

a month. Most people find a 20 minute treatment once a week successfully controls their symptoms.

Iontophoresis treatment can be done as many times as necessary, and is completely safe.

What if it doesn't work for me?

In some areas tap water can be too soft for Iontophoresis to be effective. If you live in a very soft water area and find Iontophoresis doesn't work for you, then try adding 2 teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda (baking soda). Using bottled Badoit water (available in most supermarkets) can also have the same effect.

Tap water Iontophoresis works for 85% of patients. For the few patients who do not get complete relief with tap water Iontophoresis, a drug called Glycopyrronium Bromide (Robinul) (available on prescription) can be added to the tap water and can give good results.

Further information and help

NHS24	Freephone 111
NHSinform	www.nhsinform.scot
Patient UK:	http://patient.info
British Association of Dermatologists	www.bad.org.uk
DermNet New Zealand	www.dermnetnz.org
Primary Care Dermatology Society	www.pcds.org.uk

Contact Details

For further information contact:

Sarah Mitchell
Dermatology Liaison Nurse
Outpatients Department
Western Isles Hospital
Tel: 01851 708215
E-mail: sarah.mitchell15@nhs.scot

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:



- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 1223135
- tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2236)
Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm.

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Written by: Dermatology Specialist Nurse, Western Isles Hospital.

Disclaimer

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NHS Western Isles

Dermatology Liaison Nurse Service

Iontophoresis



Information and advice

What is Iontophoresis?

Iontophoresis is a treatment for excessive sweating of the hands (palmar hyperhidrosis) and feet (plantar hyperhidrosis), and armpits (axillary hyperhidrosis).

If you have tried using aluminium chloride antiperspirants such as Anhydrol Forte (roll on), Odaban (spray) and Driclor (roll on) and they have not helped, the next treatment is Iontophoresis.

You should not have Iontophoresis if you are pregnant, have a metal implant (such as a joint replacement), or if you have a cardiac pacemaker or similar device.

How does the treatment work?

The hands and/or feet are placed in shallow plastic trays which are filled with water, and connected to an Iontophoresis machine.

A low intensity electrical current is passed through the hands and/or feet. For armpits, axillae electrodes and pads attached to the Iontophoresis machine are placed under the arm.

The treatment takes 20-30 minutes, and is totally pain-free. You only feel a 'pins and needles' sensation in the hands or feet and armpits.

About the machine

The Dermatology Liaison Nurse will show you how the machine works and discuss its safe use. We use a Hidrex Classic Ion machine.

Machine use

Required treatments

The first month involves seven treatments on the following days:

Days 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 15 and 22.

The treatment involves passing a current one way for a fixed time (polarity 1) and then reversing the current (polarity 2) for the same amount of time.

Treatment duration:

Hands only

10 mins polarity 1 then 10 mins polarity 2

Feet only

15 mins polarity 1 then 15 mins polarity 2

One hand and one foot

10 mins polarity 1 then 10 mins polarity 2 - then swap sides and repeat.

Axilla

10 mins polarity 1 then 10 mins polarity 2

It is important that the treatment protocol is followed for the first phase of treatment.

How should I begin treatment?

1. Cover any open wounds (cuts, etc) with petroleum jelly (eg. Vaseline) before treatment and remove all jewellery.
2. Prepare the tray by placing the metal plate in the bottom covered by the plastic mesh, then pour in enough water to cover the mesh.
3. Attach the leads to the metal plates and the machine.
4. Place your hands/feet in the tray (you may need help) turn on the machine. The pre-set timer will start to count down.
5. Keep your hands/feet in the water until the time is up.

It is important that you do not remove your hands/feet whilst the machine is on.

Q&A

How effective is it?

Nearly all patients find that they have stopped sweating after 4-7 treatments.

After this time, a maintenance treatment is recommended as soon as the affected areas start to become clammy, and before sweating starts again.

A regular maintenance treatment is then needed, anything from twice a week to once