

CHAMPVA POLICY MANUAL

CHAPTER: 2
SECTION: 30.14
TITLE: HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY

AUTHORITY: 38 CFR 17.270(a) and 17.272(a)

RELATED AUTHORITY: 32 CFR 199.4(b)(2)(xvii) and (c)(2)(xiv)

I. EFFECTIVE DATE

October 7, 1982

II. PROCEDURE CODE(S)

A. CPT code 99183

B. HCPCS Level II codes C1300 and G0167

III. DESCRIPTION

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO) is a mode of medical treatment in which the patient is entirely enclosed in a pressure chamber breathing oxygen at a pressure greater than one atmosphere.

IV. POLICY

A. HBO is covered when provided by an **authorized** institutional provider, such as a hospital or specialized treatment facility, and only when provided as treatment for the specific conditions listed below under Policy Considerations.

B. HBO services provided by freestanding HBO chambers may be reimbursed when billed by an **authorized** institutional provider (i.e., an **authorized** hospital contracts with a freestanding HBO therapy chamber to provide HBO therapy to patients referred by the hospital and the hospital bills for the HBO therapy).

C. The Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Committee is the one national body that regularly reviews all applications of HBO therapy to ensure the applications are supported by current reliable scientific evidence.

V. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

HBO is covered when provided for the following conditions and under the circumstances outlined. If treatment exceeds the review point criteria listed below, the medical necessity for continued treatment must be documented and the claim submitted for medical review.

1. Exceptional blood loss (anemia) when considered class IV hemorrhage as follows:

a. when the patient cannot accept blood replacement for medical or religious reasons,

b. for shock, systolic blood pressure below 90 mmHg or pressure maintained by vasopressors,

c. disorientation to coma,

d. ischemic changes of the myocardium as demonstrated on the electrocardiogram; and ischemic gut as demonstrated by a sprue-like diarrhea.

Review point: 5 treatments.

2. Carbon monoxide poisoning and smoke inhalation.

Review Point: 10 treatments.

3. Cyanide poisoning, acute, and carbon monoxide poisoning complicated by cyanide poisoning when used as an adjunct to standard medical treatment.

Review Point: 10 treatments.

4. Decompression sickness.

Review Point: 20 treatments.

5. Gas embolism or air embolism.

Review Point: 10 treatments.

6. Gas gangrene (clostridial myositis and myonecrosis or spreading clostridial cellulitis with systemic toxicity) when used in conjunction with surgery and antibiotic treatment.

Review Point: 10 treatments.

7. Skin grafts or flaps (compromised).

Review Point: Preparation for grafting - 20 treatments.

Review Point: Postgrafting - 20 treatments.

8. Crush Injury, compartment syndrome, and other acute traumatic ischemias.

Review Point: 12 treatments.

9. Documented acute cerebral edema when used as an adjunct to other supportive measures.

Review Point: 20 treatments.

10. Osteomyelitis, refractory.

Review Point: 40 days.

11. Radiation tissue damage. Radiation tissue damage includes soft tissue radionecrosis, osteoradionecrosis, radiation mucositis, dermatitis, enteritis, laryngeal radionecrosis, cystitis, etc., and surgical wounding in radiation-damaged tissues (late radiation effects), and pre and post-operative use in any care requiring late surgery through previously irradiated tissues. Hyperbaric oxygen treatments must be performed in close coordination with the appropriate medical specialist, and must be prescribed as part of an overall treatment plan, including debridement, resection of nonviable tissues, specific antibiotic therapy, soft tissue flap reconstruction, and bone grafting as may be indicated.

Review Point: 60 treatments.

12. Enhancement of healing in selected problem wounds as follows:

a. decubitus ulcers,

b. for venous stasis ulcers when used as a limb salvage measure,

c. for arterial insufficiency ulcers in preparation for skin grafting, and

d. hypoperfused wounds which may be infected and that have failed standard and medical therapy.

Review Point: Preparation for grafting - 20 treatments.

Review Point: Post-grafting - 10 treatments.

13. Diabetic wounds of the lower extremities who meet the following criteria:

- a. patients have type I or type II diabetes and have a lower extremity wound that is due to diabetes (ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes 250.7, 250.8, 707, 707.1, 707.10, 707, 12, 707.13, 707.14, and 707.19),
- b. have a wound classified as Wagner grade III or higher and,
- c. have failed an adequate course of standard wound therapy.

Review Point: 30 days. [Continued treatment with HBO is not covered if measurable signs of healing have not been demonstrated within any 30-day period of treatment.]

14. Suturing severed limbs.

Review Point: 20 days.

15. Necrotizing soft tissue infections (subcutaneous tissue, muscle, fascia) when used as an adjunct to surgical and antibiotic treatment. To include:

- a. Meleney's synergistic gangrene,
- b. Fournier's Disease,
- c. crepitant anaerobic cellulitis,
- d. progressive bacterial gangrene,
- e. necrotizing fasciitis, and
- f. nonclostridial myonecrosis.

Review Point: 30 days.

16. Thermal burns.

Review Point: 47 treatments.

17. Payment will be considered only when the surgical procedure is performed in a well-equipped and staffed HBO operating chamber which is fully integrated with an authorized general hospital. All claims for hyperbaric oxygen-supported surgery require medical review prior to payment.

18. Reimbursement. There are two separate charges involved in HBO services: The professional charge, billed by the individual professional practitioner, who performs the procedure, and the facility charge. Claims for outpatient facility charges submitted by authorized hospitals are payable, subject to normal adjudication procedures. In the case of DRG hospitals, reimbursement for inpatient charges are included in the DRG payment.

VI. EXCLUSIONS

- A. Acute cerebral edema.
- B. Acute or chronic cerebral vascular insufficiency.
- C. Acute thermal and chemical pulmonary damage (i.e., smoke inhalation with pulmonary insufficiency).
- D. Aerobic septicemia.
- E. Anaerobic septicemia and infection other than clostridial.
- F. Arthritic Diseases.
- G. Cardiogenic shock.
- H. Chronic peripheral vascular insufficiency.
- I. Cutaneous, decubitus, and stasis ulcers.
- J. Exceptional blood loss anemia.
- K. Hepatic necrosis.
- L. Multiple sclerosis.
- M. Myocardial infarction.
- N. Nonvascular causes of chronic brain syndrome (Pick's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Korsakoff's disease).
- O. Organ storage.
- P. Organ transplantation.
- Q. Pulmonary emphysema.
- R. Senility.
- S. Sickle cell anemia.
- T. Skin burns (thermal).
- U. Systemic aerobic infection.
- V. Tetanus.

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W. Topical application of oxygen.

X. HBO therapy for treatment or complications of peripheral vascular disease is not a covered benefit as this treatment is unproven. [38 CFR 17.272 (a)(14)]

END OF POLICY