Oxygen Tent Encyclopedia Article

Oxygen Tent

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Oxygen Tent

A French physician, Charles Michel (1850-1935), first realized the importance of oxygen to aid the healing process. It was perhaps around 1900 that he first used an oxygen chamber to improve the health of some of his patients, probably those suffering from respiratory disorders. Later the oxygen chamber was expanded around a patient's entire bed and became known as the oxygen tent. Oxygen tents then began to appear in hospitals in Europe and North America.

Oxygen tents are most often used when a medical patient suffers from pneumonia or other respiratory disease, or carbon monoxide poisoning. They are also used following an event in which the patient's body tissues have been deprived of oxygen. The gas inside the tent has a higher percentage of oxygen than found in normal air and thus the patient breathes in more oxygen per breath. The tent is a framed "envelope" fitted completely around the patient's hospital bed. Air inside the tent is extracted with a fan and passes through a dust filter and cooling unit where moisture in the exhaled air is condensed and removed. Oxygen-enriched air is pumped into the tent and, if necessary, humidity inside the tent can be increased by an atomizer so the patient's lungs do not dry out. Access to the patient is through a large, zippered opening.