

The Stinky Feet Sheet

McKenzie Pediatrics 2016

What Causes Stinky Feet?

Stinky feet (a.k.a *eccrine bromhidrosis*) is essentially caused by perspiration and bacteria. Pregnant women, teens, the elderly, folks with heart disease and diabetes, and people under a lot of stress are especially prone to the condition. The feet have about a half a million sweat glands, and this can lead to a whole lot of sweat! Bacteria and fungus can thrive in this warm, moist environment, and can produce a lot of odor!

Getting Rid of the Stink:

1. **Wash (And DRY!) Your Feet Properly:** Most people don't actually wash their feet with soap when they bathe or shower. Do so. And dry the feet thoroughly afterwards, making sure not to miss the skin in between the toes!
2. **Change Your Socks Regularly:** consider changing socks mid-way through the day, or, for kids, when they get home from school.
3. **Purchase Socks Made With Breathable Materials:** synthetic materials provide less ventilation than natural materials, so polyester or nylon socks may increase the amount of perspiration compared to cotton. And more perspiration means more bacteria and fungus. And DON'T wear shoes without socks! Not only will sweat accumulate, so will dead skin cells, dirt, oils, and germs.
4. **Don't Wear Plastic Shoes!** Flip flops and other hard, synthetic materials will also promote stinky feet, because sweat cannot evaporate, so avoid them unless at the pool or the beach. And make certain shoes that get wet in the rain or in puddles are thoroughly dried before worn again!
5. **Consider Daily or Every Other Day Foot Soaks:** Soak for 20 minutes and dry thoroughly when done. Examples of good, bacteria-reducing soaks include:
 - a. **Vinegar Baths:** 1 part white vinegar and 2 parts water
 - b. **Tea Soaks:** 5 black tea bags to a quart of hot water, then allow to cool
 - c. **Salt Washes:** pour ½ cup kosher salt or Epsom Salts into 4 cups water
 - d. **Baking Soda Soaks:** 1 tbsp. in 1 quart of water (and consider adding the juice of one fresh lemon)
 - e. **Lavendar Oil Soaks:** 2-3 drops lavender essential oil in 1 quart warm water
 - f. **Sage & Rosemary Soaks:** 1 tsp. dried rosemary & 2 tsp. dried sage in 1 quart of water
 - g. **Alum Powder Soaks:** 1 tsp. alum per 1 cup of water
6. **Consider Drying Powders On The Feet To Start The Day:** examples include baking soda, baby powder, talcum powder, and corn starch.
7. **Consider Odor-Killing Shoe Sprays:** good examples include Dr. Scholl's Odor Destroyer Deodorant Spray and Kiwi Select Fresh Force.
8. **Consider Taking A Daily Probiotic Supplement**
9. **Finally, Consider a Doctor Visit If Nothing Works:** you or your child may have a fungal infection requiring treatment