

Are your pits the pits?



With 2.6 million sweat glands in the human body, you're destined to experience some perspiration frustration. Learn why sweat happens and how to keep it under control.

The skinny on sweat:

Our bodies perform best at 98.6° F.

When your body temperature rises above that, sweat helps cool it down.



Sweat is made up of:

**water • ammonia
urea • salt • sugar**

Sweat stinks because:

It mixes with bacteria on your skin. Sweat by itself doesn't smell!

There's a method to the madness. Here's why you sweat when you're:



Sick: Your body heats up as a natural defense against illness or infection.



Nervous or mad: Stress hormones increase your heart rate and blood pressure.



Drinking alcohol: Alcohol widens blood vessels in the skin, also known as vasodilation.



Drinking coffee: Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system, activating sweat glands.



Eating spicy food: Spicy foods spark the same nerve receptors that respond to a hot day.



Smoking: Nicotine causes the release of a chemical that stimulates sweat glands.

Sweat remedies



Antiperspirant vs. deodorant

Antiperspirants plug sweat ducts, reducing wetness and, in turn, reducing body odor. Deodorants reduce the bacteria on the skin that cause body odor, and are often scented.



Au naturel

Natural options — such as crystals, lemon juice, witch hazel and shaving — have been said to help with body odor, but these methods have not been medically proven.



Prescription-strength

When supermarket deodorants don't do the trick, ask your doctor about prescription-strength options. Consult your doctor if you believe you're sweating in excess, as it could be a sign of a medical condition.

From the expert

“Sweat may be a nuisance, but it’s just your body’s way of regulating itself. See your doctor if you’re sweating too much. But otherwise, remember that sweating is healthy and normal.”

— Dr. Kimberly Byers-Lund, a board-certified family medicine doctor with Sharp Community Medical Group

