Diaphoresis, Hyperhidrosis Perspiration, Sweating

Sweating is controlled by our nervous system. Sweat glands are found in the skin throughout the body. They are in higher numbers in the skin of the hands, feet, armpits and the genital regions. Sweating occurs normally when the temperature of your body goes up. Diaphoresis means profuse sweating or perspiration due to an underlying medical condition or an external factor (such as medicines). Hyperhidrosis means excessive sweating that is not usually due to an underlying medical condition, on areas such as the palms, soles or armpits. Other areas of the body may also be affected. Hyperhidrosis usually begins in childhood or early adolescence. It increases in severity through puberty and into adulthood. Sweaty palms are the most common problem and the most bothersome to people who have hyperhidrosis.

CAUSES

Sweating is seen normally with exercise, or being in hot surroundings. Stressful situations also cause sweating. In some people stimulation of their sweat glands during stress is over active. Talking to strangers or shaking someone's hand can produce profuse sweating and be awkward. Sweating during exercise or high temperature exposure is normal. Not sweating in these conditions would be harmful.

Some common causes of sweating include:

- Emotional upset.
- Exercise.
- Infection.
- Spicy foods.
- Painkillers.
- Alcohol.
- Caffeine.
- Hot flashes.

Some abnormal causes of sweating include:

- Overactive thyroid.
- Malaria.
- Heart Attack.
- Illicit drugs use such as cocaine and amphetamine use.
- Use of medicines which stimulate parts of the nervous system.
- A tumor (*pheochromocytoma*).
- Tuberculosis.
- Low blood sugar.
- Withdrawal from some medications and alcohol.

DIAGNOSIS

You can tell when you are sweating. But when it is excessive, your caregiver needs to be consulted to make sure it is not caused by another condition such as those listed above. Further testing may have to be done.

TREATMENT

- When hyperhidrosis is caused by another condition that condition should be treated.
- If menopause is the cause, you may wish to talk to your caregiver about estrogen replacement.
- If the hyperhidrosis is a natural happening of the way your body works, special anti-perspirants may help.
- When medicines do not work, injections of Botox are sometimes used for underarm sweating.
- Your caregiver can usually help you with this problem.

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