

# Hyperhidrosis

By: Beth Reinhardt

Thirty-five years later and 2,500 miles away from home, Martha Gibson found the relief she had been seeking from her facial burning and excessive sweating. On her sixty-sixth birthday, Martha began to enjoy life again.

At the age of 30, Martha noticed that her scalp and face would sweat uncontrollably for no apparent reason. Her face would burn, turn bright red, and sweat would drip down her face from her scalp. Her hair would become saturated with sweat. An avid swimmer and ballroom dancer, Martha began to give up the things she loved to do as the sweating intensified throughout the years. Her social life came to a halt and her husband, Robert, of 44 years could do nothing but watch his once vivacious wife slip away into a reclusive state.

"This was very crippling to me," Martha said. "Many people do not understand."

The Canadian couple's search for a diagnosis and cure began as Martha began to retreat from society. Embarrassed by her constant sweating, she and her husband, Robert tried to find a name for her problem. Throughout the years, Martha visited numerous doctors.

Each gave a range of diagnoses but never the right one. Doctors said she had illnesses such as high blood pressure, an over-active gland, a case of nerves but the most common diagnosis was anxiety. Martha was placed on a variety of anti-anxiety drugs and tranquilizers.

"We tried acupuncture, hypnosis and biofeedback," Robert said. But nothing was working and Martha was becoming more and more reclusive.

## Do You Suffer?

Her only outings were with her family and she carried a face towel with her at all times.

"The sweat would be so bad," she said. "It would pool up on my neck. It would run into my eyes and ears. I would not buy expensive clothes because of fear of the sweat stains."

Many times, Robert would convince his wife to go out to dinner or dancing with him. As they were getting dressed for the evening, Martha would begin to sweat and her makeup would run down her face. She would become angry and not leave the house.

"There would be absolutely no reason for her face to turn red," Robert said. "But it would."

About two years ago, Martha read in an English magazine a story about a girl with similar problems. Martha became very excited. For the first time she had a name for her problem; hyperhidrosis, excessive sweating of the hands, feet, face and scalp. Martha had renewed hope that she would find a solution.

She and Robert went to visit a thoracic surgeon at Vancouver General Hospital with the article in hand and a hope for a cure. However, the surgeon told them there was nothing he could do for her. Her renewed hope was gone.

Her family had not given up hope. Martha's son-in-law began searching on the Internet for more information. The search led them to two places: The Cedar Sinai Center in Los Angeles and to a Dr. David Nielson of San Antonio, TX. Since they lived in Canada, Martha tried to call Cedar Sinai. She left several messages and tried to get through to anyone who could help her. No one ever called her back. Her determination was driving her and despite Dr. Nielson was in San Antonio, she called late on a Friday afternoon in October.

"When Jane from his office called me back, I was floored," Martha said.

Martha and her husband Robert were ecstatic about finding Dr. Nielson. The more they talked with the staff in his office, Martha became more assured that this was her cure. "It's been over 30 years that I have been looking for someone to help me," she said. "I never had a doubt."

### Dr. David Nielson

Dr. David Nielson is a cardio-thoracic surgeon who specializes in micro-endoscopic chest surgery on adults and children. But what Dr. Nielson is fast becoming known for is his innovative, least invasive treatment for patients with hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating of the hands and face), Raynaud's Syndrome, facial blushing and RSD. These syndromes are all connected to a hyperactive sympathetic nerve dysfunction. Micro-endoscopic thoracic sympathectomy, created by Nielson, is the least invasive surgery for people suffering from any of these ailments. This procedure has the quickest recovery time and has a 99 percent success rate for those suffering from hyperhidrosis of the hands.

## We Can Help!

During the procedure, Dr. Nielson makes a single incision, one-twelfth of an inch per side under each arm and inserts a 2mm scope. Nielson compares the size of his instruments to angel hair pasta. Once Dr. Nielson identifies the sympathetic nerve, he precisely divides it to instantly lessen hyperhidrosis symptoms and bring warmth to cold hands. The procedure takes 30 minutes. The patient is able to leave two to four hours after the procedure.

Performing the surgery on Martha might have incurred serious implications. While her age was not a factor, her physical and medical problems almost derailed the process. Martha has a partial blockage in her heart. She also has gained an unhealthy amount of weight from years of inactivity due to her excessive sweating. The office made her aware of the problems she could have during the procedure but with Dr. Nielson's specialized micro ETS technique and his highly advanced monitors the surgery became a reality for Martha.

"I told Jane, this is my first chance of getting it fixed," she said. "I'm not turning it down."

Traveling to San Antonio was made easy by Dr. Nielson's staff. The staff works with all patients on patient education, insurance, and emotional support. Patients have traveled from as far away as Australia, Italy, Africa, South America, Japan, Singapore, Croatia, England and Korea to have the procedure done by Dr. Nielson.

For Martha and Robert, the trip from Canada was easy. Martha just needed her passport and she was ready to come.

"They set it (the surgery) up like I lived around the corner," Martha said.

The day after the procedure, Martha had her towel in hand, but she did not need it. The procedure was a success. "I used to have a constant on edge feeling," she said. "Like butterflies in my stomach. But when I woke up the feeling was gone."

Martha and Robert look forward to going back to Vancouver where they live in a home by the beach. Martha wants to swim and dance again. Robert wants to go for a long walk on the beach with his wife.

"I've loved her from the first time I saw her," Robert said. "I want the best for her."

## We Can Treat Your Excessive Sweating

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