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Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

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OVERVIEW

Contraindications

As with most medical treatments, absolute and relative contraindications exist with the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). [2]

Table 2. Absolute Contraindications to Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (Open Table in a new window)

Absolute Contraindications	Reason Contraindicated	Necessary Conditions Prior to HBOT
Untreated pneumothorax	Gas emboli Tension pneumothorax Pneumomediastinum	Thoracostomy
Bleomycin	Interstitial pneumonitis	No treatment for extended time from use of medication
Cisplatin	Impaired wound healing	No treatment for extended time from use of medication
Disulfiram	Blocks superoxide dismutase, which is protective against oxygen toxicity	Discontinue medication

Doxorubicin	Cardiotoxicity	Discontinue medication
Sulfamylon	Impaired wound healing	Discontinue and remove medication

Table 3. Relative Contraindications to Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (Open Table in a new window)

Relative Contraindications	Reason Contraindicated	Necessary Conditions Prior to HBOT
Asthma	Air trapping upon ascent leading to pneumothorax	Must be well controlled with medications
Claustrophobia	Anxiety	Treatment with benzodiazepines
Congenital spherocytosis	Severe hemolysis	None; HBOT for emergencies only
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	Loss of hypoxic drive to breathe	Observation in chamber
Eustachian tube dysfunction	Barotrauma to tympanic membrane	Training, PE tubes
High fever	Higher risk of seizures	Provide antipyretic

Pacemakers or epidural pain pump	Malfunction or deformation of device under pressure	Ensure company has pressure-tested device and learn to what depth
Pregnancy	Unknown effect on fetus (Previous studies from Russia suggest HBOT is safe.)	None, but HBOT may be used in emergencies
Seizures	May have lower seizure threshold	Should be stable on medications; may be treated with benzodiazepines
Upper respiratory infection (URI)	Barotrauma	Resolution of symptoms or decongestants

