

## Excessive Sweating (Hyperhidrosis)



Hyperhidrosis is excessive sweating that affects the face, armpits, palms, and soles of the feet. It usually occurs at least once per week, affects both sides of the body, and continues for 6 months or longer without an apparent cause. The sweating usually stops during sleep. Often times, other family members also have the same problem. Increased heat or emotional stress can make the sweating even worse. It can be an embarrassing problem for many people (2-3% of the population).

Sweating that occurs all over the body, happens during the night, or occurs with other symptoms (such as fever, weight loss, pounding heart, or lack of appetite) may be a sign of illness and you should see your physician.

Sweating under the arms, on the palms, or the soles of the feet can be treated with antiperspirants. Antiperspirants block the pores of the sweat glands and decrease the amount of sweating. Deodorants, which are often combined with antiperspirants, decrease the odor that comes with the sweating, but do not decrease actual sweating.



### Treatment

Some other measures you can take to control excessive sweating include wearing natural fabrics that are air-permeable such as cotton, wool, or silk. Bring an extra shirt to change in to if needed or extra socks or panty hose. Avoid spicy foods, garlic and onion to control odor, and decrease caffeine and alcohol intake.

Most non-prescription antiperspirants will work better when used at night. Be sure to apply to dry underarms (may use hair dryer on cool setting prior to application if needed). You can put on a second application in the morning if you find this helps.

If regular antiperspirants do not work to control your sweating, *Certain Dri* roll-on is a non-prescription antiperspirant that contains 12% aluminum chloride (one of the most effective ingredients for the treatment of excessive sweating). It is used differently than other antiperspirants. You should apply this at bedtime and leave on overnight. If you shower in the morning, it will not wash off. Be sure to apply only a small amount 1-2 strokes under each arm at first. You can apply it nightly until sweating is controlled, then decrease to every other day or 2x per week to keep control. *Certain Dri* has a special AM refresher antiperspirant to use if you would also like to do a morning application.

If non-prescription antiperspirants do not control the sweating, there are prescription strength antiperspirants available.

-**Drysol/Hypercare** (20% Aluminum Chloride Hexahydrate), comes in 35 ml plastic dab-O Matic, 37.5 ml plastic bottle, and 60 ml plastic dab-O-Matic. It should be applied to the affected area only once a day, at bedtime. The area should be completely dry prior to application to prevent irritation (may use cool hair dryer). Do not apply to broken, irritated or recently shaved skin (wait 24-48 hours). Cover the treated area with saran wrap held in place by a snug fitting T-shirt. Do not use tape to hold the saran wrap in place. Wash the treated area the following morning. Excessive sweating may be stopped after two or more treatments, thereafter, apply it once or twice weekly or as needed.

-**Xerac AC** (6.25% Aluminum Tetrachloride), comes in 35 ml and 60 ml containers. Apply nightly until improvement, then weekly for maintenance.

If irritation occurs, consult your physician. Common side effects include skin irritation, burning, prickling sensation, transient itching or stinging. It may stain clothing.

Other treatments are available if prescription strength antiperspirants are not effective. These include:

-Medications such as anticholinergics, beta-blockers, and benzodiazepines. These each have potential side effects that must be considered before they are prescribed.

-Iontophoresis is a mild electric current that is carried through water. It is for treatment of excessive sweating of the hands and feet.

-Botox injections have helped in some cases. These would be administered by a dermatologist (doctor who specializes in skin diseases).

-Endoscopic Thoracic Sympathectomy is a surgical procedure that can be used in severe, difficult to control cases.

### Support Group

International Hyperhidrosis Society, [www.sweathelp.org](http://www.sweathelp.org)