

Information Leaflet – Self management of excessive sweating

What can I do myself to improve symptoms of excessive sweating?

If possible, try to avoid triggers that you know make your symptoms worse. Common food and drinks that can trigger excessive sweating are products which contain caffeine (tea, coffee), chocolate, spicy or sour foods, hot foods, alcohol, foods or drinks containing citric acid, or sweets.

Use a commercial antiperspirant (as opposed to a deodorant) frequently. It says on the spray or roll-on whether it is an antiperspirant or deodorant.

Avoid tight clothing and manmade fabrics like nylon or polyester.

Wear white (as opposed to blue) shirts or black clothing to minimize the signs of sweating.

Consider using dress shields (also known as armpit or sweat shields) to absorb excess sweat and protect delicate or expensive clothing. These can be obtained via the internet or the Hyperhidrosis Support Group.

For people with excessive sweating of the feet:

Wear moisture-wicking socks, changing them at least twice daily.

Use absorbent soles, and use absorbent foot powder twice daily.

Avoid occlusive footwear such as boots or sports shoes; wear leather shoes.

Alternate pairs of shoes on a daily basis to allow them to dry out fully before wearing them again.

What can I do if the above measures don't help?

Use an antiperspirant roll-on containing 20% aluminium chloride, e.g. Driclor[®], Anhydrol Forte[®] which can be purchased from your local pharmacy or online. If the main problem of sweating is with the feet, an aluminium salt dusting powder (Zeasorb[®]) or aluminium chloride spray or lotion (for example Odaban[®]) can be useful alternatives.

How should I be using these products?

Aluminium chloride should be applied at night just before sleep and washed off in the morning

Apply to dry skin where you experience excessive sweating: armpits, soles of the feet, hands, or face (avoiding the eyes). Consider soaking lotion pads for application to the face.

Avoid shaving for 24 hours before and after application

Apply aluminium chloride every 1-2 days, as tolerated, until the symptoms improve. From first starting treatment, it can take up to 1-2 months to be able to evaluate full effect. If effective, you will need to repeat this when symptoms return, which may be up to every 6 weeks.

I experience irritation of the skin when using aluminium chloride, why should I do?

Skin irritation is common when using aluminium chloride products. You can reduce this by:

- Use a soap-substitute for washing instead of soap.
- Reduce the number of days per week that you apply the product
- Use hydrocortisone cream 1% for up to 2 weeks

Where can I find further information and support?

The Hyperhidrosis Support Group at: www.hyperhidrosisuk.org.

The International Hyperhidrosis Society at: www.sweathelp.org.

The information in the leaflet has been based on information provided in the Clinical Knowledge Summary Hyperhidrosis, published by the National Institute for Care and Clinical Excellence. July 2013.