



# BOTOX: IT'S NOT JUST FOR WRINKLES

A Treatment for Sweaty, Odorous Feet

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Excessive moisture also encourages the growth of many different types of fungi

**D**o you, or someone you know, have trouble with offensive foot odor? Are you embarrassed by foot odor when you remove your shoes? Are your socks drenched with sweat by the end of the day, or even worse, by mid-morning? If so, you may benefit from Botox. It's not just for wrinkles anymore. Botox is now used for a variety of medical conditions including hyperhidrosis, incontinence, migraines, and spontaneous muscle spasms.

Hyperhidrosis (sweaty feet) and bromohydrosis (foot odor) are common conditions affecting millions of Americans. They are often responsible for embarrassing or stressful situations and can have significant psychosocial effects in those afflicted with these

conditions. There are about 250,000 sweat glands in the human foot that together can produce up to 4 ounces of sweat per foot per day.

Hyperhidrosis and bromohidrosis can be difficult to treat. In society today, wearing shoes is the norm. Thus, the sweat from the feet cannot evaporate. The pooling sweat rapidly progresses

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to a foul odor, which is caused by the byproducts of bacteria. Excessive moisture also encourages the growth of many different types of fungi that can cause odor as well. One of the main causes of sweaty, malodorous feet is improper socks or footwear. Shoes with plastic or other synthetic fabric linings are not absorbent and can prevent sweat from evaporating. Synthetic socks have the same effect, particularly if they are tight.

**The first steps in treating hyperhidrosis and bromohidrosis are to try some basic tips:**

- After showering or bathing, dry feet well. Pay particular attention to the area between the toes. A surprisingly high percentage of people do not actually do this. The use of foot powder can limit moisture as well.
- Alternate shoes. Do not wear the same pair of shoes 2 days in a row. Shoes frequently will not dry out overnight.
- Avoid socks that do not absorb moisture. Moisture-wicking athletic socks are a good choice. These may be made of merino wool (which does not itch) or a synthetic blend.
- Change socks or pantyhose often (at least once a day).
- Air/ventilate the feet. Go barefoot when feasible. Slip feet out of shoes whenever possible (e.g., while sitting with feet inconspicuously hidden under a desk).
- Avoid hot beverages (such as coffee), alcohol, and spices. These can heat the body and increase sweating.
- Change your diet. Take note of any foods or

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beverages that cause excess sweating. Consider eliminating caffeinated drinks (like coffee and cola), alcohol, certain "hot" spices, and foods with strong odors, such as garlic and onions.

- An old remedy that has been fairly effective in some people is caffeinated tea soaks. The caffeine and tannic acid in the tea constrict sweat glands, thus reducing the amount of sweat produced. Soak feet in caffeinated tea for approximately 15 minutes, 2 times a day. Typically, a decrease in sweating and foot odor is seen by 2 weeks.
- Shoes should also be disinfected to help reduce odor.

If these measures do not help, topical medications such as formaldehyde (Formadon or Lazerformalyde) or ostiderm can be prescribed. These products work by drying and absorbing moisture on the skin, but may have side effects such as local irritation or allergic reactions. Anti-perspirants and deodorants may also be used to reduce sweat. These anti-perspirants contain aluminum chloride and work by blocking the opening of sweat glands. Regular over-the-counter anti-perspirants typically contain 1 to 2% aluminum chloride, while prescription strength products may contain as much as 15 to 20%. Side effects of these anti-perspirants include skin irritation, and results are often insufficient to stop sweaty feet.

A new product called the Steri-Shoe has been very helpful in reducing bacteria and fungi in the shoes. This novel treatment comes in the form of a shoe tree and uses an ultra violet light that kills 99% of pathogens including MRSA in just 45 minutes. It can be picked up at some Podiatry offices or online at [www.SteriShoe.com](http://www.SteriShoe.com).

For more severe cases, many patients are now turning to Botox. Botox is the most popular non-surgical cosmetic procedure in the United States today. It has helped many patients look more youthful, and also deal with incontinence, muscle spasms, and migraines. Botox is FDA approved for the treatment of excessive underarm sweating and is now used for the treatment of sweaty feet. Botox is made from a toxin produced by a bacterium called *Clostridium botulinum*. When the toxin is injected locally at a specific site, the nerves in that area are blocked and the sweat glands are essentially paralyzed, thus preventing excessive sweating.

Botox treatment for sweaty feet usually takes about 30 to 45 minutes and is performed in a doctor's office under local anesthesia. The doctor will most likely perform an iodine starch test to determine the areas where most of the perspiration is occurring. This test involves painting betadine (iodine) over the entire foot and then applying a starch powder, such as corn starch. Within a couple of minutes, the areas that sweat will turn a dark violet or black color.

Botox injections are concentrated in these areas,

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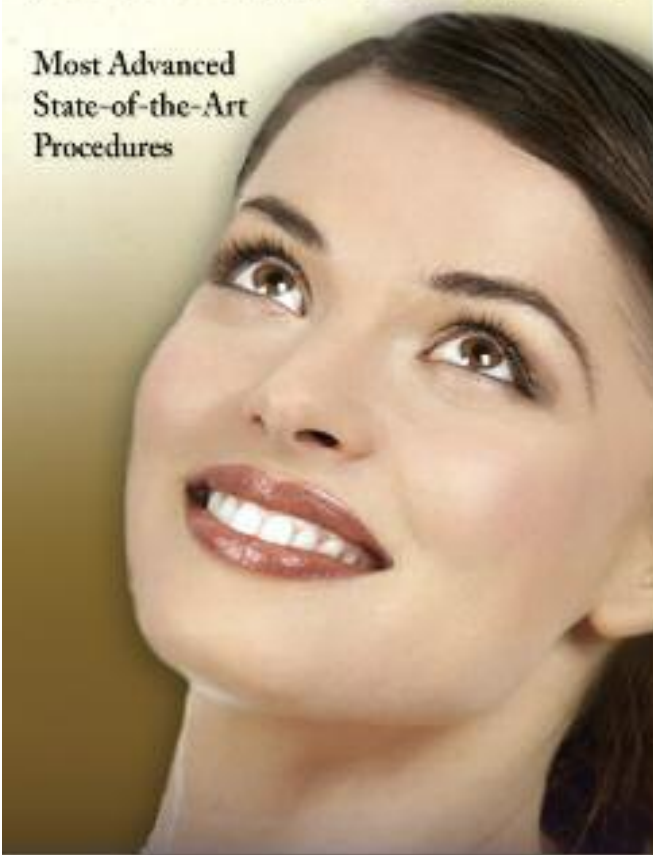
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## BOTOX FOR FEET

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and approximately 25 to 35 injections are given into each foot about 1 to 1.5 centimeters apart. Side effects are rare, but include temporary bruising, pain at the injection site, and muscle weakness to the intrinsic muscles of the foot and infection. These side effects are temporary and typically will quickly diminish over time.

It should be noted that the effects of Botox are not permanent; the toxin in Botox is eventually de-

graded by the body. However, response has been very positive. Patients report the effects lasting from 6 to 15 months. Ninety-one percent of patients experience a decrease in sweating and odor. Although the initial consultation is covered by most insurance companies, the procedure is not. Treatment can range from \$1200 to \$1800 for both feet. For more information about the use of Botox for treating excessive sweat, visit these websites [www.Botox.com](http://www.Botox.com), [www.GreatFootCare.com](http://www.GreatFootCare.com), and [www.LIFootCare.com](http://www.LIFootCare.com). **IMAGE**



Botox is injected to control superfluous sweating in the foot