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UCSD Hyperbaric Medicine & Wound Care

Specialty: Advance Wound Care, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, Limb Salvage

UC San Diego Health is a leader in caring for difficult-to-heal, problem wounds. With advanced wound care services and a state-of-the-art hyperbaric chamber, Dr. Caesar Anderson and his skilled team in Encinitas are a part of the largest and most sophisticated hyperbaric oxygen therapy systems in the state.

The Hyperbaric Medicine and Wound Care program provides cost-effective, evidence-based therapeutic options for patients with a variety of non-healing problem wounds. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy has been proven to: accelerate wound healing, reduce cell death and infection, increase tissue oxygenation, promote better blood vessel formation, preserve injured tissues, and increase the body's resistance and ability to combat infection.

For more information, visit www.health.ucsd.edu/specialties/hyperbaric or call 760-452-2222.



For more than 25 years, physicians and dentists at North Coast Health Center have been providing highly personalized care to coastal north San Diego County. With more than 250 physicians and dentists to choose from, North Coast Health Center patients have access to primary care, a surgery center, pharmacy, lab, imaging, and over 45 medical and dental specialties all in one convenient location.



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Ask the EXPERT 2016

LEARNING ABOUT HBOT: HOW HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY CAN HELP YOUR BODY NATURALLY HEAL

You may connect Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) with speedy recovery programs for high-performance athletes or treatment of decompression illness from scuba diving, but the application of increased oxygen under pressure to accelerate the body's natural healing process can be advantageous to those suffering from many common issues, as well.

UC San Diego Health operates two hyperbaric facilities: Encinitas and Hillcrest. The Hillcrest facility has the only hyperbaric chamber in the county open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The center's team of experts are prepared to handle wound care and hyperbaric emergencies. The Encinitas location, however, is open only on weekdays for non-emergent outpatient cases.

"We're trying to educate patients in the community and their referring physicians about the benefits of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for those with non-healing diabetic foot ulcers, injury related to radiation exposure from cancer therapy, compromised or failing skin grafts/flaps following plastic surgery, or chronic bone infection," said Dr. Caesar Anderson, Medical Director at UC San Diego Health, Encinitas specializing in Advance Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine.

"Some people think the therapy almost sounds too high-tech, but it is actually one of the most natural ways to treat your body. Oxygen is our medication and pressure is how we are able to dose it. Providing an environment of enriched oxygen delivery can help our body combat infection and serve as a natural healing process for a wide range of challenging medical illnesses."

HBOT takes place in a pressurized chamber where 100% oxygen is delivered. It is effective for patients suffering from the aforementioned illnesses because it effectively facilitates the penetration of oxygen into oxygen-deprived body tissue. HBOT speeds up the healing process by delivering oxygen to these injured areas.

Anderson cautions that HBOT is not designed as the sole method to heal these challenging wounds, but to enhance the effectiveness of combined treatment with surgery, antibiotic support and comprehensive wound care.

"It is low-risk, non-invasive and cost-effective," Dr. Anderson said. "And we've found that most of our therapies are fully covered by insurance."

About the Chambers

The chambers at UC San Diego Health are large and can treat multiple people at one time. A certified hyperbaric technician or emergency medical technician accompanies patients inside the chamber at all times.

In Encinitas, "we have outfitted the chamber with comfortable recliners, so patients can sit back and read their book or even watch the movie of the day," Anderson said. "It really is a humane and relaxing experience."

And if you're wondering about side effects, complications are rare. HBOT is generally a safe procedure, especially when performed under UC San Diego Health's expert supervision. "The most common side effect is middle ear barotrauma, which causes a feeling similar to flying in an airplane," Anderson said. "We teach simple techniques like yawning, chewing gum or swallowing to take care of this problem quite easily."

UC San Diego Health ascribes strictly to the published guidelines of the Undersea Hyperbaric Medical Society. "This means we only deliver HBOT to specific subsets of diseases that have been rigorously tested," Anderson said.

The typical HBOT therapy period spans about 20 treatments over the course of four weeks. Each treatment generally lasts about two hours. UC San Diego takes new patients on a referral basis only so speak with your physician today and check out <http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/hyperbaric> for more information.

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