

THE MANUAL

The Essential Guide for Men

FASHION & STYLE GROOMING FOOD & DRINK TRAVEL LIVING Q&A

ABOUT THOSE YELLOW UNDERARM STAINS ON YOUR SHIRT

GROOMING UNCATEGORIZED

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1 COMMENT

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How many of your favorite shirts have you lost to a crusty, yellow stain that has mysteriously formed on its underarm? Worse—how many times have you seriously debated with yourself the point at which said stain would render your polo, tee-shirt or oxford too unsightly to wear? The crusty, yellow rash of shirt death is a real problem but there are ways for you to avoid or stave off this problem.

The culprit, it turns out, is your antiperspirant. More specifically, its active ingredient—aluminum. That's pretty much a bum situation for the product since aluminum's removal would transmogrify the antiperspirant into its less brawny cousin, deodorant.

Before the nitty gritty, a little refresher—antiperspirants work by plugging the sweat ducts and minimize sweat so odor causing bacteria can't set up shop. Deodorants use ingredients that destroy the bacteria once they've signed the lease.

The safest, but probably most outlandish, is to just have your underarm sweat glands removed. Yes, that's a thing (that also permanently removes your underarm hair so....) More realistically, you should just get a little better at reading the ingredient list. Of all the forms of aluminum, aluminum chlorohydrate is considered the least harmful to your shirt.

Use sparingly and let it dry fully before getting dressed—one light all encompassing swipe will keep you dry and expose less of the harmful ingredient to your shirt. This is also a smart idea if you're one of those guys who get skin irritations from antiperspirant. Another way to help mitigate the problem is to wash with an antibacterial soap. This will help keep odor causing bacteria at bay and make it a lot easier for you to apply antiperspirant sparingly.



If you start to notice the onset of the killer canary color there are a few tricks that might work. Namely a mix of baking soda, hydrogen peroxide a dash of dish soap, which when scrubbed onto the spot with a sponge or brush has worked for me to temper the yellow color (but only at the onset). Hot and warm water will help set the stain so stick with cold water. Another option is to soak the spot in white vinegar, though that smells like, well, vinegar.

We've also got to mention, since being put to use in antiperspirant back in the 1940s, Aluminum has also garnered a bad reputation for having been linked to things like cancer, kidney disease, Alzheimer's and the formation of breasts in men. It is, after all, an estrogenic.

Doctors are still squabbling about the definitive correlation between aluminum and certain death (and breasts), but we do know for sure, that it is the number one cause of nasty underarm stains. So maybe don't even use it at all? That's totally up to you, deodorant will keep you smelling fresh, but if you turn into a human sprinkler system come summer, the regiments described here will come in handy.

Good, low count, all natural antiperspirants with aluminum chlorohydrate:

Toms of Maine, Natural Powder Naturally Dry Antiperspirant (\$4.99 / 2.25 oz) at tomsomainestore.com

Recipe for Men, Antiperspirant Deodorant, (\$22 / 2 oz) at recipeformenusa.com

A fresh antibacterial soap:

Menscience, Daily Antibacterial Body Wash (\$27 / 12 oz) at menscience.com