

△ GENERAL INFORMATION

The body has two types of sweat glands. *Eccrine* glands are found virtually all over the body and produce the ordinary, clear sweat when the body becomes warm. About 99% of this type of sweat is water. The other type of glands are the *apocrine*. They develop during puberty and are found mostly in the armpits and groin, around the genitals, and around the anus. They put out a thicker, cloudy fluid that has a slight odor (it's the one for which so many persons use deodorants).

Sometimes the apocrine glands become plugged and infected. The reason for this is not clear in most instances. Some persons, however, seem to get an infection if they use antiperspirants. Antiperspirants do their job by plugging the sweat pores: no sweat, no odor. This is different from the way deodorants work; they let the sweat come out and then try to mask its odor.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- The affected skin has one or many infected pockets; some may be draining pus.
- The infected areas can be painful or limit motion of the arm or leg.
- There usually is a foul odor.

DIAGNOSIS

- Usually, the diagnosis can be made by taking a detailed history and doing a thorough physical examination.

○ TREATMENT

- Whenever possible, the treatment is medical. This may include the following:
 - Applying warm, moist packs to the affected area.
 - Taking antibiotics to fight the infection.
 - Using antibiotic soap.
 - Losing weight if one is obese.
 - Nicking the skin over the pus pockets to let out the pus.

Although most patients respond reasonably well to the above treatment, other persons keep getting worse in spite of everything. For such an individual an operation is advisable.

- There are several operations for this condition. An operation may be rather minor, or it may be extensive. In certain situations, all the affected skin needs to be removed. If the edges of the incision are too far apart and cannot be brought together, then a skin graft may need to be used.
- Which operation is chosen depends on at least the following:
 - The part of the body involved.
 - How large an area is affected.
 - Whether the infection is acute or chronic.

After careful consideration of all factors, the recommendation is that you have an operation to try to correct your condition. The specific operation that is proposed will be discussed with you.

PREOPERATIVE PREPARATION

- Do not eat or drink anything for 8 hours before the operation.
- An examination of your blood, urine, heart (EKG), and lungs (chest x-ray) will be done.
- Shower as usual on the morning of the operation.
- You may be given medicine that will make you feel drowsy before you are brought to the operating room.

□ OPERATION

- You will be asleep for the operation.
- If a skin graft is necessary, it will be taken from your abdomen.
- The duration of the operation depends on how much tissue has to be removed and whether a skin graft is necessary.
- You will not need a blood transfusion.

POSTOPERATIVE CARE

- You will be taken to a recovery room and observed. When your blood pressure, pulse, and breathing are stable, you will be taken to a regular hospital room.
- That evening you will be helped to sit up in bed and on the next day to get out of bed.
- Pain will be controlled with medicine.
- Your diet will be as you tolerate it.
- As with any operation, complications are always possible. With this type of operation, they can include infection, blood clots, an ineffective skin graft, a thick scar in the area from which the skin graft was taken, and possibly others.
- When you go home depends on the extent of your operation.
- Arrangements will be made for your medicine, follow-up office visit, and any stitch removal.

⊕ HOME CARE

- You may walk about as you wish, even climb stairs.
- You may eat as you did before the operation.
- If there is no skin graft, you may shower as you wish.
 - There may be narrow strips of tape across the incision. It's all right if they get wet; they will be removed in the doctor's office.
 - After you dry yourself, replace any dressings with clean, dry ones.
- If a skin graft is in place, the surgeon will instruct you on when you may start bathing or taking a shower and how to take care of the incision.
- You may return to work when you feel up to it, but let's talk about it first during a follow-up office visit.

📞 CALL OUR OFFICE IF

- The incision becomes red or swollen, or there is drainage from it.
- You develop a temperature higher than 100°F.
- You have any questions.