

# Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: What You Need To Know

## General Information

During hyperbaric oxygen therapy, you breathe in pure oxygen while you lie in a special chamber. This extra oxygen enters your bloodstream and is absorbed by your tissues. This therapy is used to treat many medical conditions.

Treatment lasts 90 to 120 minutes each day. Your appointments will be scheduled each day Monday through Friday.

## How Treatment Works

The hyperbaric chamber is pressurized. Breathing oxygen that is under pressure gives your blood vessels 10 to 15 times more oxygen than normal.

This therapy helps to heal wounds, flaps and grafts that are not getting enough blood.

## What To Tell Your Health Care Provider

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is safe. Before your treatment can begin, tell your health care provider:

- if you have a pacemaker, defibrillator or other implanted device or prosthesis
- if you have diabetes, asthma or ear problems
- if you have ever had a collapsed lung
- if closed-in spaces bother you (claustrophobia)
- what medicines you are taking (include all prescription, over-the-counter, and natural or herbal supplements).

## If You Need To Cancel

It is important to attend treatment every day as scheduled.

Call \_\_\_\_\_  
if you cannot make your appointment.

## Special Instructions

You should stop smoking while having hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Smoking slows healing. Nicotine from tobacco causes small blood vessels to get smaller. This means body tissues receive less blood and your lungs absorb less oxygen.

If you need help quitting, please ask your health care staff for resources.

## Before Treatment — at Home

- Wear or bring 100 percent cotton underwear. You will wear a hospital gown for the treatment but you will not be able to wear silk, rayon, polyester or other noncotton fabrics in the chamber.
- Do not wear any makeup.
- Do not wear any jewelry. If your rings do not come off, they will be covered with tape.
- Do not wear perfume, cologne, aftershave, or deodorant.

*(over)*

- You may take your regular medicines.
- Leave your valuables at home. (You will have a locker for your clothing.)
- If you have diabetes, the pressure in the chamber can cause your blood glucose to drop faster than it usually would in two hours. You should eat before your treatment.

## Before Treatment — at the Hospital

- If you have diabetes, the health care staff will check your blood glucose level. It must be between 120 to 200 mg/dL. You will receive something to eat and your blood glucose will be rechecked.
- You will change into the hospital gown.
- The health care staff will ask you about your health. Tell the staff if you have any changes in your health (including vision changes) and how you are feeling that day.

## During Treatment

- Ask the health care staff if you can wear your glasses, dentures or both during treatment.
- You will lie down on a stretcher.
- You will be the only person in the chamber.
- You will be able to talk to the health care staff (specially trained doctors and technicians) through a speaker.
- You can sleep, watch TV or movies, or listen to the radio.

- The pressure inside the chamber will cause your ears to pop. (This is similar to flying in an airplane.)
  - To equalize the pressure in your ears, move your jaw, yawn or swallow.
  - If you are feeling any pain or having problems, please tell the health care staff.
- If you feel lightheaded or sick to your stomach, please tell the health care staff.
- You may have some vision changes during treatment. These are temporary (will not last) and will get better within 6 weeks of your last hyperbaric treatment.

## After Treatment

- If you have diabetes, the health care staff will check your blood glucose level. If your glucose is lower than 120 mg/dL you will receive something to eat and have your blood glucose rechecked.
- You may change into your regular clothes.
- You may leave the hospital.