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Decompression Sickness

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Synonyms

Aeroembolism; Air embolism; Caisson disease;
Diver's condition; The bends

Definition

Decompression sickness is a syndrome that can occur in divers, aviators, astronauts, or compressed air workers in which bubbles form in or

outside of the blood vessels, usually in the spinal cord or brain, due to increased pressure and inadequate decompression (Vann et al. 2011; Thalmann 2004). Higher concentration of bubbles results in numbness, tingling, paralysis, confusion, personality changes, amnesia, and loss of consciousness as early as 15 min after resurfacing (Thalmann 2004). Failure to seek treatment may result in permanent neurologic or cerebral deficits (Thalmann 2004).

References and Readings

- Thalmann, E. D. (2004). *Decompression illness: What is it and what is the treatment?*. Retrieved from: http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/medical/articles/Decompression_Illness_What_Is_It_and_What_Is_The_Treatment.
- Vann, R. D., Butler, F. K., Mitchell, S. J., & Moon, R. E. (2011). Decompression illness. *Lancet*, 377(9760), 153–164.