Anemia, Iron Supplementation and the Mountaineer

If you are a mountain climber going to high altitudes, consider having a blood test to check for iron-deficiency anemia.

Red blood cells store and carry oxygen through the body to our tissue and muscles, so the more red blood cells a climber has the more oxygen they have in their working muscles. The body needs iron to produce red blood cells. Iron-deficiency anemia causes a lowered red blood cell count, so people with anemia are more likely to suffer from altitude sickness and fatigue than are persons with normal blood counts.

People who are diagnosed with iron deficiency anemia may want to consider taking an iron supplement before and during travel to high altitudes.

Excessive amounts of Iron in the body can be harmful so if you are a mountaineer and are considering taking an iron supplement do not take an excessive amount and check with your doctor for advice on the right dose for you.