

Boy sucked in by Jacuzzi saved by hyperbaric chamber

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Headline: Boy sucked in by Jacuzzi saved by hyperbaric chamber

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Monday, July 15, 2002 -- An 11-year-old boy who was sucked into a Jacuzzi pump and lay in a coma for four weeks has regained consciousness and begun to walk, react, and smile.

Assaf Harofeh Hospital doctors said yesterday the boy's condition improved dramatically after he was treated in the medical center's hyperbaric (high-pressure oxygen) chamber. His relatives called it a "miracle."

The boy, from the Sharon area, was in the Jacuzzi outside his home when he suddenly was drawn into the mechanism, which was not covered by a metal screen.

He was found after he had been underwater for some 20 minutes, and a Magen David Adom mobile intensive care unit team performed resuscitation. He was then taken to a nearby hospital, where he was respirated for several days, and then to a pediatric rehabilitation facility, where doctors told his parents to "prepare for the worst."

The parents looked frantically for a way to improve his condition, using the Internet and calling doctors until they found the Tzrifin hospital's hyperbaric chamber - the only one in the center of the country (there is also one in Haifa and one in Eilat). For several weeks, the boy was taken by ambulance from the hospital to Assaf Harofeh for treatment.

"Even after the first treatment, the boy made eye contact for a few seconds," said Dr. Nahum Gal, the head of the hyperbaric unit. We were very encouraged. After a few treatments, he began to smile. After nine, he began to walk by himself and react to commands."

Gal said the boy has undergone 40 treatments, but still suffers from speech and coordination problems and it is not known how much these can be reversed.

Assaf Harofeh's hyperbaric unit has been functioning for four years; it has been found effective for treating carbon monoxide poisoning from gas heaters, the "bends" in divers, diabetic foot sores and necrosis, crushing accidents, blindness from clogged retinal arteries, bone infections, and other problems.

Keywords:

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