



Patient Education

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

A guide to help you learn about and get ready for your treatment.

About this booklet ...

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy can be frightening for you and your family. This booklet was written by members of your hyperbaric team to help answer some of your questions about hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

The staff at the Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit are here to help you heal and recover. They will be pleased to answer questions at any time – no question is too simple to ask.

What is hyperbaric oxygen therapy?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is a painless treatment that increases the amount of oxygen in your body. This is done by breathing pure oxygen while you are in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber.

A hyperbaric oxygen chamber is an enclosed chamber that you lie inside. The pressure inside the chamber is increased as you breathe pure oxygen.

The increased pressure inside the chamber allows your tissues to take up more oxygen. More oxygen into your tissues helps your body heal faster by speeding up the formation of new tissue and fighting infection.

At the Hamilton General Hospital, your treatment will be in a "monoplace" chamber. You will be inside the chamber and a therapist will be outside in the room.

The Hyperbaric Chamber



The chamber is a clear tube so you will be able to see through it. The therapist will always be in the room and you will be able to see and talk to the therapist. You will be able to see the chamber before your first hyperbaric oxygen treatment.

What is hyperbaric oxygen therapy used for?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is used to treat:

- poor wound healing
- carbon monoxide poisoning
- gas gangrene, soft tissue infection
- diving accidents or the “bends”
- air and gas embolism
- burns
- soft tissue radiation injury
- osteomyelitis
- osteoradionecrosis
- acute blood loss anemia
- intracranial abscess
- skin grafts and flaps
- thermal burns
- crush injury
- compartment syndrome
- acute traumatic ischemias

How do I get ready to go in the hyperbaric chamber?

Before you start your treatment:

- go to the bathroom
 - remove your underwear, nylons and socks
 - put on the special gown
-

You cannot wear:

- contact lenses, dentures, and/or hearing aids
- jewellery
- hair spray
- ointments
- makeup
- creams
- nail polish
- perfume or cologne
- lotions or petroleum jelly
- deodorant
- velcro
- watch
- hair elastic bands

You **cannot** chew gum or suck candies in the chamber.

You **can** wear your eyeglasses. We will give you a bottle of water to drink and a bed pan to use in the chamber if needed.

Tell the therapist right away if you become nauseated before or during treatment.

Sorry, books and magazines are not allowed inside the chamber. However, a television is available for viewing and you can hear the sound inside the chamber.

What are the risks?

There are potential risks to having hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Your doctor will talk to you about them before you agree to having the treatment.

While in the chamber you will breathe pure oxygen which is flammable. **We take every precaution to make sure nothing that could cause a spark is taken into the chamber with you.**

You will be given a special gown to wear during your treatment. It is made of 100% cotton to reduce the risk of static electricity. **Please do not wear any other clothing underneath the gown.**

Check with the therapist if you are not sure. If you have a wound dressing on, please check with the therapist to see if it is all right to wear it during your treatment.

What else do I need to know?

Do not drink anything carbonated such as Coke™ within 1 hour to the start of your treatment as this could cause stomach pain. Avoid food and drinks with caffeine too.

Do not smoke during the course of your treatment. Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen your blood can carry and will reduce the effectiveness of the treatment.

If you drink alcohol, please discuss this with the doctor. Drinking alcohol during your treatment course could cause a seizure.

If you have diabetes, please tell the therapist your morning blood sugar result and eat a normal breakfast.

Tell the therapist if you did not sleep through the night before your treatment.

Useful telephone numbers:

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit

905-527-0271 ext 46426

If no answer, call Jan Lowther, ext 46407 and leave a message

Dr. Brian Egier's office

905-527-0271 ext 44550

Henderson Hospital

Cancer Centre

905-387-9495

Henderson Hospital

Lakeview Lodge

905-575-6302

Cancer Society

905-575-9220

Divers Alert Network (DAN)

919-684-8111

Frequently asked questions ...

How long does each treatment last?

A typical treatment lasts between 2 to 2 1/2 hours. The number of treatments you will need depends on why you are having hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Your doctor will discuss your treatment schedule before it starts.

Will I need to sign a consent?

You will be asked to sign a consent form for hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Before this, the doctor will discuss with you and explain the risks and benefits of the treatment.

What will I feel during the hyperbaric oxygen treatment?

As the chamber is pressurized, you may feel a rise in the temperature. You will hear the oxygen coming into the chamber. It may sound like hissing or a waterfall. You will feel a fullness in your ears as your eardrum is exposed to the pressure change. This feeling is similar to that felt in an airplane. The therapist will teach you how to deal with this. Never allow your eardrums to become painful.

Always tell the therapist if you are having problems adjusting to the pressure change. Let the therapist know if you:

- feel nauseous
- have tingling in your face
- see double

What do I have to do during the treatment?

You do not have to do anything during the treatment. During the treatment you may lie on your back or side and you can adjust your position if you wish to. You will be able to watch television during the treatment.

What are the side effects?

Some side effects include nausea, earache, and vision changes during your treatment. Do not change your eyeglass prescription since the vision changes are temporary and your vision will return to normal.

Why is my wound painful?

The treatment is causing an increase in the flow of blood to the wound. This may increase the pain but is a sign of the healing process.

What if I can't keep my appointment?

If you need to rebook, please call the Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit as soon as you can.

Where is the Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit located?

The Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit is located on the 3rd floor of the Hamilton General Hospital. It is next to the Respiratory Therapy area and across from the Heart Investigation Unit. Take the elevator on the main floor and get off on the 3rd floor. Follow the signs from there.

If you have any questions about your hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatment, please ask your therapist on the day of your treatment or ask your doctor.

We hope you find this pamphlet to be useful. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding this information pamphlet, please talk to the therapist.

Notes



**Funding for the Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit
is supported by the Firefighters of Hamilton**

Hyperbaric Chamber Schedule

Month: _____

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

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Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
