

# 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 chamber gurney. The hyperbaric technician or physician 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 pressurization will begin.

## **DURING TREATMENT**

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

During your treatment, oxygen flows continuously 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 associated 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 periodically breathe air from a facemask inside the chamber. This provides an additional protection against oxygen toxicity. Your hyperbaric technician 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. During this period, you can watch television or rest.

At the end of your treatment, pressure will be reduced within the hyperbaric chamber. Depressurization is performed slowly, but you may experience cooling inside the chamber. It is particularly important during this time to maintain normal breathing. Holding your breath could result 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 immediately 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 hyperbaric physician to ensure you are tolerating and benefiting from your treatments.