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HYPERHIDROSIS **Excessive Sweating**

Hyperhidrosis is a genetic condition which causes severe sweating and abnormal heat loss of the hands (palmar), feet (plantar) or underarms (axillary). Hyperhidrosis is caused by a hyperactive sympathetic nervous system and can affect the areas of the body in any combination, i.e. hands and feet, hands and underarms, feet and underarms, face and hands, etc. In the United States, hyperhidrosis affects both men and women, all races, every age group and 1 out of 25 individuals. Studies have also shown it to affect 1 out of every 25 Caucasians and Asians have an even high rate of incidence with 1 out of every 5.

Many individuals do not realize they are affected by the hyperhidrosis condition because of the common misconception that sweating is due to severe anxiety, extreme shyness and emotional distress. It is true, however, that the condition can be aggravated by anxiety but hyperhidrosis has its own trigger and sweating can appear at any time.

As mentioned above, hyperhidrosis affects a few areas of the body. **Palmar Hyperhidrosis** (hands/palms) is the most common manifestation of this condition. It is known to be caused by an over-stimulation of the sweat glands in the palms and can be severe and emotionally devastating. I have treated patients who sweat so profusely that the sweat drips to the floor. I have also treated patients with hands that are discolored, cold and clammy. In both instances, patients have admitted that handshaking is very embarrassing for them. I've also had patients lose their jobs as card dealers; bartenders have dropped glasses and some of my younger patients' grades have suffered because of smudging on their homework and tests. The sweating is involuntary and cannot be controlled consciously. Some of my patients have also indicated a tingling in their fingers or a feeling that their skin pores are opening.

Axillary Hyperhidrosis (underarm) is caused by an over-stimulation of the underarm sweat glands by the sympathetic nervous system. Some of the patients I have treated indicate to me they cannot wear light colors or certain types of fabrics such as silk because their clothes become easily stained and ruin the fabric. Unfortunately, the condition is resistant to all deodorants.

Pedal Hyperhidrosis (feet) is caused by an over-stimulation of the sweat glands in the feet. Sympathetic nerve fibers that stimulate sweating of the feet arise from both the thoracic and lumbar sympathetic nerve chains.

Facial Hyperhidrosis is caused by an over-stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system. It is a genetic condition which results in facial blushing and sweating. The facial blushing is intense, constant and continuous for a prolonged period of time. The blushing may also affect the forehead, neck and ears. One of the misconceptions of this condition is that it is related to being overweight which is untrue.

The surgical treatment for hyperhidrosis is an Endoscopic Transthoracic Sympathectomy (ETS). I utilize the minimally invasive approach which allows this procedure to be on an outpatient basis with a quicker recovery period.

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