

UC San Diego Health System Expands Healing Services in North County

Director of new Hyperbaric Medicine and Wound Healing Center brings fresh outlook

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A wound that fails to heal is a serious health issue. Complications range from ongoing pain to severe infection or even amputation. UC San Diego Health System's Department of Emergency Medicine is expanding treatment options in the San Diego region by opening a new Hyperbaric Medicine and Wound Healing Center in Encinitas, California.

"The field of hyperbaric medicine is on a sharp incline in terms of both its clinical use and awareness among members of the medical community," said Caesar Anderson, MD, director of UCSD's Hyperbaric Medicine and Wound Healing Center, Encinitas. "Practicing competent wound care does not mean treating a wound in isolation; it means keeping the complete patient in mind."

The UCSD Hyperbaric Medicine and Wound Healing Center, located at 477 N. El Camino Real, Ste. D-204, Encinitas, California, specializes in the treatment of difficult-to-heal wounds, including those resulting from an operation, radiation exposure, diabetes, bone infection, or trauma. The all-inclusive center provides all the necessary services, including expert evaluation, individual therapy plans and support tailored for each patient.

The center also offers more advanced treatment options such as bioengineered skin grafting and hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). HBOT greatly increases oxygen levels in the body and is an effective remedy for many types of chronic, non-healing wounds. This non-invasive, painless technique infuses the bloodstream and tissues with high levels of oxygen, enhancing the body's ability to heal. The state-of-the-art facility offers the largest, most comfortable chamber in the region. During treatment, patients may read, watch a movie, rest or listen to music while breathing normally, under the surveillance of a physician.

During hyperbaric oxygen therapy, the amount of oxygen a patient breathes in is increased to 100 percent. At the same time, the pressure surrounding the body is slowly increased. This dual process enables the blood to carry much more oxygen to the tissues, promoting healthy tissue and new blood vessel growth. The high oxygen level also helps fight infections caused by a variety of bacteria, augments antibiotic strength, and further promotes healing. An average session lasts no more than two hours and the pressure changes experienced are very similar to that of traveling in an airplane.

"This is a simple procedure with great benefits. It is extremely safe and it makes sense to try this approach rather than endure real loss. This treatment saves limbs and lifestyles," said Dr. Anderson.

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