PREPARING FOR TREATMENT
HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT) – PATIENT EDUCATION

What is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy? How does it work?

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) is an adjunctive therapy (additional therapy) that assists other important treatments a patient may be receiving such as advanced wound care treatments. HBOT assists by helping to deliver concentrated oxygen to injured areas that are not receiving an adequate oxygen supply. This process is performed with a patient in a pressurized environment surrounded with 100 percent oxygen. Oxygen is a vital component needed for cellular growth.

Is HBOT appropriate for me?

 Currently HBOT is approved for reimbursement from Medicare and several insurance companies for the following conditions:

- Diabetic ulcers
- Effects of radiation treatments - osteoradionecrosis & soft tissue radionecrosis
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Gas gangrene
- Necrotizing fasciitis
- Crush injuries
- Compartment syndrome & acute traumatic ischemia
- Decompression sickness

(These are some of the conditions usually covered, see your insurance provider for further details and approved treatments.)

During the consult, our clinician will determine if HBOT treatment is appropriate for you. Our goal is to expedite the tissue healing process and allow you to regain your quality of life.

How long is each treatment?

Treatment length depends upon the condition being treated. It may range from 2 - 5 hours or more. Wound Care treatments are usually 2 hours long each day, Monday-Friday for a total of 20 treatments. After 20 treatments the patient is re-evaluated by a physician to determine if progress has been made in the healing process. If the tissue is not healed, but has made progress, another group of 20 treatments may be ordered.
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What if I am claustrophobic?

We have the largest and newest Sechrist Monoplace Hyperbaric Chambers (4100H) currently available on the market. For comfort, patients may choose to sit in an inclined position. If the patient wants, we can have them slide inside the chamber on the gurney with the door left open and see if they would feel claustrophobic inside. If necessary during treatment, we are able to depressurize and remove the patient within two minutes.

What is involved with HBOT treatment?

Here are some of the steps in the treatment:

- Patient removes clothing and all restricted items (see list below)
- Patient changes into approved hospital gown
- Clinician will take the patient’s vitals and check their ears, lungs and blood sugar levels (if patient is diabetic)
- Patient is checked to ensure all restricted items are removed
- Antistatic wrist strap is put on patient's wrist and tested
- Patient lies down on the gurney and selects which position they want to lie in: flat or inclined
- Gurney is rolled into chamber and door is shut
- Patient is able to see outside of chamber through transparent acrylic walls
- Patient is able to talk to the technician
- Chamber is pressurized while patient clears ears (similar experience to diving down to bottom of pool or during a plane landing)
- Patient selects if they want to watch TV/DVD, listen to music or sleep during treatment
- After treatment is complete, chamber is depressurized while patient clears their ears (similar experience to a plane taking off)
- Patients are removed from the chamber
- Patients receive a routine quick check to make sure they are "OK"; ears are checked; and blood sugar is checked again (if they are diabetic)
- Patients get dressed
- Patients check out at front desk
What items are restricted from going in the hyperbaric chamber?

Since the chamber is filled with 100 percent oxygen, many items are restricted. Here is a partial list of restricted items:

- Ignition sources (lighters, matches, cigarettes, etc.)
- Electronic items (phones, music devices, battery operated items, etc.)
- Petroleum products
- Hair gels, sprays or mousse
- Perfumes and colognes
- Nail polish
- Hard contact lenses
- Dentures
- Jewelry (including watches, rings, necklaces, etc.)
- Clothing not 100 percent cotton or cotton blend
- Hearing aids
- Insulin pumps
- Ostomy bags

Are there any complications with HBOT treatments?

Oxygen is a natural substance our body relies on to function. Fortunately, there are very few complications with HBOT treatments. Some possible complications are as follows:

- Confinement anxiety (claustrophobia)
- Barotrauma
  - Congestion can cause problems with ear & sinus spaces that temporarily prevent those air filled spaces from equalizing due to fluid buildup. If pain should occur during treatment, the patient can notify the technician, who will then lower the pressure in the chamber to relieve the pain. If the patient is not able to equalize, the treatment will be cancelled until the patient is able to clear.
  - Ears - We teach the patient how to equalize their ears to help prevent this issue.
- Oxygen Toxicity - Breathing 100 percent oxygen under pressure, for long periods of time, may cause oxygen toxicity. This may result in generalized seizures that are self limiting and do not cause any permanent damage. However, we limit the possibility of this occurring by following conservative US Navy decompression tables and limiting oxygen exposure times.