

TAKE IT **EASY**

OLFERS SHOULD NOT OVERSTRAIN THEMSELVES DURING WARM AND HUMID WEATHER

BY ARUL JOHN

Dr Gavin Ong (right), Specialist in Dermatology, The Skin Specialist, a Singapore Medical Group clinic, answers queries about physical problems golfers face. In this issue, he discusses Golfer's vasculitis, a condition that is also known as hiker's rash.

What is Golfer's vasculitis and what causes it?

Golfer's vasculitis is also known as exercise-induced vasculitis.

As the name implies, it is an inflammation of the small blood vessels (vasculitis) in the skin that is triggered by physical exertion especially in warm and humid weather like in Singapore. Symptoms include itch, skin swelling and rash.

Golfer's vasculitis is an uncommon skin condition and is usually self-limiting.

What is the proper treatment for the condition?

Proper treatment includes cessation of physical activity.

The affected individual should rest in a cool environment. Elevation and compression of the affected limbs may reduce swelling. Antihistamines and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (NSAIDs) are also helpful.

What precautions should golfers take to avoid the ailment?

Golfers who tend to suffer from exercise-induced vasculitis should avoid excessive physical activities especially in a warm and humid environment.

Which parts of the body are more susceptible to Golfer's Vasculitis, and why is this so?

Although Golfer's Vasculitis can affect any part of the body, it affects the lower legs more com-



monly. We are not exactly sure why this is so but it may related to increased physical activity of the limbs during exercise.

What other circulatory problems can golfers face?

Golf in general is not a particularly strenuous sport.

I am not aware of any other circulatory problems arising specifically due to golf. Golfers with pre-existing medical conditions affecting the cardiovascular system such as heart attack, mild stroke and diabetes, should follow the advice given by their physicians.

What will happen if conditions such as Golfer's vasculitis and other circulatory problems are not properly treated?

There is usually no long-term serious consequence to Golfer's vasculitis. This condition is usually self-limiting and will resolve once physical exertion is discontinued.