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Children's Health Tip of the Day

Scent of a Teenager -- Puberty and Body Odor Go Hand-in-hand

It seems like only yesterday your child had that sweet baby smell. Now he's all grown up and --- stinks! As kids hit the preteen years, they put the "p.u." in puberty.

Hormones in action

So, why does your child suddenly smell like an entire locker room full of pro football players?

During puberty, the hormones in a child's body increase the amount of sweating. As the pre-teen body starts to change, millions of sweat glands become more active – especially the apocrine glands in the armpits, around the genitals and on the feet.

Bacteria that live in the skin combine with sweat from the apocrine glands and grow and multiply, producing a waste product that creates the unpleasant body odor.

And B.O. plays no favorites- it affects males and females equally.

Say no to B.O.

Have your child follow these strategies to keep smelling sweet:

- Shower daily with an antibacterial soap.
- Use a deodorant or antiperspirant. Deodorants cover up bad smells with good ones, and antiperspirants temporarily block bacteria from getting into the sweat glands to reduce sweating.
- Dust the underarms with talcum powder after bathing. Powder absorbs sweat to keep you drier and prevent bacteria from growing.
- Wear fresh clothes every day.
- Opt for cotton clothing (especially t-shirts, socks and underwear). It absorbs sweat more effectively than synthetic fabrics.
- Cut the caffeine intake. Cola, coffee, tea, chocolate and other foods and drinks with caffeine make apocrine sweat glands more active.
- Eat a balanced diet, and avoid certain foods that can affect body odor, such as


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cumin, curry, onion and garlic.

- Drink lots of water. This dilutes perspiration, thereby reducing body odor.
- Keep an emergency t-shirt in the locker at school.

If the smell is coming from the feet:

- Wash the feet with antibacterial soap daily and dry well with a towel.
- Sprinkle on some powder (either talcum or one specially made for the feet) before putting on clean, cotton socks.
- Let shoes dry out after wearing.

Reviewed by: [Patrick S. Pasquariello Jr., MD](#)

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