

Hyperhidrosis

Hyperhidrosis is a disorder that defines individuals who sweat more than the body would normally need to maintain optimal temperature. It affects approximately 3% of the population – some 950,000 Canadians – of whom 300,000 have a severe form of the disorder.

Hyperhidrosis affects work productivity, confidence, social comfort, emotional well being and wardrobe choices. Studies show that hyperhidrosis impacts quality of life similar to or even greater than other well-known dermatological conditions, such as severe acne or psoriasis.

It has also been shown that only 38% of hyperhidrosis sufferers talk to a health care professional about their condition. People rarely seek help because many are unaware that excessive sweating is a treatable medical disorder.

What causes hyperhidrosis?

There are two types of hyperhidrosis.

Focal hyperhidrosis: also known as primary hyperhidrosis, has an unknown cause. This type of hyperhidrosis is localized to one or more of the following areas:

- Underarms (axillary hyperhidrosis)
- Hands (palmar hyperhidrosis)
- Feet (plantar hyperhidrosis)
- Face (facial hyperhidrosis)

Although this type of hyperhidrosis has an unknown cause, the way it affects sufferers appears to be related to over-activity of the central nervous system thereby causing an overactive stimulation of local sweat glands.

Generalized hyperhidrosis: also known as secondary hyperhidrosis is actually caused by another underlying condition (e.g. endocrine disorders, menopause, obesity, nerve damage, and rarely, some types of drugs). This type of hyperhidrosis generally occurs over the whole body and is usually treated by addressing the underlying condition. Therefore, the vast majority of information contained within this brochure pertains to treatment of focal hyperhidrosis.

Treatment Options

There are several ways to treat hyperhidrosis. Many of these treatments are covered by medical plans. In order to find the best treatment for you, speak to a dermatologist or sweat management specialist which you can find at www.sweatmanagement.ca. A consultation with one of these physicians will allow you to find the best treatment for you.

Possible treatment options:

- Topical treatments
- Iontophoresis
- Botulinum toxin type A
- Surgery

For more information about hyperhidrosis and treatment ask for CDA's hyperhidrosis brochure or go to www.dermatology.ca to download a copy.