

Excessive Sweating (Hyperhidrosis)

How do I know if I sweat too much?

Sweating too much (also called hyperhidrosis) is a common condition that can be embarrassing. This most commonly happens on the hands, feet, underarms, and face. You should tell your doctor if your sweating bothers you during daily life, happens at least once a week, and has been going on longer than six months.

Being sweaty is usually not caused by a disease. It tends to begin in childhood or early adulthood, and it often runs in families. The sweating becomes worse with emotion and stress, but it does not happen when you are asleep.

How is it treated?

It depends on how much you sweat, how much the sweating affects your daily activities, and how well a treatment works for you. There are several treatments available.

- An aluminum chloride solution (Drysol) can be used on the underarms, the palms of your hands, and the soles of your feet.
- If aluminum chloride does not work, your doctor may give you an injection of a medicine called botulinum toxin type A (Botox). This can be used on the underarms, hands, or face.

- Another treatment for hand or foot sweating is called iontophoresis (i-ON-tuh-fo-RE-sis). For this treatment, you put tap water into a special device, place your hands or feet in the water, and a mild electrical current is passed through the water to your skin. This treatment can be done at home.
- There are some medicines you can take in a pill form that may decrease the amount of sweating.
- If all other treatments do not work and the problem is serious, there is a surgery that can cut the nerves that cause the sweating.

All of these treatments can have side effects. You and your doctor can decide which treatment is best for you.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP's Patient Information Resource
<https://familydoctor.org/condition/hyperhidrosis/>

International Hyperhidrosis Society
<https://www.sweathelp.org>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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