treatment for asthma in the past three years must carry a rescue inhaler on the adventure. If you do not bring a rescue inhaler, you must buy one before you will be allowed to participate.**

**Asthma and Scuba Diving:** *Persons being treated for asthma (including reactive airway disease) are disqualified from BSA scuba programs.* Persons with a history of asthma who have been asymptomatic and have not used medications to control asthma for five years or more may be allowed to scuba dive as part of a BSA activity upon submission of evidence from their treating physician. Persons with a history of asthma who have been asymptomatic and have not used medication to control asthma for fewer than five years may be allowed to scuba dive as part of a BSA activity upon submission of a methacholine challenge test showing the asthma to be resolved to the satisfaction of the Sea Base physician.

**Allergy or Anaphylaxis.** Persons who have had an **anaphylactic reaction** from any cause must contact the Florida Sea Base before arrival. If you are allowed to participate, you will be required to have appropriate treatment with you. You and at least one other member of your crew must know how to give the treatment. If you do not bring appropriate treatment with you, you will be required to buy it before you will be allowed to participate.

## Recent Musculoskeletal Injuries and Orthopedic Surgery.

Individuals with significant musculoskeletal problems (including back problems) or orthopedic surgery/injuries within the last six months must have a letter of clearance from their orthopedic surgeon or treating physician to be considered for approval to participate. Permission is not guaranteed. A person with a cast on any extremity may participate only if approved by their physician AND the Florida Sea Base.

**Psychological and Emotional Difficulties.** A psychological disorder does not necessarily exclude an individual from participation. Any condition should be well-controlled without the services of a mental health practitioner. **Under no circumstance should medication be stopped immediately throughout the entire high-adventure experience.** Participants requiring medication must bring an adequate supply for the duration of the trip. **SPECIAL NOTE ON SCUBA DIVING—** Several psychotropic medications are NOT COMPATIBLE with the hyperbaric stresses of scuba diving. All medications MUST be listed on the BSA Annual Health and Medical Record. These medications will be reviewed by the Florida Sea Base health advisor and considered on an individual basis.

**Weight Limits.** Participants may complete their Sea Base adventure as long as they do not exceed 295 pounds in body weight. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE MAXIMUM WEIGHT LIMIT**, and those exceeding the maximum weight will be sent home at their own expense.



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