



Chronic Fatigue Syndrome & Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

Helen Prater

Although its name trivializes the illness as little more than mere tiredness, Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), an immune system disorder, is a complicated disease characterized by extreme fatigue that doesn't improve with bed rest and usually worsen with physical or mental activity.

Primary CFS damages the immune system. It is intracellular, not outside the cell. Patients describe their fatigue from CFS and immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS) as oppressive - a prolonged, pervasive weariness that seems to penetrate every cell. They usually suffer from an entire constellation of symptoms, including severe incapacitating fatigue, profound exhaustion, extremely poor stamina, memory loss, inability to comprehend/retain what is read, difficulty concentrating, recurrent flu-like illness, severe joint and muscle aches, non-refreshing sleep, neurological problems, and many more too numerous to mention. No wonder it's so hard to diagnose with this myriad of symptoms that are classic of so many other illnesses! Consequently, most symptoms are not visible, making it difficult for others to comprehend the vast array and intensity of debilitating symptoms with which afflicted persons must contend.

There is no known cause, cure or universal treatment for CFS/CFIDS. Treatment focuses on a combination of approaches to relieve signs and symptoms. It requires adapting to an entirely new way of life.

CSF may occur after an infection, such as a cold or viral illness. The onset can be during, or shortly after a time of great stress, or it can come on gradually with no clear starting point or obvious cause. Women are diagnosed with CSF more often than men. However, sex isn't a proven risk factor for this condition. It may be that women are more likely to report their symptoms than men. The condition is most common in those in their 40s and 50s, but can affect people of all ages.

Terry, a sufferer of CSF, spoke to me about her experiences with CSF and the role Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) has played in her fight against it. Terry was a full of life, love to exercise, walk, work, and just stay busy, person. Then it struck!! CSF!! She describes CSF as life altering, debilitating. Even her sleep was not replenishing.

Introduced to HBOT when she took part in a 3 year study at Texas A&M on the effects of HBO on CFS. Participants received HBO for 2 weeks each year. Although her symptoms were not completely gone, at the end of the year's session the good effects lasted longer each year. They lasted for 2 years beyond the end of the study and she was able to go back to work and resume exercise. Later she was able to get 15-20 treatments at the UT

Health Science Center and again got relief. Without HBOT she eventually became totally disabled and bedridden. (This seems to indicate that regular use of HBO would provide continued improvement!)

In 2007, Terry's specialist in Houston discovered she had Walking Pneumonia bacteria in her system. Much like cancer, it requires 5 types of antibiotics at one time to kill the bacteria. She says it steals the cell's adenosine triphosphate (ATP). (ATP supplies energy to the body via mitochondria.)

When cells die from the antibiotics, the bacteria becomes toxic. If your system can't flush the toxins you become sick from "the cure"! Up till then, HBOT was the only thing Terry did that helped. Unless it's associated with a study, she couldn't be treated for CFS at a hospital. Then she found out that San Antonio had

a free standing HBO clinic that could treat her. (It's the one I use.) She wasted no time in setting up a series of sessions.

HBOT not only helps kill bacteria itself, it removes the toxins from the tissues. It has boosted her energy, improved her sleep, and increased her stamina. After several HBO sessions she can finally walk for 30 minutes and do much more than that for the first time in 8 years! There is no doubt in her mind that in

addition to the antibiotics her doctor prescribed for her, HBOT has been the single most helpful tool.

Oxygen is a crucial factor in immune function. White blood cells require molecular oxygen as a base organism for microbial killing. Scientists have long known that oxygen is literally the "breath of life", but only recently have studies begun to reveal how profoundly oxygen metabolism influences health and illness. Oxygen, indeed, may be a key to helping overcome chronic fatigue. HBOT provides molecular oxygen and removes the toxins in the system and is noninvasive. What better single adjunctive therapy to incorporate in treatment of CFS and all immune system illnesses?

Our immune systems are key to good health.

After retiring from 35 years in the computer field, Helen Prater developed an interest in alternative health medicine. She became interested and began researching HBOT in an effort to find help and hope for her husband with congestive heart failure and diabetes, her nephew with ALS, and her niece with Lupus. She scoured the Internet, read articles, visited HBOT clinics, and even took dives herself. Her mission was to find out everything that she could about this simple, but powerful, treatment and how it can help. Call 210-654-6464 or visit the website: www.sanantoniohyperbarics.com

What is HBOT?

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) is a medical treatment approved by the FDA and AMA which enhances tissue levels of life giving oxygen. Normally, oxygen is almost exclusively carried by red blood cells. During HBO therapy, all body fluids, including the lymph and cerebrospinal fluids are infused with the healing benefits of this molecular oxygen. Pressurization forces it to reach bone and tissue that is inaccessible to the blood cells even when compromised by injury or disease.