



HYPERBARIC MEDICINE

987561 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68198-7561
402.552.2490

Hyperbaric Oxygen **THERAPY**

This brochure has been designed to provide you with basic information about hyperbaric oxygen therapy. After reading this brochure, please contact your doctor or the Hyperbaric Medicine staff at 402.552.2490 if you have any questions.



What is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) is a medical treatment used for specific medical conditions. It may be the primary treatment for some disorders, but is often used as part of a combined program involving nursing care, dressing changes, surgical debridement, medications and nutrition.

During hyperbaric oxygen therapy, the patient is placed in a clear plastic chamber which is pressurized with pure oxygen up to three times normal air pressure. This increases the oxygen level in the blood and ultimately in the body tissues.

How Does Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Work?

Oxygen that is delivered to a patient in a hyperbaric chamber greatly increases the amount that can be delivered to body tissues by the blood. The benefits of hyperbaric oxygen are not from oxygen in contact with the surface of the body, but from breathing it and getting more into the blood stream.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy may be used to treat several medical conditions including:

- Severe anemia
- Brain abscess
- Bubbles of air in blood vessels (arterial gas embolism)
- Burn
- Decompression sickness
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Crushing injury
- Deafness, sudden
- Gangrene
- Infection of skin or bone that causes tissue death
- Non-healing wounds, such as a diabetic foot ulcer
- Radiation injury
- Skin graft or skin flap at risk of tissue death
- Vision loss, sudden and painless

What Does Hyperbaric Oxygen Feel Like?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is virtually pain-free. Patients lie comfortably and restfully in the chamber. Patients can listen to music, watch television or movies, or nap if they wish. During certain stages of the treatment, patients may experience a sensation of fullness in their ears. This is similar to that which is felt while flying in an airplane or driving down a mountain



Jeffrey S. Cooper, MD, Medical Director, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

as the eardrum responds to changes in pressure. As part of the introduction to treatment, patients are taught several easy methods to avoid ear discomfort.

Is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Safe?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is prescribed by a physician and performed under medical supervision. Like all medical treatments and procedures, there are some risks associated with hyperbaric oxygen therapy. These risks are quite rare and will be discussed in detail prior to starting therapy. Overall, hyperbaric oxygen therapy is extremely safe.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy at Nebraska Medicine

Nebraska Medicine is home to the only accredited, Level 1 (i.e., available 24/7 for emergencies and critical patients) clinical hyperbaric oxygen therapy unit in the region.

The Hyperbaric Medicine Program is medically directed and staffed by physicians and nurses specially trained in hyperbaric oxygen therapy. The unit is located on the 9th floor, in Clarkson Tower. It is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For further information regarding hyperbaric oxygen therapy, please contact Hyperbaric Medicine at 402.552.2490.