

# Under Pressure

by Brandi Schlossberg

Tapping into one of life's most essential ingredients, oxygen, hyperbaric chambers aim to speed the body's ability to heal by allowing a person to inhale 100-percent pure oxygen at more than twice the normal atmospheric pressure.

Known as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, this treatment is based on the concept that most disease conditions result from reduced oxygen levels. By boosting tissue oxygen levels to more than 10 times the normal amount, hyperbaric oxygen therapy aims to elevate the body's ability to heal wounds, fight infections, reduce tissue inflammation and strengthen the immune system. The delivery method forces more oxygen into the bloodstream more quickly and stimulates small blood vessel growth, which speeds up healing. Often, the therapy is used as part of an overall treatment plan.

"Medicare and insurance generally cover (hyperbaric oxygen therapy for) 14 medical conditions, including diabetic

and other problem wounds, complications from radiation therapy, bone infections, compromised grafts and flaps, gas gangrene, carbon-monoxide poisoning, limb salvage and diving injuries," says Richard Flyer, president and clinic director of Northern Nevada Hyperbarics, where such treatment

has been offered for nearly 10 years. "Some investigational areas include neurological conditions, such as stroke recovery, multiple sclerosis and reflex sympathetic dystrophy, as well as Lyme disease and others."

Business at Northern Nevada Hyperbarics is based on physician referrals, according to Flyer. An average course of treatment in a hyperbaric chamber occurs 90 minutes per day, five days a week, for six weeks.

"Patients usually watch a movie from our large selection or take a nap," he says. "Even though a patient is in a chamber, you soon forget that you are enclosed—the clear acrylic tube allows patients to see and talk to the hyperbaric technician who is always present."



## News & Notes

■ The University of Nevada School of Medicine announced the addition of **Dr. Tony Chang** to the sports-medicine fellowship, which begins its second year in Reno this July.

■ Renown Regional Medical Center has opened its new **Baby & Family Suites**, 28 private rooms that offer new moms every comfort. For more information, visit [renown.org](http://renown.org).

■ The National Kidney Disease Education Program has dubbed **March as National Kidney Month** in an effort to raise awareness of chronic kidney disease, which affects one in nine Americans.