TOXICOLOGY

The 18-Hole Itch

The 51-year-old automobile-repair instructor had a flaming eczemalike eruption on his hand and arms, neck, face and legs. He told the University of Pennsylvania's Dermatologist Walter B. Shelley that he had first had it in 1959, soon after he took up golf. For the next two years it got bad in summer, better in winter. But after the 1962 season began, it stayed bad. He had noticed, the patient said, that it became "explosively worse" after he walked past workers spraying the greens. That was the doctor's clue.

The patient was given a cortisone-type drug and kept off the golf course. Within a week, he was much better. Then Dr. Shelley checked the spray used on the greens. It was a fungicide, and its active ingredient was thiram, a notorious cause of allergies. Since thiram is still used in processing rubber, Dr. Shelley notes in this week's A.M.A. Journal, the thiramsensitive individual must avoid such varied rubber products as art-gum, erasers, bunion pads, eyelash curlers, condoms, gloves, goggles, dress shields, dental dams, bathing caps, headrests, garters, pessaries, elasticized garments, and mammary protheses." And now, golf courses.

Dr. Shelley has added an extra hazard to the known perils of the 19th hole. Thiram is close chemical kin to disulfiram (Antabuse), which make people sick when they drink. A golfer sensitized on the greens

may have a serious reaction at the bar.

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