

A special note on how to clear your ears

As soon as the pressure increases in the chamber you will need to start making your ears 'pop'. There are several ways to do this. The Centre staff will help you to discover the method that best suits you.

Usually the best way to clear the ears is to swallow. Some people find that holding the nose and blowing with the mouth closed is also effective. Alternatively you can try moving your lower jaw from side to side then in and out. It is also helpful to have a small drink of water to moisten the throat.

Do not worry if you cannot at first effectively clear your ears, but do let the chamber operator know immediately and he/she will be able to slow the compression process and offer advice.

Any other questions!

High Dosage Oxygen Treatment is a pleasant experience but we are all claustrophobic to some extent so expect to feel slight apprehension, because this is normal. Staff are always on hand to offer reassurance, answer any questions you might have and put your fears to rest. Being inside a chamber is the safest place in the Centre because of the high levels of oxygen in the body.

There is a wealth of information on the subject of Hyperbaric Medicine, including many controlled studies. Please ask your G.P. or feel free to contact the MS Therapy Centre on the number below. We are always happy to help at any time.

About us

The Kent Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre is an independent local charity.

We provide a wide range of information, support and therapies aimed at improving symptom management and quality of life for people with MS and their carers throughout South and East Kent and the surrounding areas.

Our core therapies include: Physiotherapy, Gym and Group Exercise, Hydrotherapy, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, Counselling and Nutritional Advice.

Within our brand-new purpose-built centre we also offer a much wider range of complementary therapies such as Yoga, Reflexology, Indian Head Massage, Body Massage, Hot Stones Massage, Hand Massage, Acupuncture, Hypnotherapy and Facial Reflexology.

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Information for Clients

High Dosage Oxygen Treatment

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Self-help
is our way
of action

What is High Dosage Oxygen Treatment?

It is increasing the concentration of just the same oxygen we breathe normally in air. A **hyperbaric chamber** is needed to allow the pressure around the body to be increased. We all live under the pressure of the atmosphere and the extra pressure required for this treatment is small.

The technology is very well established, as all commercial aircraft are hyperbaric chambers equipped with oxygen breathing systems! High Dosage Oxygen Treatment, (HDOT) often called Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, has a hundred year history, but doctors have only recently recognised that even when the level of oxygen in the blood is normal there can be a severe deficiency in the tissues.

Now the science is understood this use of oxygen is expanding rapidly around the world. The treatment involves breathing pure oxygen in a chamber at 1.5 to 2.5 times normal atmospheric pressure for an hour a day.

How will breathing more oxygen help?

The air that we breathe usually provides enough oxygen for both normal body metabolism and the repair of tissue damage after injury or illness. However, tissue damage or disease also involves the blood vessels within the tissue and this may reduce blood flow. So, just when more oxygen is needed, the supply is reduced and recovery may be limited or even prevented. By increasing the concentration of oxygen in the blood more can be delivered to damaged tissue to establish normal oxygen values and so allow recovery to take place.

How does it work?

Oxygen is transported dissolved in the blood and also in combination with haemoglobin in the red blood cells. Although haemoglobin carries most of the oxygen, it is only the dissolved oxygen that passes into the tissues. Breathing high levels of oxygen under hyperbaric conditions oxygen dissolves more in all of the body's fluids and so more can reach areas where the circulation is diminished or blocked to improve recovery. The extra oxygen has additional benefits because it greatly enhances the ability of white blood cells to kill bacteria. It also reduces swelling and allows new blood vessels to grow more rapidly into the affected areas.

What are the treatments like?

This is a simple, non-invasive and painless treatment which most patients find pleasurable and relaxing. You will be treated in a comfortable purpose-built chamber.

How often will I be having the treatment?

This depends on what your doctor or medical advisor feels is appropriate. The sessions last just over an hour and are usually repeated five times per week for up to 20 sessions.

Are there any side-effects?

At the dosage used in this treatment there are no side-effects from the oxygen. However, the change in pressure may cause some ear or sinus discomfort. Note that HDOT has been used in the NHS for more than 50 years and, since 1982, it has also been used in the community. More than 1.6 million sessions have been carried out – 63,489 in the last year without a single serious problem!

The treatment session is in 3 phases:

1. Compression

After the door is closed, there will be some noise as the pressure increases. It will get warmer and you will feel 'fullness' in your ears like descending in an airplane. You will have been taught how to avoid discomfort by clearing or 'equalising' your ears. If you develop any discomfort inform the attendant and the rate of compression will be reduced. There may be a few unusual noises but they can be ignored.

2. Treatment

The treatment begins when the pressure reaches the prescribed level. You may then rest, sleep, read or listen to music. It's your opportunity to relax and get better!

3. Decompression

The attendant will let you know when the treatment is complete and the pressure will be lowered slowly, again at a rate comfortable to your ears.

- Wear comfortable clothing and leave your watch outside
- No smoking materials, matches or lighters are allowed in the chamber

Note: The chamber can actually be decompressed at any time and whilst breathing oxygen, you cannot suffer decompression sickness ('the bends').