

Your doctor has referred you for hyperbaric oxygen (HBO) therapy at the Diving Diseases Research Centre in Plymouth. This centre was originally developed as a treatment centre for divers suffering from 'the bends'.

What is HBO therapy?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is a form of treatment which involves providing the body with extra oxygen delivered under pressure.

HBO use in Head & Neck Cancer

Radiotherapy can cause damage to the blood vessels in the mouth; this leads to a reduction in the oxygen supply to the jaw bone. In some cases the bone can eventually die, this is called **osteoradionecrosis**.

Although HBO therapy cannot restore dead bone, increased oxygen can help the tissues around the area to heal by encouraging new blood vessels to grow.

Is it safe?

There will be an attendant inside the chamber with you at all times who will be in contact with the staff outside the chamber.

HBO is a relatively safe treatment:

- You may feel your ears popping as the pressure inside the chamber changes
- You may experience blurred vision, but this gets better once therapy ends
- Light-headedness sometimes occurs but this lasts for only a few minutes
- Tiredness can be a problem especially if you have more than one therapy a day. This will ease once therapy finishes

Before therapy

You will be examined by a doctor to make sure that you are fit enough to receive this type of treatment. It is given inside a chamber, so if you have a fear of enclosed spaces (claustrophobia) you may need medicines to help you overcome any anxiety.

You will need to arrive at the Centre half an hour before your treatment is due to start. Cotton clothing will be provided for you to wear inside the chamber.

Lockers are available for your belongings.

No alcohol should be drunk for at least 12 hours prior to therapy.

You are advised to stop smoking completely during the time you are receiving your therapy. Ladies please note no make-up is to be worn inside the chamber.

It may be possible for you to take a book or magazine inside the chamber, or a DVD or music may be played into the chamber.

Relatives are welcome to use the facilities at the Centre.

How many treatments?

The number of treatments varies from patient to patient. Some will need 40 treatments and others less. This will be explained to you before you start your treatments.

If needed, transport may be available. For your first appointment, telephone 01752 431954 for more information. There is a charge for this service.

The Centre will arrange subsequent transport arrangements on reduced charges for patients visiting frequently or those on specific benefits. Proof of receipt of benefit is required.

Directions

By Road:

Take the A38 to Plymouth, continue onto the A386, following signs for Derriford Hospital. At the Tavistock roundabout take 3rd exit onto Derriford Road, turn right at Davy Road and right at Research Way.

By rail / Bus:

Taxi from Plymouth Station
No direct bus service.

Parking /Facilities

Parking is available.
There is a kitchen where you can make tea and coffee. It is equipped with a microwave oven and fridge

Please note that the information in this leaflet is to be used as a guide only.

Any specific questions or concerns can be discussed with the team at the Diving Centre. (Contact details overleaf).

If you need any further assistance or information please contact:

**Diving Diseases Research Centre
Hyperbaric Medical Centre
Plymouth Science Park
Research Way
Plymouth
Devon
PL6 8BU
01752 209999**

www.ddrc.org

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.



Torbay and South Devon
NHS Foundation Trust

PATIENT INFORMATION

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for Head and Neck Cancer Patients

Working with you, for you