

Finally, Help for Those with the "Silent Disability"

By Dr. William Carter

At least 3% of humans are affected by this condition. Many more are extremely bothered by a milder form of it. This problem does not shorten anyone's life, yet it profoundly changes the way affected individuals interact with others. It lowers self-esteem. It costs the sufferers a great deal of worry, money, inconvenience, and can lead to many frustrating and/or unsatisfactory interactions with medical providers.

This condition is hyperhidrosis, or excessive sweating. It can be generalized or localized. Many in the field believe it to be an autosomal dominant inheritable trait. Up until one year ago, in the U.S., there were only a few approaches that were of any substantial benefit for these unfortunately afflicted people.

Firstly, there are very strong topical antiperspirants. The most effective of these is generally felt to be prescription Drysol. The majority of the time, however, Drysol is either not strong enough or is too irritating for long-term use.

Medications by mouth like Ditropan (oxybutynin) and Robinul (glycopyrrolate) are helpful but also cause fatigue, dry mouth, increased cavities, trouble focusing one's eyes, and a greater tendency for heat stroke in warm weather.

Iontophoresis works for some. This consists of a series of electric current driven ionic bath treatments to stun the sweat glands. This technique works best for hands and feet, can be painful, and is messy as well as inconvenient.

Botulinum toxin-A (Botox, Dysport, Xeomin) injections work very well. In fact, over the years, this has been my favorite "go to" technique for the severe underarm or hand hyperhidrosis sufferer. Much as I love this method, and even though it can give relief that lasts 6-9 months, it is expensive and needs to be repeated to give continuous relief. A single treatment costs between \$500 and \$1200.

Then there is surgery. Either the sweat glands themselves

are scooped or suctioned out from under the dermis of the armpit skin, or a surgeon can do an endoscopic thoracic sympathectomy. What is nice about these treatments is that the results can be very long lasting. However, they can be disfiguring or have other complications. One of these complications is excessive sweating in areas of the body that didn't initially have the problem. This occurs about 70% of the time!

Enter miraDry! This recently developed, novel approach utilizes locally applied electromagnetic energy delivered over two treatments, three months apart. With this schedule, 90% of those treated never need another treatment for long lasting relief. Once destroyed, sweat glands do not reform. Interesting side effects of this technique are the dramatic reduction of underarm odor and a lessening of armpit hair. At this point in time, miraDry can only be used in the underarm area. For those of you who know me, it will not surprise you to learn that Dr. Amato and I did this treatment to each other. (I haven't needed a deodorant or antiperspirant since!) Useful resource websites for those interested include: www.miradry.com and www.sweathelp.org.

At Medical Cosmetics, All About Faces (www.allaboutfaces.biz), and Lebo Skin Care Center (www.leboskincare.com) we do free consultations for this most disturbing "silent disability." 🌿

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Since 1999 Dr. Carter has been extensively involved in all office-based things having to do with appearance optimization. He has performed over 35,000 Botox treatments and thousands of laser and filler procedures. He maintains active practices in Lancaster, Dauphin, and York counties.



Published in **Fine Living Lancaster**
Issue Number Twenty-Six

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