Do you need to see a diving doctor before your next dive trip?

Diving is a fascinating and exciting sport, but it also involves special physiological challenges and risks. In order to dive safely and healthily, careful medical advice is recommended. Some local diving centres also require a diving medical certificate. It is best to find this out before you go on holiday.

To a diving doctor or a GP?

Diving doctors have special training and expertise in diving medicine. They often have many years of diving experience themselves. They understand the physiological changes that occur during diving, such as the influence of increased ambient pressure on the body, the risks of decompression and the effects of nitrogen narcosis and oxygen toxicity. This specialised knowledge enables them to make accurate assessments and recommendations that can be vital for divers.

Knowledge of specific risks and medical conditions

A qualified diving doctor is familiar with the specific medical conditions that could make diving unsafe, such as lung diseases, cardiovascular problems, neurological disorders or certain medications.

Targeted examinations and diagnostics

The medical examination by a diving doctor may also include tests and diagnostics that are not carried out in a general examination by a family doctor. These include lung function tests, audiometry if necessary, and sometimes imaging procedures such as cardiac ultrasound or CT scans of the lungs. These tests help to identify hidden problems that could be dangerous when diving.

Personalised advice and safety measures

Diving doctors offer customised advice and safety measures tailored to individual health conditions and diving-specific requirements. They can provide detailed recommendations such as diving depth limitations, specialised equipment or special precautions for divers with chronic medical conditions.

Conclusion

Choosing the right doctor for your diving fitness consultation can make a big difference to your safety and well-being while diving. While family doctors are great general practitioners, a qualified diving doctor has the specialised training and knowledge required to assess and manage the risks and demands of diving. Invest in your health and safety by seeing an experienced diving doctor for your diving fitness assessment. This way you can enjoy your diving adventures safely and worry-free.

Find a diving doctor near you

This initiative is promoted by DAN Europe Suisse in cooperation with SUHMS, and is aimed at all DAN Members living in Switzerland.

About the author

Dr Stephan Steinhauser is a diving and hyperbaric physician from Switzerland. He is also part of the hotline team of DAN Europe Suisse.