About hyperbaric oxygen therapy

It is a treatment in which you breathe 100% pure oxygen inside a compression chamber. The amount of oxygen in your blood is increased several times the normal level when you breathe pure oxygen under high barometric pressure. This increase in oxygen to all parts of your body helps improve healing and control infection in certain medical conditions, such as:

- Air embolism
- Decompression sickness (bends)
- Crush injuries
- Problems with skin grafts or flaps
- Problem wounds
- Clostridium infections (gas gangrene)
- Bone or tissue dying from radiation (radionecrosis)
- Diabetic lower extremity wounds
- Bone infections
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Low blood flow or blockage of blood to body organs (ischemia)

What to expect

You will be evaluated by a hyperbaric doctor, and a treatment plan created. Treatments are scheduled daily, sometimes twice a day, Monday through Friday.

During treatment, you lie down in the chamber. The clear acrylic chamber cover allows you to see out. You can sleep, watch television or listen to music. An intercom system allows you to talk with staff.

Phases of Treatment

Each treatment has three phases:

- **Compression:** The chamber’s pressure is increased. You will feel fullness in your ears, like flying in an airplane or diving underwater. Staff will show you how to relieve this fullness and equalize the pressure. This phase is 15 to 20 minutes.

- **Treatment:** During treatment, the fullness in your ears will decrease to normal levels. This phase lasts for 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours. A treatment is sometimes referred to as a “dive.”
• **Decompression:** During decompression, there is a reduction in the chamber’s pressure. Your ears readjust to normal pressure. This phase is 15 to 20 minutes. More care may be needed before and after treatment. The most common side effect after treatment is ear fullness or feeling tired. If you have ear pain or fullness after a dive, tell the doctor.

### Getting ready for treatment

- You may eat and take medicines as you normally do.
- Leave all valuables at home.
- If you smoke, stop smoking and ask for help to quit tobacco.
- Avoid alcohol between hyperbaric oxygen treatments.
- Cotton clothing is provided for you and must be worn in the chamber. A changing area and lockers are available.

### Chamber Safety

**Do NOT** bring any of these items into the chamber with you:

- Anything deemed unsafe by staff
- Anything that contains oil or alcohol
- Cigarettes, medicines, coins or money
- Electronic devices, such as cell phones, computers, games, hearing aids or batteries
- Flammable liquids or gasses
- Hair spray, hair gel, mousse, oils or perms
- Heat warmers

- Jewelry or watches
- Makeup, lipstick or nail polish
- Matches, lighter or other fire / spark producing materials
- Metal objects, unless approved by staff
- Newspapers and similar items
- Ointment, salves or liniments not used for wound care
- Perfumes, colognes or aftershave products
- Petroleum or Vaseline products, unless covered by occlusive dressings that keep out air
- Shoes or static-producing clothing items, such as Velcro
- Street clothing
- Synthetic clothing, such as rayon, nylon and pantyhose
- Wigs, hairpieces or mustache wax

### How to reschedule your appointments

If you are not able to make your appointment, please call the hyperbaric location you go to for treatment:

- Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, **University Hospital**, 614-293-5551
- Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, **East Hospital**, 614-257-3110

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Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail health-info@osu.edu.

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