
Description of treatment

By editor

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Hyperbarics oxygen therapy (HBO) is a form of treatment, which involves providing the body with extra oxygen. 'Hyper' means increased and 'baric' relates to pressure. Oxygen (O₂) is one of the gases in the air that we breathe, and is essential for life. Normally, oxygen makes up just over one fifth (21%) of the air that we breathe. In HBO therapy, pure oxygen is given to patients in chambers known as hyperbaric oxygen chambers. People can breathe this increased oxygen by sitting in the chamber and using a mask. Oxygen is carried around the body by the blood. Breathing in 100% (pure) oxygen, under increased pressure (HBO), allows extra oxygen to be taken up by the blood stream and dissolved at a far greater rate than if pressure was not used. This extra oxygen can help where healing is slowed down by infection or limited blood supply due to damage to the tissues.

HBO therapy:

- * assists healing by raising tissue oxygen levels to normal in areas where they are reduced through illness or injury
- * encourages new blood vessels to grow and carry additional blood
- * increases the ability of the body's defence mechanisms to fight infection and kill bacteria
- * helps reduce any swelling that may occur around the area.

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