

# My Deodorant Is a Stainless Steel Bar

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May 6, 2010 by [Julia Wasson](#) Author: Julia Wasson Name: Julia Wasson



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**About:** My professional background includes teaching, educational publishing, and marketing. In all phases of my career, it has been important to me to “make a difference” while making a living. Blue Planet Green Living combines my concern for the environment, my passion for teaching, and my love of writing. I hope you enjoy the stories we bring you. Please feel free to make suggestions for others, or submit your own stories for publication to [julia@organicgreenandnatural.com](mailto:julia@organicgreenandnatural.com). [See Authors Posts](#) (321)

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De  
Odor  
Works  
is a



stainless steel bar that prevents body odor when rubbed against the skin under running water. Photo: Courtesy Abbott Research Group, Inc.

When the public relations rep for [De Odor Works](#) contacted me to try their new deodorant bar made of stainless steel, I was skeptical, but willing. After all, I’ve seen concerns in the media about the connection between deodorants/antiperspirants and Alzheimer’s disease, breast [cancer](#), and prostate cancer. So, trying a deodorant that doesn’t have aluminum in it seemed like a good idea.

## Sweat Doesn't Smell

But let's talk about the difference between a deodorant and an antiperspirant. Sweat itself doesn't smell. So sweat is not the enemy. Your body — and mine — has several kinds of bacteria that live on the skin, and some of those cause odors. It's not the bacteria themselves that smell, either, but the waste products they produce after eating those sweat-laden, dead skin cells and "[breaking down protein into certain acids](#)," according to Medical News Today.

The upshot is that we don't really need to prevent sweating; we need to prevent the bacteria from excreting their foul-smelling waste products on our skin — or at least keep the waste products from smelling. That's what De Odor Works, manufactured by Abbott Research Group, Inc. (not connected to Abbott Laboratories), is supposed to do. "Its secret," Abbott Research Group says, "is the unique reaction that occurs when ordinary running tap water and stainless steel combine to neutralize odor. Using stainless steel with running water is a recognized method of eliminating the volatile sulfur compounds (VSC) that cause odor. Stainless steel is biocompatible to human tissue, so you can use De Odor Works anywhere on your body without any adverse effects."

## Whole-Body Deodorant

And they mean "anywhere." The product insert diagrams show people using the medical-grade stainless steel bar under their arms, on the soles of their feet, and even in the groin area (both men and women). Rub the area "gently for approximately 30 seconds under running water," the instructions say. The lightweight (about 2 oz.) bar is contoured to fit an adult hand, and easy to grip, even in the shower. (You don't need soap on your hands when using it, so there's no danger of it slipping out of your fingers.)

I've been using De Odor Works for about a month now, with good success. So far, no one has objected to sitting next to me — at least to my knowledge! And I've only had one occasion when I could tell that the deodorant action wasn't fully working. It was a hot, muggy day when I had been pulling weeds and planting in the garden. (And to be fair, my *eau de* armpit may have been *eau de* neck and back and other body parts where I hadn't applied the De Odor Works bar. But I definitely wasn't as inviting to be around as I strive to be.)

Will it work on the muggiest of summer days in Iowa? I'm guessing the deodorant effect will be fine, but I may not appreciate the fact that it doesn't stop me from sweating. De Odor Works isn't an antiperspirant, after all; it's just a deodorant.

## Inconclusive Studies

Now back to those claims in the media about the dangers of

antiperspirants/deodorants. According to the National Cancer Institute:

[R]esearchers at the [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#), a part of the [National Institutes of Health](#), are not aware of any conclusive evidence linking the use of underarm antiperspirants or deodorants and the subsequent development of breast cancer. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which regulates food, cosmetics, medicines, and medical devices, also does not have any evidence or research data that ingredients in underarm antiperspirants or deodorants cause cancer.

And what about Alzheimer's disease? Here's what the [Alzheimer's Association](#) has to say:

During the 1960s and 1970s, aluminum emerged as a possible suspect in Alzheimer's. This suspicion led to concern about exposure to aluminum through everyday sources such as pots and pans, beverage cans, antacids and antiperspirants. Since then, studies have failed to confirm any role for aluminum in causing Alzheimer's.

This may all be true, but rumors persist. And more than one person I know points out that the studies cited above were "inconclusive" — neither proving nor disproving a link between the aluminum in antiperspirants and disease. According to [Web MD](#):

One of the most publicized and controversial theories concerns aluminum, which became a suspect in [Alzheimer's](#) disease when researchers found traces of this metal in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease. Many studies since then have either not been able to confirm this finding or have had questionable results....

One study found that people who used antiperspirants and antacids containing aluminum had a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's. Others have also reported an association between aluminum exposure and Alzheimer's disease.

On the other hand, various studies have found that groups of people exposed to high levels of aluminum do not have an increased risk.... On the whole, scientists can say only that it is still uncertain whether exposure to aluminum plays a role in Alzheimer's disease.

And here's what [Wikipedia](#) reports on the connection between aluminum and disease:

A 1998 study stated the use of aluminium-containing antiperspirants has been linked with the systemic accumulation of aluminium which increases the risk of [Alzheimer's disease](#).<sup>[7]</sup> A 2007 study stated personal care products are a potential

contributor to the body burden of aluminium and newer evidence has linked [breast cancer](#) with aluminium-based antiperspirants.<sup>[8]</sup> A 2008 study stated that no scientific evidence supports the hypothesis that deodorants and/or antiperspirants increase the incidence of breast cancer.<sup>[9]</sup>

## A Good Buy

Do you worry about the aluminum (and other chemicals) in antiperspirants and deodorants? If you do, consider using De Odor Works. It costs \$19.95 (plus shipping) if ordered on the company website. With deodorant/antiperspirants selling for \$1.99 (Old Spice) to \$8.29 on sale (Secret Clinical Strength) at DrugStore.com, it won't take too many months before you'll save the purchase price. And, though it may seem weird to share a deodorant, you could easily share with your spouse (assuming you have one) without getting grossed out. The De Odor Works bar stays nice and clean under warm running water. It's guaranteed for a full year, though I can't imagine what could go wrong to make it less than usable for years to come.

So, I'm a believer in De Odor Works — at least until the summer gets muggy here in Iowa. By then, I might just want an antiperspirant for comfort, even if I'm odor free. Have you tried De Odor Works in a humid climate? If so, please let us know how well it works.

One more thing. A lot of people I know are now using the deodorant crystals instead of traditional deodorant/antiperspirants you can buy in the grocery store. Wikipedia says,

Over-the-counter products labelled as “natural deodorant crystal” containing the chemical [potassium alum](#) have gained newfound popularity as an alternative health product.<sup>[17]</sup> A popular alternative to modern commercial deodorants is [ammonium alum](#), which is a common type of [alum](#) sold in crystal form and often referred to as a *deodorant crystal*. It has been used as a deodorant throughout history in Thailand, the Far East, Mexico and other countries.

If you use these deodorant crystals to avoid aluminum, you might be surprised to learn that some of them contain “hydrated potassium [aluminium sulfate](#) with the formula  $KAl(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$ ” according to [Wikipedia](#).

## WaterWorks

The WaterWorks system. Photo: Courtesy Abbott Research Group, Inc.

Abbott Research Group has applied the



same stainless steel technology to a new feminine hygiene product, a vaginal cleansing system that helps “resolve vaginal odor and discharge issues among women seeking help.” The “medical-grade, lightweight stainless steel nozzle and low-pressure water combination is designed for easy, reusable use in the shower as part of a daily routine,” according to the WaterWorks PR group. Whether using a douche as a part of a daily routine is a good idea is a topic best taken up with a woman’s gynecologist or family practitioner.



What’s promising about this particular system is that it uses no chemicals and relies entirely on a low flow of warm water through a stainless steel wand to eliminate vaginal odor. The water flows gently downward, avoiding the danger of spurting into the uterus. Many physicians caution healthy women against douching. But for those women who have a persistent vaginal odor that they just can’t control with daily showers, it may be worth a try. Check with your physician to see if it’s right for you. No prescription is required.

At the time of this post, WaterWorks sells for \$69.90 on the [Abbott Research Group’s Waterworks website](#). (Currently, shipping is free.)

## The Small Print

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