

What are HBOT treatments?

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by Dr. Daniel Man in the Boca Raton News

Dear Dr. Man, My sister recently had some plastic surgery done and, shortly after her surgery, the doctor had her get HBOT treatments. He said that it would help her body heal more quickly. Can you tell me more about these treatments and how they work?

HBOT is an acronym for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, which is a specialized therapy that uses an increase in atmospheric pressure in order to allow the body to incorporate more oxygen into blood cells, blood plasma, cerebral-spinal fluid and other body fluids.

The body's healing process occurs when a severely compromised tissue in the body begins to receive oxygen, and blood circulation to the tissue resumes. The damaged tissue may not have been receiving enough blood for it to heal, due to a lack of blood circulation caused by the initial trauma or surgery

So how does hyperbaric oxygen therapy work? Patients are placed inside a pressurized chamber. Once in the chamber, the surgery site can now begin to receive a healing dose of oxygen through the surrounding body fluids and plasma—even if the blood supply to the tissues is compromised. To boost the oxygen concentration in oxygen chambers, supplemental oxygen may be added into the chamber during treatment.

When in the hyperbaric oxygen tank, red blood cells instantly fill with oxygen and the extra oxygen dissolves directly into the blood fluid. In just a few minutes, this extra oxygen builds up tissue oxygen levels far above normal. In fact, patients can inhale 2.4 pounds of oxygen in just one hour (the normal is 6 pounds per day).

How long treatments last depends on the doctor or therapist's particular protocol for that individual. Every person and every condition is unique; and the hyperbaric treatment may require a one hour or two hour session. A program should be set out for each individual, which may require three treatments a week for several weeks or more.

There is much more information and research available on this remarkable subject. The New England Journal of Medicine has much documentation on the use of HBOT for the treatment of such indications as multiple sclerosis, acute carbon monoxide poisoning, gas gangrene, air embolism, diabetic foot wounds, infections, burns, ulcers and edema. This is but scratching the surface of the many uses of hyperbaric technology.

Dr. Daniel Man is a board-certified plastic surgeon.

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