



Patient & Family Guide

2022

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy



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Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is used to treat:

- › Decompression sickness in divers
- › Severe (very bad) carbon monoxide poisoning
- › Wounds related to diabetes, vascular disease, and radiation injury

The hyperbaric doctor will talk with you about your condition.

What is hyperbaric oxygen therapy?

During hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO), you will breathe in 100% oxygen in a hyperbaric chamber. The chamber compresses the oxygen, which keeps it at a higher atmospheric pressure than normal. This helps your body to dissolve (take in) more oxygen in your blood and tissues.

Where do I go for my appointment?

The Hyperbaric Treatment Department is located at the Victoria General (VG) site of the QEII in Halifax. Enter the Dickson Building (no need to register), then take the elevator to the basement (Floor B). Take the second hallway on your right. The Hyperbaric Treatment Department is located between the Victoria and Dickson Buildings.

How is hyperbaric oxygen therapy done?

- You will be taken to the hyperbaric chamber.
- A specially trained Respiratory Therapist and/or nurse will stay with you during your treatment. There may also be other patients in the chamber.
- You will be given oxygen through a special face mask or oxygen hood.

How often are treatments done?

- How many treatments you will need and how long each treatment will last will depend on the condition being treated.
- For most conditions, patients are treated once each weekday (Monday to Friday) for up to 40 treatments. Each treatment lasts about 2 to 2 ½ hours.

- The hyperbaric doctor will talk with you about your treatment plan and appointment schedule.

When will I get my appointment schedule?

- A Respiratory Therapist will call you before you start your treatment.
- If you live outside of Halifax, please tell the Respiratory Therapist. They can help you arrange for somewhere to stay near the hospital. The cost of lodging is covered by your provincial health insurance (MSI).
- If you need other health care supports (like feeds, wound care, or ostomy care), please tell the Respiratory Therapist. They can help you arrange for any help you may need.

What are the possible risks?

- Special safety precautions will be taken to make sure you are safe while you are in the chamber.
- For safety reasons, **do not** wear the following:
 - › Lipstick
 - › Oil-based makeup
 - › Ointments (like Vaseline[®], lotions, oils)

- › Hair products (like hair spray, mousse)
Make sure you have clean, product-free hair
- › Watches
- › Jewelry that hangs
- › Hearing aids
- › Hard contact lenses (soft lenses are OK)
- › Synthetic clothing
- Before your treatment, we will give you special clothing and footwear to wear in the chamber.
- **Do not** take the following items into the chamber:
 - › Cigarettes
 - › Lighters
 - › Matches
 - › Knitting
 - › Newspapers
 - › Cell phones
 - › Electrical or battery-operated devices
 - › Vapes/e-cigarettes
- You may bring a book or a magazine to read during your treatment, if you wish.

What are the possible complications?

- You may have a feeling of fullness in your ears during treatment. This is similar to the feeling you may have while flying in an airplane. Before your treatments start, you will be shown how to clear your ears. There will always be someone in the chamber to help you, if needed.
- Sometimes, patients who are having daily hyperbaric treatments have temporary changes in their vision. These are usually not serious. Your vision will go back to normal within 4 to 8 weeks (1 to 2 months) after your treatments end.
- The hyperbaric doctor will give you more information about the possible complications. They can answer any questions you may have.

Does smoking affect hyperbaric oxygen therapy?

- Smoking lowers the amount of oxygen that can be carried by your blood. **We strongly recommend that you do not smoke while you are being treated with hyperbaric oxygen therapy.**
- If you are not able to stop smoking completely, **you must not smoke for 2 hours before and 2 hours after each treatment.**

Can I take my medication(s) during my treatment?

- Please talk with the hyperbaric doctor about your medication(s). You may need to stop taking some medications while you are being treated with hyperbaric oxygen therapy.
- If you need to take medication(s) during a treatment, please bring it with you.
- If you are diabetic, we will check your glucose level before each treatment. If you need to eat something during your treatment, please tell a staff member. They will talk with you about what types of snacks you can bring into the chamber.

What if I feel sick while I am in the chamber?

- If you have a cold, a flu, or a sinus problem, you may not be able to clear your ears during pressure changes in the chamber. Your treatments will need to be rescheduled.
- Call the Hyperbaric Medicine Unit before your appointment to reschedule your treatments.
 - › Phone: 902-473-7998

Can I have a support person with me during my treatment?

Hyperbaric Medicine Unit staff will tell you if a support person may stay in the waiting area during your treatment. Please consider the privacy of other patients.

For more information:

Hyperbaric Medicine in the Maritimes: Diving for Hope (video)

Visit:

› <https://vimeo.com/126165261>

Or use the QR code below:



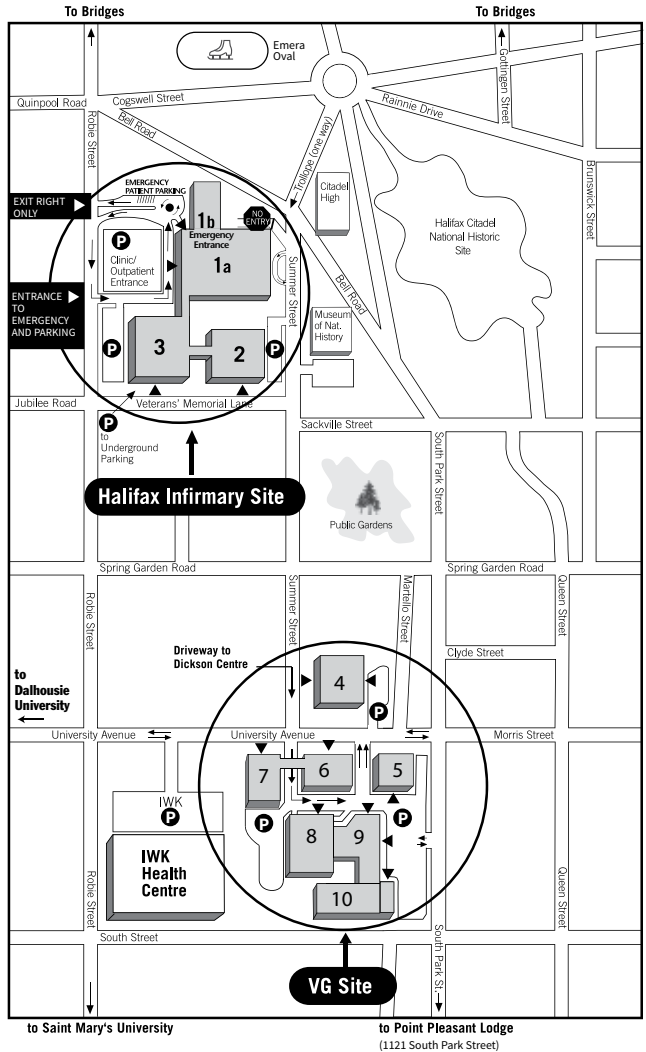
QEII Health Sciences Centre

is made up of 10 buildings located on two sites

Halifax Infirmary Site
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Halifax Infirmary 1b. Emergency Dept.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Abbie J. Lane Memorial Building
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Camp Hill Veterans' Memorial Building
VG Site
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Bethune Building
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Mackenzie Building Laboratories
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Centre for Clinical Research
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Dickson Building
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Victoria Building
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Centennial Building

- P** Patient Parking
- ▶** Entrance Doors

Please do not wear scented products when you come to the QEII.



Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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Prepared by: Hyperbaric Medicine Unit, QEII

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.