



OUR DOC WILL SEE YOU NOW

Get the scoop on excessive sweating, digestive enzymes, ear seeding, and more.



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Why do I seem to sweat so much more than everyone else when I'm working out?

We all have the same number of sweat glands, but it's true that some of us perspire more than others. Your drenched sports bra could actually be a sign that you're super fit: The more lean muscle mass you have, the more efficient your body is at cooling down, meaning it will start releasing sweat ASAP.

Shifting hormone levels during perimenopause can also trigger an

uptick in sweating, as can chronic stress. Other usual suspects include certain infections, drugs, and supplements (such as iron and zinc). If sweating buckets is new to you, it's worth mentioning to your doctor.

She may ask if you perspire a lot even when you're not exercising or out in the heat. That's a symptom of a condition called hyperhidrosis, which affects about 3 percent of people. It causes your sweat glands to overreact to stimuli; a normal case of nerves, for example, might lead to dripping palms. Hyperhidrosis doesn't have a known cause, but there are ways to treat it. Your MD might recommend a prescription-strength deodorant, medication, or Botox injections. There's also a laser procedure for excessive underarm sweat called miraDry that may solve the problem permanently.

Could taking digestive enzymes help me get my stomach issues under control?

Digestive enzymes help your gastrointestinal system break down and extract nutrients from food. Our bodies naturally create these enzymes, but some people are deficient in them, which can lead to uncomfortable symptoms. For example, when someone is lactose intolerant, her body doesn't produce enough lactase, the enzyme needed to digest the sugar in milk, and eating dairy products can result in gas, bloating, abdominal pain, or diarrhea. An over-the-counter lactase supplement can remedy the situation.

Pancreatitis and other problems in the pancreas, which produces most of our digestive enzymes, can

also lead to deficiencies. In those cases, doctors usually prescribe supplements.

But if you don't have any trouble with dairy, and if you don't have a diagnosed pancreas problem, there isn't any evidence that over-the-counter digestive enzymes will improve your GI health. Your best bet is to see a gastroenterologist to figure out the real cause of the issues you're experiencing.

How can I tell if I have a hernia? And do hernias ever heal on their own?

An abdominal hernia occurs when tissue or a portion of an organ pushes through a weakness in the muscle layer covering the abdominal cavity. (Inguinal hernias, which happen in the groin, are far more common in men than women.) Such a weakness can develop after surgery or pregnancy, or can be caused by a sudden physical exertion, like trying to lift something really heavy. In some cases, hernias don't cause any symptoms, but you will likely feel a dull ache or notice a lump or bulge in the area that may disappear when you lie down.

Unfortunately, hernias rarely heal on their own, so it's important to seek medical care. Your doctor may take a wait-and-see approach if you're not experiencing significant pain/symptoms, or recommend surgery. Over time, the protrusion can become more severe and even cause life-threatening complications. For example, part of the intestine can become stuck between the abdominal wall and lining, and lose its blood supply, which could lead to gangrene (or tissue death).

What's the deal with ear seeding?

It's a form of acupressure. The practitioner places seeds of the Vaccaria plant—or metal versions that look like tiny stud earrings—on specific pressure points along the outer ear, sticking them on with adhesive. The theory, rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine

and acupuncture, is that massaging the seeds daily can relieve things like anxiety, stress, insomnia, and chronic pain.

There is some research that suggests acupressure can help with certain conditions, but the evidence behind ear seeding is scanty. There have only been a few small studies on the practice, and their quality is questionable.

If you want to give ear seeding a try, however, there isn't much of a downside. I'd recommend seeing an acupuncturist for the treatment, though there are DIY kits available. Just know that some people, especially those with sensitive skin, may experience skin irritation or redness where the seeds are placed, from the adhesive or friction from the seeds themselves. And the seeds should not be kept on for more than five days.

Lately I've been experiencing hand tremors. Could they be an early sign of Parkinson's?

Shaky hands can have many causes, and in most cases, the shaking is only temporary. Tremors are very often a symptom of stress or extreme fatigue. They may also be a sign that your blood sugar is low and you need a protein-rich snack. Too much caffeine is another common culprit.

If the shakiness persists, however, see your provider. Tremors can be brought on by an overactive thyroid, certain nutritional deficiencies, or a medication that contains stimulants or affects your dopamine levels.

Some people have a glitch in their nervous system that triggers what's called an essential tremor, usually after the age of 40. Your doc might prescribe a beta-blocker, which can steady your hands by quieting the body's fight-or-flight response.

If tremors occur when you're not using your hands—or only affect one hand—they could point to something more worrisome, like Parkinson's. In that case, you'll be sent to a neurologist who can help you get to the root of the problem. ✕

A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

Dr. Raj shares her wellness picks.



BETTERAIR BIOTICA800 AIR PURIFIER

Pumping healthy bacteria into your home can actually lower the amount of unhealthy germs and allergy triggers in the air and on surfaces. Get 10 percent off with the code Health2020. (\$299; betterairus.com)

TULA PROTECT AND GLOW DAILY SUNSCREEN GEL

I spent years perfecting this SPF 30 formula for Tula. It's not only lightweight and colorless (no greasy feeling or whitish tinge!) but it also adds the skin-protective power of probiotics and superfoods. (\$36; tula.com)



PENDULUM GLUCOSE CONTROL

This probiotic-prebiotic combo has been clinically proven to help maintain healthy blood sugar levels, by optimizing the way we digest fiber. (\$165 for a monthly subscription; pendulumlife.com)



RIND SKIN-ON SUPERFRUIT SNACKS

These satisfy my craving for something sweet after meals. Rind leaves the peel on their slices of delicious dried fruits (including kiwi, oranges, and persimmons), so they contain an extra dose of fiber and antioxidants. (\$18; rindsnacks.com)