

Hours Of Operation:

The Hyperbaric Medicine Unit is open Monday through Friday 0700-15:30. The Unit Phone number is 464-4910. Coverage for emergencies is provided after hours by calling the unit number and following the directions.

Will My Insurance Cover Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatments ?

As a State Hospital we will accept and bill all insurance companies for care provided. Co-pay and services not covered are the responsibility of the patient. It is recommended the patient contact their own insurance company for information regarding individual coverage.

Unit Numbers:

Unit:: 464-4910

Fax: 464-4919



State University of New York
Upstate Medical University

Department of Anesthesiology
315 464-8668



Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

Patient information

What is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy? (HBO2)

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy is a medical treatment that allows a patient to breathe 100% oxygen inside an enclosed chamber at increase pressure. This increased pressure and increased oxygen concentration raises the oxygen content in the blood and other tissues.

How Does It Work ?

Normal atmospheric pressure is 14.7 PSI (pounds per square inch). At this normal pressure we breathe 20% oxygen and 80% nitrogen. During an HBO2 treatment the pressure is increased 2 to 3 times normal atmospheric pressure (2.0-3.0 ATA) and 100% oxygen is delivered for breathing. A greater amount of oxygen is dissolved in the blood stream and carried to the body tissues in amounts sufficient to promote several therapeutic and healing effects. Hyperbaric oxygen treatments will provide your body with one or more of the following:

- *increased oxygen delivery to the tissue
- *formation of new small blood vessels
- *improved infection control
- *elimination of carbon monoxide
- *enhanced wound healing

How Is The Treatment Given?

There are two types of chambers, monoplace and multiplace. Multiplace are “rooms” that are compressed with air while the patient breathes 100% oxygen by a face mask or hood.

At University Hospital we use monoplace chambers. These clear acrylic chambers are compressed with 100% oxygen and therefore a mask or hood are not needed. Each chamber holds one patient.

How Many Treatments Will I Need?

A typical outpatient treatment schedule is 30 treatments delivered once daily, Monday-Friday, for 90 minutes each. The number and frequency of treatments vary according to the patient referral and condition.

What Does It Feel Like?

Once you are in the chamber and the door is closed, you will hear oxygen begin to flow. A nurse will sit by you and be in constant communication with you through a two way intercom. During the compression phase (a gradual increase in pressure) you may feel a fullness in your ears, similar to what you have experienced while flying in an airplane. Prior to beginning treatment your nurse will demonstrate how to relieve this. The rate of compression will be adjusted for your comfort. This “phase of compression will last about 15 minutes.

When you have reached the level of pressure that has been prescribed you may watch television., rest, or sleep during the remainder of the treatment. When your treatment is complete, the decompression phase will begin (a gradual decrease in pressure to normal). During this time you may feel a “popping” sensation in your ears. This is normal and will resolve as you return to normal surface pressure.

A registered nurse trained in hyperbaric Medicine will remain with you at all times during your hyperbaric oxygen treatment.

Are There Any Side Effects?

Generally patients experience no after effects from hyperbaric oxygen therapy. However some patients report a remaining “fullness” in their ears between treatments. If this should continue a hyperbaric Physician will prescribe medication to help relieve this. Rarely, patients having hyperbaric oxygen therapy develop temporary changes in eyesight. This is usually of short duration and will return to its normal status within several months after the treatment is complete.

Like all medical treatments and procedures some risks are associated with hyperbaric oxygen therapy. These risks are quite rare and will be discussed with you by the hyperbaric staff prior to initiation of treatment.

Special Preparation for Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment

For your safety in the environment of increased oxygen concentration and increased atmosphere there are certain requirements that must be followed. No personal garments are allowed in the chamber. A 100% cotton gown will be provided for you by the hyperbaric staff. No unnecessary items will be permitted in the chamber these include, but are not limited to, matches, lighters, hearing aides, watches, jewelry, books, magazines, hard contact lenses, make-up, hair spray, lotions, ointments or oil on the skin.. It is highly recommended you stop smoking prior to initiation of, and for the duration of HBO2 therapy.

Smoking greatly reduces the effectiveness of these treatments.

What Conditions Does Hyperbaric Therapy Treat?
Most often patients are referred for enhancement of healing of irradiated tissue, either prior to surgical intervention/ and/or to enhance healing post surgical intervention. We also treat patients with carbon monoxide poisoning, post flap / graft surgery, reattachment of amputated body parts and chronic non-healing wounds.

The indications are based on recommendations of the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society and very strictly followed.

How are patients Referred for Treatment?

Patients are referred upon recommendation from their primary care Physician. A letter of referral is required in non-emergent case requesting consultation by a Hyperbaric Physician. A consultation will then be scheduled with the patient and a plan of care recommended. Emergency admissions can be accepted by telephone consult from an Attending Physician.