

Golfer's Vasculitis

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Naming a rash after golf isn't going to do much to grow the game, but the purpose is to get the rash recognized, not golf.

"It's awful, look what it is doing to my legs!" says a veteran golfer. "It must be something you're spraying out here," she adds. I have heard that statement or a similar one many times over the years.

I would then suggest seeing a dermatologist and taking all of our Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) along to the doctor to find out which chemical we are spraying is causing the rash on our clientele's legs. The strangest part of these encounters is that I never learned what was actually causing the rash.

Confronted by this situation again this season, I came across a study out of Australia that has connected the issue to being mostly heat related. The report took a look at many different patients in Australia, all suffering from similar symptoms and most attributing the issues to severe allergic reactions after golfing, hiking, or walking outside for extended periods. Those in the study believed the allergen to be grass or pesticide related but with none confirmed through sometimes extensive allergy testing. Furthermore, those afflicted could never pinpoint anything new they had used that would have caused the reaction like lotion, fabric softener, or soap.

The study found there were two common denominators among all those inflicted; it occurred during the summer months under hot conditions and most patients were over 50 years old. The summary of the study states: "The findings would suggest that it occurs in healthy people and extensive investigation with



Golfer's Vasculitis starts above the sock line and appears on the lower leg when the afflicted walk a lot in hot temperatures.

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blood tests or allergy testing is inappropriate. We believe the condition should be termed 'golfer's vasculitis', as golf appears to be the most common precipitating event and such a term would enable the condition to become more widely recognized.

It seems the rash is more common than originally thought, and goes mis- or undiagnosed because the symptoms disappear before an appointment with a dermatologist or physician is made and subsequently completed. The rash commonly appears on legs of people who participate in walk-a-thons, and those who attend theme parks where a large amount of walking (usually in summer) is a given. In fact, the rash has been called the Disney Rash (the Disney Corporation may have been behind the name change) and has been attributed to the parks operated by Disney for many years.

"I have gotten the Disney Rash during my last several trips but I thought I was allergic to the landscaping since Disney is the only place I get it!"



You don't have to play golf to get the rash. One of the more common places people get Golfer's Vasculitis is at theme parks, where they walk and stand for long periods throughout the day.

Another park goer thought it had something to do with the paving at Epcot. "... our experiences have been only in Epcot. Back in 2001, I thought I read over on the parks board something about there being very small pieces of glass mixed in with the pavement ingredients and when mixed with the sun reflecting up from it the end result was this rash."

Golfer's Vasculitis as named by the Australian Journal of Dermatology is caused by prolonged exercise under hot conditions. It typically occurs in healthy people and usually starts above the sock line on the calves of those afflicted. The blood vessels in the leg become irritated, inflamed, and eruptions appear as red splotches or patches. In most cases the affected areas do not itch.

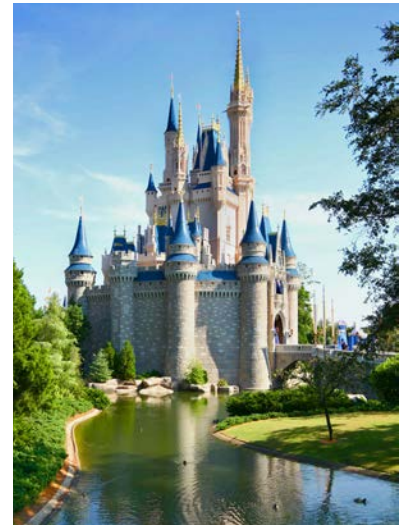
Prevention and Treatment of Golfer's Vasculitis

The research offered no treatment or prevention recommendations. Thankfully, (from one who is in the golf industry) it should not be considered a health concern nor should anyone afflicted with it begin allergy or extensive medical testing. However, if one is unsure a diagnosis from a dermatologist or physician is recommended.

If one suffers from Golfer's Vasculitis, common sense would dictate, don't go for long walks when it is hot outside. The most common recommendations I found are to:

See your doctor or dermatologist and suggest Golfer's Vasculitis

- Take a golf car instead of walking on hotter days
- Pamper your legs following a round of golf – elevate and apply cool compresses
- Try compression socks or supportive leggings



The next time a member or golfer asks you what you've been applying to the turf and blaming you for the rash that has broken out on their lower legs, tell them about the Disney Rash. ☺



Points for a Purpose

The Wee One Foundation is asking golf course superintendents nationwide to donate a portion of their Early Order Program points to the Wee One Foundation through participating turf care supply companies. All donated points will be matched as a cash donation from the participating organizations. Donations will help ease the financial burden of medical expenses for golf course superintendents.

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For a complete list of participating companies, visit weeone.org

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Wee One Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit association. A tribute to Wayne Otto, CGCS.