

HYPERHIDROSIS

What is Hyperhidrosis?

Hyperhidrosis simply means excessive sweating. The problem is typically localized to the armpits, palms, or soles. Stressful situation may aggravate the problem. Ordinary antiperspirants are not usually able to control significant Hyperhidrosis.

Treatment

The problem can be controlled but not cured permanently. The best control technique is to apply aluminum chloride hexahydrate alcohol solution. The strongest for is called Drysol and is available only by prescription. Two weaker versions are available: Xerac-AC (prescription required) and Certain-Dri Antiperspirant (available without a prescription). Whichever is used, the instructions must be followed exactly:

- a. The skin must be totally dry before application. Use cool air from a blow dryer if necessary. Do not apply for 24-48 hours after shaving. In the armpit, apply only to the hairy area.
- b. Apply before bedtime only. The medicine needs to have skin contact for 6-8 hours when you are not sweating in order to work. While you are sleeping is the best time for this.
- c. Wash off the medication in the morning.

What if the above treatment doesn't work?

If nightly treatment for 1-2 weeks has not reduced sweating significantly, do the following: Apply the medication to dry skin at bedtime as before. This time, after the medication is dry, cover the affected area with plastic for the entire night. This will increase penetration of the medication.

In the *armpit*, plastic such as Saran Wrap is used. Keep it in place with a rolled-up sock inside a slightly small T-shirt. In the morning, remove the plastic and gently wash your armpits with plain water.

For the *hands*, use the thin, pliable plastic disposable gloves available at drug stores. In the morning, remove the plastic and gently wash your hands with plain water.

For the *feet*, use plastic bags held in place with socks. Cut the bags so they cover only the feet. In the morning, remove the plastic and gently wash your feet with plain water.

Repeat this technique nightly for one to two weeks until you have the problem under control. Then do it as often as needed to maintain control.

Side effects

If irritation results from the treatment, apply hydrocortisone 1% cream (prescription required).

If irritation persists despite using hydrocortisone cream, use a lower strength of aluminum chloride hexahydrate (Certain-Dri Antiperspirant is the lowest strength, Xerac-AC is the next lowest, and Drysol is the strongest).

What if the plastic covering does not help?

Most people are well-controlled with the above suggestions. However, there are other therapies available which we will discuss with you if you are in need of further help.