

HYPERHIDROSIS

Hyperhidrosis is a skin condition, which can affect the hands, feet and/or armpit. The first part of the word hyper refers to too much. The second part of the word hidrosis refers to sweating. Very simply hyperhidrosis is a fancy medical word for too much sweating which you already knew before you came to see me.

Unfortunately the root cause of the hyperhidrosis condition is not known. It is not an indication of an internal problem. It is not related to stress or anxiety. The sweating can occur independent of any factors, which may produce sweating in other circumstances.

Although the condition is not serious in any way it can be quite bothersome and interfere with normal day to day activities. Although the root cause is unknown, it is treatable in most cases.

The main treatment for hyperhidrosis involves the use of a prescription liquid medication to the affected areas at night. It is important to apply the medication to the areas after they are dried off with a towel. The medication is only applied at night. It must be used regularly to start to decrease the amount of sweating. In some patients the sweating slows down after only a week or two but in other patients it may take up to six to eight weeks to improve. After the sweating is decreased, the medication can be used infrequently such as once or twice a week to keep it that way. The advantage of this treatment is that once you decrease the sweating, the medication can be used infrequently and the sweating will not return.

The problem with the prescription medication is that there is a fine line between the medication cutting down the sweating versus producing some irritation. If you do notice any irritation on the affected areas such as dryness, redness or swelling, you may have to stop the medication for a day or two and apply a lotion. Once the irritation goes away the prescription liquid can be restarted. Most patients can find a happy median where they use the medication regularly and not produce any irritation.

Although the cause of hyperhidrosis is unknown it usually can be helped in one way or the other. If you have any other questions about this condition, please do not hesitate to ask before you leave the office.