

West Palm Beach doctor believes pressurized oxygen chamber could help post-COVID patients

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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (CBS12) — Fatigue, brain fog or shortness of breath are some of the lingering symptoms many COVID-19 survivors are still dealing with.

People in the community are turning to a treatment that's typically used to heal wounds or chronic infections for help.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy has been around for years.

Dr. Olayemi Osiyemi, an infectious disease specialist, is now offering the treatment as a way to help post-COVID patients to feel like their normal selves again.

He adds this particular research is still new, but the results are promising.

Inside Fantastic Wellness Center in West Palm Beach, patients like Avis Brown are put inside a pressurized chamber for 90 minutes to get 100 percent oxygen into the blood stream.

The air we breathe normally contains about 20 percent oxygen.

Dr. Osiyemi says the pressure in a hyperbaric chamber is the same as being 30 feet underwater.

Once inside, their breathing slows, and it's something the nurse practitioner struggles with.

"I got back to work, and I still just wasn't myself. It was this overwhelmingly long bouts of fatigue, couldn't catch my breath," nurse practitioner Avis Brown explained. "I want to get back to me, I want to be normal again. It's been four months."

Brown tried the treatment for the first time Tuesday afternoon.

Dr. Osiyemi is currently studying treatment results, comparing post-COVID patients to those still fighting the virus. Over the summer, restaurateur Derrick McCray tested positive for COVID-19. After his second of 10 treatments in the hyperbaric chamber, he's starting to feel normal again.

"Just walking, feeling rejuvenated, the energy to pop around my restaurant, I felt like I could do it," said McCray, owner of McCray's Backyard BBQ & Seafood.

There are all kinds of side effects for patients who call themselves "COVID Long Haulers," including mental disorders.

A first-of-its-kind study from the British Medical Journal, The Lancet, reports one in five COVID-19 patients will show signs of mental health issues within just a few months of being infected, including depression, anxiety and insomnia.

Dr. Osiyemi wants those who are interested to visit [Fantastic Wellness Center](#).

"They're smiling. They're holding their head high. They feel good about who they are. Just seeing someone go through that phase makes me happy," he said.