

# Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick

**Q. Dear Twig: I have a question about the words that my sister and I sing to "Jingle Bells." Why does Batman smell?**

A.: Science has yet to study the question. So one can only guess. Batman might have **bromidrosis** ("bro-mih-DRO-sis"), also called **body odor**. (Oh? "No! B.O.!" Oh.)

See, Batman's job has **mental stress** and also plenty of **physical work**. Both can make the human body **sweat**. Especially a body that has gone through **puberty** (the medical name for the process of changing from a child into an adult). (Which Batman, based on his name, has done. If not, he'd be Batboy.)

That's normal.

That's OK.

But if the sweat stays on the body awhile, even if only a couple of hours, **bacteria** start to break the sweat down.

**Ammonia** and **short-chain fatty acids** result. Both can reek. Gaaa!

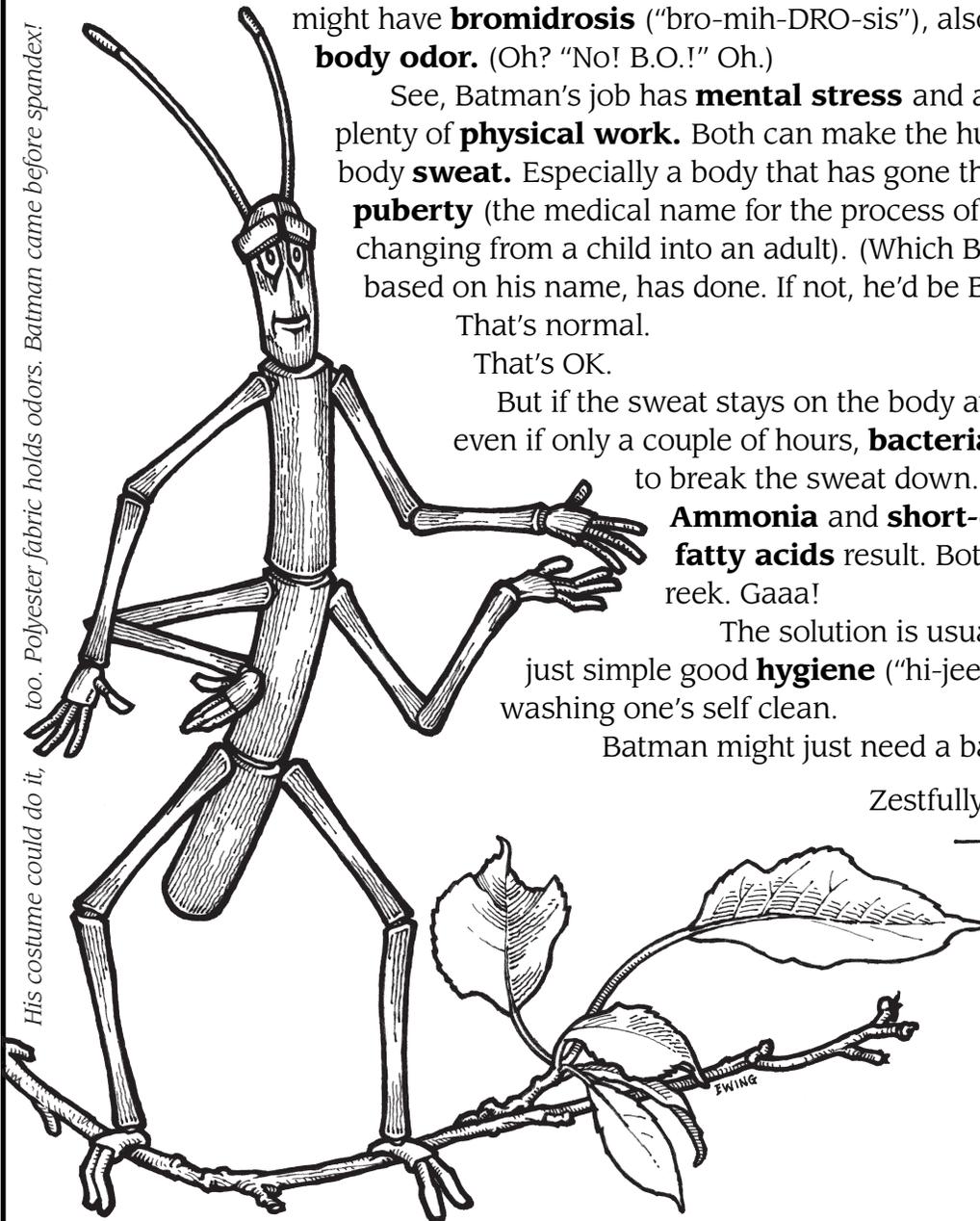
The solution is usually just simple good **hygiene** ("hi-jeen"): washing one's self clean.

Batman might just need a bath!

Zestfully,

Twig

His costume could do it, too. Polyester fabric holds odors. Batman came before spandex!



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center ([www.oardc.ohio-state.edu](http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu)) and OSU Extension ([extension.osu.edu](http://extension.osu.edu)).



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**Notes:** Regarding the rest of the folkloric lyrics: Robin can't lay an egg. He's a male human, not a female bird. Regardless, ovulation by robins, at least by the robin species that live and breed in the Northern Hemisphere (the presumptive location of Gotham City), takes place in spring and summer, not December, the typical time for this vocalization. The Batmobile might have lost a wheel due to insufficient lug-nut torque. The Joker might have run away due to Batman's alleged bromidrosis or, perhaps, to wanting to be a dentist, which, as Sam the Snowman tells us, never solves anything, unless the problem is that someone near you has bromidrosis. Bromidrosis is sometimes spelled "bromhidrosis."

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