

Medical Coverage Policy | Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)



EFFECTIVE DATE: 10|01|2019

POLICY LAST UPDATED: 02|16|2022

OVERVIEW

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) involves breathing 100% oxygen at pressures between 1.5 and 3.0 atmospheres (atm). It is generally applied systemically with the patient inside a hyperbaric chamber. HBOT can also be applied topically; that is, the body part to be treated is isolated (eg, in an inflatable bag and exposed to pure oxygen). HBOT has been investigated for various conditions that have potential to respond to increased oxygen delivery to the tissues.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION:

Prior authorization review is not required

POLICY STATEMENT:

Medicare Advantage Plans and Commercial

HBOT is medically necessary when filed with a covered indication. HBOT is not medically necessary for services for all other indications as the evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For simultaneous use of systemic HBOT and Negative Pressure wound closure, medical criteria for each service must be met using the web-based authorization tool.

Medicare Advantage Plans

Topical hyperbaric oxygen therapy is not covered as the evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

Commercial

Topical hyperbaric oxygen therapy is not medically necessary as the evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

COVERAGE:

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage, Subscriber Agreement, or Benefit Booklet for applicable Medical Treatment coverage.

BACKGROUND

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) is a technique of delivering higher pressures of oxygen to the tissues. Two methods of administration are available. In systemic or large hyperbaric oxygen chamber, the patient is entirely enclosed in a pressure chamber and breathes oxygen at a pressure greater than 1 atmosphere (atm; the pressure of oxygen at sea level). Thus, this technique relies on systemic circulation to deliver highly oxygenated blood to the target site, typically a wound. In addition, systemic HBOT can be used to treat systemic illness, such as air or gas embolism, carbon monoxide poisoning, or clostridial gas gangrene. Treatment may be carried out either in a monoplace chamber pressurized with pure oxygen or in a larger, multiplace chamber pressurized with compressed air, in which case the patient receives pure oxygen by mask, head tent, or endotracheal tube.

Topical hyperbaric therapy is a technique of delivering 100% oxygen directly to an open, moist wound at a pressure slightly higher than atmospheric pressure. It is hypothesized that the high concentrations of oxygen diffuse directly into the wound to increase the local cellular oxygen tension, which in turn promotes wound healing. Devices consist of an appliance to enclose the wound area (frequently an extremity) and a source of oxygen; conventional oxygen tanks may be used. The appliances may be disposable and may be used without supervision in the home by well-trained patients. Topical hyperbaric therapy has been investigated as a treatment of skin ulcerations resulting from diabetes, venous stasis, postsurgical infection, gangrenous lesion, decubitus ulcers, amputations, skin graft, burns, or frostbite.

The evidence for the use of systemic HBOT in individuals with nonhealing diabetic wounds of the lower extremities, acute traumatic ischemia, soft-tissue radiation necrosis (eg, radiation enteritis, cystitis, proctitis), osteoradionecrosis (ie, pre- and posttreatment), planned dental surgery (non-implant-related) of an irradiated jaw, gas gangrene, and profound anemia with exceptional blood loss when blood transfusion is impossible or must be delayed includes systematic reviews and/or recommendations from the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society's (UHMS). Relevant outcomes include overall survival, symptoms, change in disease status, and functional outcomes. For all indications in the PICO note, evidence and/or USMS guidelines support use of HBOT. The evidence is sufficient to determine qualitatively that the technology results in a meaningful improvement in health outcomes.

The evidence for the use of systemic HBOT in individuals with any condition other than those specified in the policy are not medically necessary as the available studies do not demonstrate that HBOT improves relevant outcomes. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

The evidence for the use of topical HBOT in individuals who might respond to increased oxygen delivery to tissues includes primarily of case series and case reports. Relevant outcomes are symptoms and change in disease status. Only 1 randomized controlled trial (RCT) was published on any indication. This study, in patients with diabetic foot ulcers, had a small sample size and did not find a significant benefit of topical HBOT. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

CODING:

Medicare Advantage Plans and Commercial

The following code(s) are medically necessary when filed with a covered diagnosis listed below;

99183 Physician attendance and supervision of hyperbaric oxygen therapy, per session

G0277 Hyperbaric oxygen under pressure full body chamber, per 30 minutes

Note: The covered diagnosis must be filed on the claim line to ensure correct claim processing

[2022 Covered Diagnosis for HBO](#)

The following code(s) are not medically necessary:

A4575 Topical hyperbaric oxygen chamber, disposable

E0446 Topical oxygen delivery system, not otherwise specified, includes all supplies and accessories

RELATED POLICIES

Preauthorization via Web-Based Tool for Procedures

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, April 2022

Provider Update, May 2021

Provider Update, May 2020

Provider Update, August 2019

Provider Update, February 2019

REFERENCES

1. Federal Food and Drug Administration. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: Don't Be Misled. 2013; <http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm364687.htm>. Accessed December, 2016.
2. National Coverage Determination (NCD) for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (20.29): <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=12&ncdver=4&bc=AAAAgAAAAAAAA&>,

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