

## **HIDRADENITIS SUPPURATIVA**

Hidradenitis is a chronic disease of the apocrine glands (a form of sweat gland found on certain parts of the body). For unknown reasons, people with hidradenitis develop plugging or clogging of their apocrine glands. It causes chronic scarring and pus formation of the underarms (axilla) and groin/inner thigh areas. In women it can also occur under the breasts. It is similar to acne, which is a disease of the sebaceous glands. Hidradenitis is more common in people who have had acne. It may be an unusual type of adult acne.

This condition is slightly more common in women and African-Americans and with obesity. Hidradenitis usually starts as one or more red, tender, swellings in the groin or armpits. Over a period of hours to days the lesions enlarge and often open to the skin surface draining clear to yellow fluid. The involved area then heals with scarring. The condition usually continues for years with periods of flare and remission.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for this condition, but we can often achieve control. Weight loss can help improve the condition. Initial treatment is usually oral and topical antibiotics. Intralesional injections into the affected places reduces swelling and tenderness within days. The involved areas should be cleaned daily using an antibacterial soap, as this will reduce any odor associated with this condition. Often application of a topical antibiotic is recommended. Sometimes oral medicines like metformin, spironolactone and/or isotretinoin are tried.

Humira is a newer injectable medicine for some autoimmune diseases that is also approved for hidradenitis. It can offer some relief for the most severe cases. Accutane, a drug for severe acne, offers modest help for some moderately bad cases.

Surgery can be an effective treatment for hidradenitis. Aggressive surgery will cure an area of severe, chronic hidradenitis but it has to remove scarred tissue or even large areas of skin. Skin grafts may be needed. Incision (lancing) and draining will reliably help smaller affected areas. Because surgery scars may have complications, medical treatments are usually tried first.