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Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: Cutting-Edge Holistic Healing

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Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy has been featured on Discovery Channel, the hit TV series House, and the acclaimed feature show The Doctors

You can survive weeks without food and days without water, but only minutes without what? Oxygen! Necessary for life, oxygen is the basic building block for healing, which makes oxygen therapy essential and logical for patients whose healing is compromised.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) is quickly becoming the preferred adjunct therapy for patients with stroke, non-healing wounds, radiation damage, chronic illnesses, and many more conditions. HBOT increases the oxygen gradient in damaged, oxygen starved tissues. The oxygen you breathe in the chamber dissolves into your blood more efficiently, acting as a cellular energy catapult so that your plasma and tissues are saturated beyond a cellular level. A cascade of healing mechanisms are then triggered which include an increase of collagen production, an improvement in auto-immune response, a reduction in inflammation and swelling, and inhibition of bacteria.

One of the many successful cases is that of Maryann Alvarado of Tiburon, CA, a diabetic patient whose non-healing wounds resulted in amputation, restriction to a wheelchair, and confinement to a convalescent hospital. When the doctor told Maryann that more amputations would be inevitable if the wounds didn't heal, she started oxygen therapy immediately.

Maryann's HBOT treatments were surely a Godsend. She avoided amputation of her lower leg because complete healing was achieved. Today, Maryann's enjoying an independent life again in her own apartment.

A treatment course of HBOT, when followed correctly, promotes the growth of red blood vessels, or Angiogenesis. Without such growth, proper circulation and complete healing couldn't take place, since no medications or drugs can produce those benefits. Basic gas laws explain how oxygen under slight pressure not only diffuses into cells easily, it can do so with up to 14 to 20 times the normal amount of oxygen that we breathe at sea level. HBOT thus provides an exponential amount of oxygen to hypoxic, or oxygen starved tissue.

Robert, a local third grade school teacher from Santa Rosa, CA, suffered for years with a non-healing wound just above his ankle. Infection to the area resulted in several failed surgeries, leaving Robert with almost no hope. Luckily, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy was approved by his

insurance, and Robert started treatment. Within two weeks there was significant improvement. Robert's wound care clinic stated that they'd never seen a wound change so quickly. The wound is closed now and Robert can swim and bathe normally again, not to mention keep up with the demands of running his third grade class.

Even children with autistic disorders and Cerebral Palsy are showing significant improvement with HBOT. This fact is turning many heads in the medical community due to the steady rise of reported children with these disorders nationally. One Bay Area physician estimates that there are nearly 5,000 or more children with autism spectrum disorders in the San Francisco Bay Area alone.

"Clinical experience with brain damaged and CP children, with well documented epilepsy, routinely improved with HBOT," stated Dr Frederick S. Cramer MD in an article he wrote on the subject. "The same clinical observations are noted with Traumatic Brain Injury patients." Oxygen is definitely part of the treatment puzzle for patients with these conditions.

Oxygen is used therapeutically in the hyperbaric venue to treat hypoxic tissue (tissue that is not getting enough oxygen). If you are a cancer patient and you received radiation therapy, the radiation will actually damage the microvasculature, which are capillaries that feed certain tissues. Hyperbaric oxygen is the only therapy that's known to be able to replenish these capillaries. While it won't grow back a carotid artery or an aorta, it will grow back those capillaries.

Margaret, a grandmother in Santa Rosa, CA, suffered extreme burning and scarring after radiation for breast cancer. Her skin was blistered and dark red. There was relentless burning pain and heat from the radiated tissue, and there seemed to be nothing Margaret could do to relieve the pain. She finally started Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and could feel things changing. Over time, the constant burning was eventually completely gone and the huge thick scar had flattened out and become non-existent. After treatment, her radiology tech asked her, "You did have surgery, right?" because she could not find the scar!

Margaret is just one of many patients who have undergone radiation and experienced harsh effects afterwards. When once there seemed to be no effective treatment for these cases, HBOT has filled the role magnificently, offering pain relief and true healing in a non-invasive setting.

In the case of a Crush Injury, hyperbaric oxygen will prevent reperfusion injury. The damage that restored blood flow can cause is sometimes worse than the initial injury. White blood cells adhere to the damaged blood vessel walls and they start exploding, releasing all kinds of enzymes that aren't good for the healing process. The hyperbaric oxygen actually down regulates a whole cascade of different enzymes and proteins that are involved in cell death and inflammation, so that's another aspect of what hyperbaric oxygen therapy can do.

Detoxification is another of HBOT's healing properties. It can help open up the circulation into damaged tissues and normalize various enzyme systems which helps with the detoxification process. A metabolically healthy cell will then be able to participate in the required chemical steps to detoxify.

Despite HBOT's multiple benefits, cost effectiveness, and growing number of positive clinical trials, many patients are still not being referred to hyperbaric centers because only a fraction of doctors are educated about this therapy.