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secrete an odorous, clear fluid (made mostly of water and salt) to help control...

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Stress is bad enough on its own. Unfortunately for most of us, however, stress usually also brings with it stress sweat, which tends to be particularly stinky, staining, and embarrassing. Given that there are two to four million sweat glands distributed all over our bodies and that stressful situations are seemingly ubiquitous in modern life, trying to avoid stress sweat might seem like a futile endeavor – but (thankfully) it

isn't. There are simple ways you can control stress sweat even when the @#%S is

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Dreaded "stress" sweat, on the other hand, comes primarily from another type of sweat gland called an "apocrine" gland. Apocrine glands are found mostly in the armpits and genital region (but there are some on the scalp, too) and exist near dense pockets of hair follicles. They produce a thick fluid that they empty into the hair follicle just before it opens onto the skin surface.

While apocrine sweat is initially odorless, it doesn't evaporate as quickly as eccrine sweat and can develop an odor when it combines with bacteria that normally inhabits the surface of our the skin. The odor has that characteristic smell that we often call "body odor." While it may smell, stress/apocrine sweat doesn't actually produce that much wetness—at least not like the amount caused by eccrine sweat.

When the body is reacting to an emotion, like anxiety, stress or excitement, apocrine sweat is released from apocrine glands. Something interesting about stress sweat is that it's immediate, whereas exercise or heat-related sweat can take longer to kick-in.

Scientists aren't sure why apocrine glands produce odor beyond the process described above, but there might be an evolutionary and protective reason behind it. Animals tend to emit an odor when they're stressed, too. That odor acts as a signal to peers that something dangerous or scary is going on and they should react accordingly. If this theory is true, it makes sense that stress sweat would be immediate and not delayed. Note that stressful situations will also increase eccrine sweating, but it's not as immediate or as pungent.

While most of us recognize that stress sweat is a "thing," we usually just suffer through it. This is a shame because there are ways to help control stress sweat and doing so can, in turn, make life a whole lot less stressful:

1. Big picture: manage your stress and learn how to control it to prevent or limit

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- Just test it on a small spot first to make sure it doesn't cause irritation—especially on sensitive parts. As always, talk to your doctor or dermatologist about any concerns.
3. No luck with the regular stuff? Try a stronger antiperspirant like Certain Dri, which is actually formulated for those suffering from extreme, clinical sweating—a condition called hyperhidrosis.
 4. Also use a deodorant to fight stress sweat odor—or use a combination antiperspirant and deodorant for convenience and cost savings.
 5. Trim and groom your hair where apocrine sweat and odor is a problem. This won't limit the sweating, but it can help your antiperspirant and deodorant reach your skin more thoroughly and, therefore, do their jobs more effectively. Trimming hair also prevents sweat and oil from hanging around and cuts down on the surface areas on which bacteria and sweat can react (remember, it's that reaction that leads to body odor.)
 6. There are other, more sophisticated treatments to stop sweating and the odor linked to it, too. One such innovation is the medical device miraDry, which studies show reduces body odor by destroying sweat glands and hair follicles via microwaves. You need to go to a doctor's office for the miraDry treatment, but the results are permanent and will stop sweating, odor and hair growth in the treated area.

While stress may be unavoidable, we can alter our reactions to it for calmer, sweeter days.

Angela Ballard is a registered nurse and health educator with the International Hyperhidrosis Society (IHhS), the only independent, non-profit, global organization

committed to helping improve quality-of-life for hyperhidrosis sufferers through support;

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