

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

What is hyperbaric oxygen therapy?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy, or HBOT, is a medical treatment. The patient breathes 100% (pure) oxygen in a pressurized chamber. The pressure is about two to 3 times higher than the normal pressure in the atmosphere.

This treatment is used to help:

- Sores heal better.
- Children that had carbon monoxide exposure or were in a fire.
- After injuries that crush or break bones.
- After surgery for skin grafting.
- For infections in the bone, skin and muscle.
- After radiation therapy for cancer.

Special preparation

- If your child has trouble with a stuffy or plugged feeling in their ears, you will be told to give your child a mild decongestant such as pseudephedrine (Sudafed®) before coming. Call us to see how much is safe for your child to have. Give other medicines your doctor has ordered for your child.
- Your child can eat like normal on treatment days. There is no need to miss a meal.
- A short exam will be done before your child's first treatment. We will check your child's heart, lungs and ears. We will also ask you a lot of questions. Your answers will help us make your child as comfortable as possible during the treatments.
- Before treatment, your child will change into a special gown. It is a 100% cotton gown that ties in the back with no snaps or Velcro on it. These gowns are specially made to keep your child safe because they don't create static electricity like other gowns might.



How is the treatment done?

- Hyperbaric oxygen is given in a large, clear chamber that looks like a big tube. Your child will lie on a cart outside the tube. The cart will be rolled into the tube. Oxygen will be turned on and the door will be closed.
- Toys need to be checked by the Hyperbaric Medicine staff. Stuffed animals, electronic games and books are not safe to take into the chamber.
- Your child can watch TV. We can play a DVD for your child. It is also ok for your child to sleep.
- We can hear your child all the time; all they need to do is talk. For your child to hear us, we use a special button on the microphone outside the tube.
- You can stay in the Hyperbaric Medicine Unit, but outside of the tube, if this will help your child. You cannot touch or hold your child during treatment.
- Each treatment takes 90 minutes. Your child can be taken out sooner if needed.

Will it hurt?

Your child should not feel pain during the treatment. Your child may feel stuffiness in their ears. This feels like your head is under your pillow or there is cotton in the ears. Infants or young children can relieve this by sucking on a bottle or pacifier. Older children can relieve this by yawning or by other movements that will be taught by the Hyperbaric Medicine staff.

If your child's ears hurt tell us right away. We can slow down how fast we get your child to the pressure needed to treat them. If needed, we can take your child out. If your child has stuffy ears that don't clear with a mild decongestant, they may need to see a doctor who specializes in ear problems to put tubes in your child's ears. These are the same tubes used for children who get a lot of ear infections.

Follow up care

- Your child's ears may still feel stuffy. If that happens, your child might need to take more of the decongestant when you get home. Call the hyperbaric medicine unit staff or your child's doctor to find out how much decongestant medicine to give your child.
- You will still see the doctor who sent you for hyperbaric oxygen treatments. The doctor will decide how well the treatments are working and if your child needs more. The number of treatments that your child needs will be decided based on a plan (protocol). The plan helps us know the fewest and most treatments needed to help your child. We will share those numbers with your child's doctor. We will look at how well the treatments are working and decide how many treatments your child needs.

Note: If you have any questions or concerns about hyperbaric oxygen treatments that are not answered by this handout please call the Hyperbaric Medicine Unit at (414) 805-5060.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.