

CLINICAL PRACTICE

Clinical Images

Lime-Induced Phytophotodermatitis

Jesse Keiser Fitzpatrick, MD¹ and Jeffrey Kohlwes, MD, MPH^{1,2}

¹Department of Internal Medicine, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA; ²Department of Internal Medicine, San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center, San Francisco, CA, USA.

KEY WORDS: dermatology; photosensitivity; phytophotodermatitis.

J Gen Intern Med 33(6):975

DOI: 10.1007/s11606-018-4315-z

© Society of General Internal Medicine 2018

A 31-year-old man presented after 1 week of painless rash on his left hand. Examination revealed three non-blanching hyperpigmented macules with mild scaling (Fig. 1).

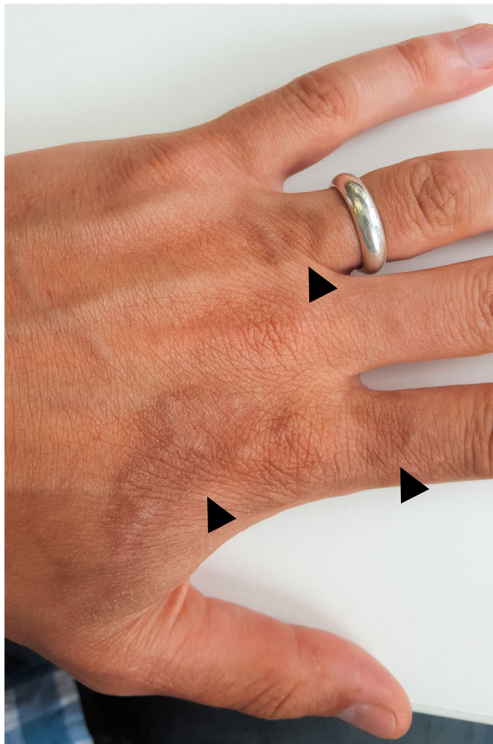


Figure 1 Clinical image showing hyperpigmented macules with mild scaling over patient's left hand.

Based on patient history of mixing margaritas outdoors 2 days prior to rash onset, he was diagnosed with phytophotodermatitis. Phytophotodermatitis is a common non-immunologic cutaneous reaction caused by topical exposure to furocoumarin compounds in the presence of sunlight. Furocoumarins in limes, carrots, celery, dill, fennel, figs, parsley, and parsnips sensitize epithelial DNA to ultraviolet light.¹ Cutaneous reactions are limited to contact areas and are often delayed by 36–72 h. Diagnosis is challenging because of the ubiquity of photosensitizing agents and the delayed onset. Involvement of skin in direct contact with beverage glasses is common, as are “drip lines” and even secondary hand imprints, which have been misdiagnosed as child abuse.² Asymptomatic hyperpigmentation is the most common reaction, but exposure can lead to severe sunburn with blistering, which may require treatment in burn units.³ Treatment is symptomatic, with rash resolution in weeks, though hyperpigmentation can persist for months. Avoidance of topical furocoumarins and protection of skin from over-exposure to sunlight are preventive.

Corresponding Author: Jesse Keiser Fitzpatrick, MD; Department of Internal Medicine University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA (e-mail: Jesse.fitzpatrick@ucsf.edu).

REFERENCES

1. **Lankerani L, Baron ED.** Photosensitivity to exogenous agents. *J Cutan Med Surg.* 2004;8:424–31.
2. **Goskowitz MO, Friedlander SF, Eichenfield LF.** Endemic “lime” disease: phytophotodermatitis in San Diego County. *Pediatrics.* 1994;93:828–30.
3. **Pomeranz MK, Karen JK.** Images in clinical medicine. Phytophotodermatitis and limes. *N Engl J Med.* 2007;357:e1.

Received August 25, 2017

Revised October 25, 2017

Accepted January 11, 2018

Published online January 29, 2018