Preparing for your Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

BEFORE TREATMENT

Before your treatments begin, practice equalizing your middle ear pressures using the instructions provided. You will find this prevents ear pain during treatment.

Both nicotine and caffeine cause blood vessels to constrict, and reduce the effectiveness of hyperbaric oxygen therapy. We strongly advise avoidance of all tobacco during the period of your treatments and thereafter if at all possible. If it is not possible for you to quit tobacco or caffeine, we advise avoidance for as long as possible before and after each treatment. Nicotine gum and patches are not permitted in the hyperbaric chamber.

On the day of your treatment, shower or bathe and dress in loose-fitting clothing with cotton socks. If you have a wound, ensure that no oil or petroleum ointment is applied. Please bring as few personal items as possible to your treatment, since very few materials are allowed into the hyperbaric chamber. Avoid using body oils, perfumes, lotions, nail polish and deodorants to lower fire risk and prevent harmful vapors from forming in the chamber. Hearing aids, metal-framed eyeglasses, hard contact lenses, jewelry, watches, dentures and other prosthetic devices cannot be taken into the chamber room. These should be left home or placed in your locker before treatment. If at all possible, we recommend you have a driver accompany you to at least your first few treatments to assist in case you experience fatigue following your treatment.

Please have a light, nutritious meal one to two hours before your scheduled treatment. If you have diabetes, your blood glucose will be checked before and after each treatment, because hyperbaric oxygen treatments can occasionally lower blood glucose levels. If you have diabetes, glucose replacement will be provided inside the chamber if you feel your glucose level is low.

Because treatments last about two hours, it is recommended you use the restroom immediately before treatment.

If you experience a fever or symptoms of infection such as cough, sore throat, runny nose, aches, sinus pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, please notify us immediately. It may be necessary to cancel your treatment until your symptoms improve. Equalizing ear pressures can be difficult in the presence of a respiratory infection, resulting in discomfort and possible injury to your eardrums.

Please check in for your treatment 30 minutes before your appointment. This allows sufficient timing for dressing change, vital signs, ear check, and restroom visits. After check-in, you will be directed to the dressing room, where you will don cotton clothing specifically for use in the hyperbaric chamber. You will then have your vital signs recorded and be escorted into the
Preparing for your Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (Continued)

chamber room. There, you will lie on the cham-
ber gurney. The hyperbaric technician or physi-
cian will perform a final check of your condition.
Following this, you will be slid into the chamber.
The chamber door will be closed, and your loud-
speaker communication with the technician will
be checked. At this time the chamber pressuriza-
tion will begin.

**DURING TREATMENT**

Even before the chamber door closes, you should
begin to equalize your ears. The maximum pres-
sure difference between the chamber and your
middle ear occurs in the first few moments of
pressurization, and it is important to begin equal-
ization before significant increase in pressure
makes this more difficult. If you experience pain
of any type, immediately say “STOP”. The techni-
cian will pause compression until you are com-
fortable continuing.

During your treatment, oxygen flows continu-
ously through the chamber to maintain a clean
atmosphere and to control inside temperature.
This produces a flow noise, which can vary from
time to time, but which is a normal sound associ-
ated with chamber operation. It is also normal
during pressurization to experience warming
within the chamber. This will normalize once
treatment pressure is achieved.

Depending upon the treatment pressure used for
your therapy, you might be instructed to peri-
odically breathe air from a facemask inside the
chamber. This provides an additional protection
against oxygen toxicity. Your hyperbaric techni-
cian will instruct you in use of the mask prior to
your treatment.

Once the chamber reaches treatment pressure,
you are unlikely to experience difficulty equalizing
your ears, since pressures are not changing. Dur-
ing this period, you can watch television or rest.

At the end of your treatment, pressure will be
reduced within the hyperbaric chamber. De-
pressurization is performed slowly, but you may
experience cooling inside the chamber. It is par-
ticularly important during this time to maintain
normal breathing. Holding your breath could re-
sult in expansion of gas within your lung, which
could lead to injury. Never hold your breath
when in a hyperbaric chamber.

**AFTER TREATMENT**

It is normal to experience mild fatigue immedi-
ately following treatment. Infrequently, this may
be accompanied by lightheadedness. For this
reason, we suggest you have a driver accompany
you to your first one or two treatments until you
are aware of how you feel following a treatment.

Remember to call the center if you anticipate
missing a treatment. If you are experiencing any
health issues or possible side effects, make sure
you bring them to the attention of the hyperbaric
technician or physician. You will be interviewed
and examined no less than weekly by a hyper-
baric physician to ensure you are tolerating and
benefiting from your treatments.