

RISK FACTORS

Ultramarathons are physically challenging events and participation in it presents medical risks, many of which can be extremely serious or fatal.

Participation in this event is at the runner's own risk. In case of a medical emergency, runners will be transported to the nearest hospital. However, due to difficult terrain and inaccessibility to majority of the course, this may take time, even upto a few hours in some cases.

Participants are advised to consult their own doctor prior to participation in this event. Runners are expected to be aware of the stress effects related to participating in trail ultramarathon events, and be adequately prepared for the same.

It is important for each entrant to recognize the potential physical and mental stresses, which may arise from participation in this event. Runners may experience dehydration, hyponatremia, disorientation and mental and physical exhaustion. Race officials will do all that they reasonably can to ensure a safe event, but ultimately runners must understand their own limitations. This is an event where it is better to follow the dictates of your body – not your ambitions! Adequate physical and mental conditioning prior to the event is mandatory. If you have not been able to prepare properly, do not attempt to run!

Runners must appreciate the risks associated with participation in this event. Actions may have to be taken on your behalf under extreme time constraints and adverse circumstances. The race officials will make reasonable efforts to give assistance whenever possible. Ultimately and primarily, you are in charge, and you are solely responsible for creating your own crisis. Be careful, be responsible, and do not exceed your own abilities and limitations.

Some of the main risks of this event, but certainly not all of them, are listed. These should be understood and remembered by all runners, before and during the event. Please note that death can result from several of the risk conditions discussed below or from other aspects of participation in the Eastern trails 2024

Renal shutdown:

Cases of renal shutdown (acute renal failure) have been reported in other ultramarathons. Adequate hydration will help averting this serious condition. If not treated, renal shutdown can cause permanent impairment of kidney function. **IT IS CRUCIAL TO HYDRATE YOURSELF USING ELECTROLYTE FLUIDS DURING THE RUN AND FOR SEVERAL DAYS FOLLOWING THE RUN.**

Heat stroke/hyperthermia:

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are serious risks. These conditions can cause death, kidney failure and brain damage. It is important that runners be aware of the symptoms of impending heat injury. These include but are not limited to: nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, irritability, lassitude, confusion, weakness, and rapid heart rate. Impending heat stroke may be preceded by a decrease in sweating and the appearance of goose bumps on the skin, especially over the chest. Heat stroke may progress from minimal symptoms to complete collapse in a very short period of time. Remember that your muscles produce tremendous amounts of heat when running up and down hill. The faster the pace, the more heat is produced. A light-colored shirt and cap, particularly if kept wet during the event, can help. If signs of heat exhaustion occur, we recommend rapid cooling by applying ice to the groin, neck and armpits.

We also recommend that runners keep themselves adequately hydrated and carry fluids between aid stations/checkpoints.

Risks associated with low sodium and chloride counts:

Low sodium levels (hyponatremia) in ultramarathon runners have been associated with severe illness requiring hospitalization. It is important for long-distance athletes to use fluids containing electrolytes to replace the water and salts lost during the run. WATER INTAKE ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT, as water intoxication and possibly death may result. This problem may in fact worsen after the Race, as the non-electrolyte-containing fluid which has been accumulating in the stomach is absorbed. Potassium and calcium replacement may also be important, although these levels change less with fluid loss and replenishment. Signs and symptoms of hyponatremia include; weight gain, bloating, nausea, vomiting, headache, confusion, incoordination, dizziness, muscle twitching/cramping and fatigue. If left untreated, it may progress to seizures, pulmonary and cerebral edema, coma and death. The best way to achieve proper electrolyte and fluid balance is to hydrate with fluids containing proper amounts of electrolytes and to replace with sodium-containing foods or supplements, if required, and as determined during your training. Potassium, while present in many electrolyte-replacement solutions, may also be replaced with fruit, such as bananas or oranges. Beer or other alcoholic beverages should not be taken at any time during the run.

Wildlife hazards:

There may be several extremely venomous and potentially life threatening snakes in this area. Parts of this run are in very remote and inaccessible areas. Runners must exercise caution and respond appropriately. Should you be bitten by a snake, there is absolutely no assurance that aid or help will arrive in time to give you effective assistance. Under no circumstances should any snake be approached. There are also dogs in the villages, which may bite. Runners are advised to be careful and avoid eye contact. There may also be wild boar sightings. Runners are advised to stay out of their way and not approach them under any circumstances. Further, the area is also prone to insects and worms such as mosquitoes and leeches. We recommend that runners cover up and carry adequate insect repellants.

Injuries from falling:

Falling is an ever-present danger on the trails, with potentially serious consequences. Parts of the trail are narrow, uneven and slippery. There are several drops on or very near the trail. Extreme care must be taken at all times, especially in the dark.

Muscle necrosis:

It has been found that some degree of muscle cell death in the legs occurs from participation in ultramarathons. The recovery can take several months. This seems to be a bigger problem in runners who become dehydrated or have overexerted themselves.

Overuse injuries:

Obviously, innumerable overuse injuries can occur, especially in the knee and the ankle and leg muscles and tendons. Sprains and fractures can easily occur on these rough trails. Blisters may cause you to have a sore day, or in severe circumstances may prevent you from finishing. Runners must have a working knowledge of how to treat themselves for all of these problems on the trail.

Common fatigue:

One of the dangers you will encounter is fatigue. Fatigue, combined with the effects of dehydration and other debilitating conditions can produce disorientation and irrationality.

Getting lost:

Although the course will be adequately marked, it is definitely possible to lose your way. If you believe at any time that you may not be on the correct trail, do not attempt to find your way cross country. If you are 100% sure of your route, backtrack to where you last saw a trail marker and try to find other markers showing the direction of the trail. If you are unable to find your way, stay where you are! Blow your whistle loudly and repeatedly until you are heard. Wandering randomly will take you farther from the trail and reduce your chances of being found.

Difficulty in gaining access to or locating injured participants:

Some parts of the trail are remote and inaccessible by motor vehicles. Accordingly, in spite of the safety precautions taken by the race officials, there is absolutely no assurance that aid or rescue assistance will arrive in time to give you effective assistance should you become sick, incapacitated, injured or attacked.

If you do become injured, exhausted or ill:

STAY ON THE TRAIL. Blow your whistle loudly and repeatedly. You will be found there either by another runner, or the sweeper that monitors the progress of runners during the event. If you feel dizzy, disoriented or confused, do not risk falling. Sit down ON THE TRAIL until you recover or are found. An unconscious runner even a few feet off the trail could be impossible to find until it is too late. If you are assisted by individuals who are not associated with the race officials and you choose to leave the trail, you MUST notify the official at the nearest checkpoint of your decision to withdraw.

Although medical and other personnel will assist you when possible, remember that you are ultimately responsible for your own well-being on the trail. Only you will know how your body and mind feel at any given time. Monitor yourself during the entire run, and prepare yourself to drop out at the nearest check-point if you find that it just isn't your day. As you continue past each checkpoint, be aware of the number of kilometers to the next one, realizing that getting rescue vehicles into these areas can be difficult, if not impossible.

There, that doesn't sound too bad does it?