

May 11, 1937

Mr. C. A. Peterson
National Refining Company
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Mr. Peterson:

I wish to acknowledge receipt of a copy of a letter from L. R. Paxton, Mankato, Minnesota, concerning a filling station operator at Austin. I wish also to apologize for my delay in replying to this letter which unfortunately was mislaid.

I should like to point out in the beginning that there is nothing in Mr. Paxton's letter which would suggest that the operator had lead poisoning. It seems quite clear from the description of the case that his ailment was that of gasoline dermatitis, aggravated in some degree by his use of leather gloves which became saturated with gasoline. I doubt if anyone could handle gasoline in this fashion without developing some injury to the skin. In as much as many people are quite sensitive to gasoline, I should consider this man rather fortunate in not having serious damage done to his skin. After some years of experience and of study of this problem, we have been quite unable to find that the small amounts of Ethyl Fluid in gasoline increase its propensities for producing skin irritations. Gasoline indeed is much more irritating than are any of the concentrated ingredients of Ethyl Fluid taken by themselves. Tetraethyl lead in its pure form does not cause a significant degree of skin irritation, whereas gasoline applied to the skin is known to produce dermatitis quite commonly. With the introduction into gasoline of the products of various types of "cracking", it becomes even more irritating so that gasoline dermatitis is by no means an uncommon lesion.

In most instances, I believe, the irritation is the result of the extraction of the oil from the skin, leaving it dry and cracked. Such a skin is easily infected with results which depend upon the infecting organisms. There is no specific remedy for this condition. It has been our experience that cases of this type of dermatitis do not recover completely unless they avoid all exposure to gasoline until their skin is entirely well. Skin lesions may be treated with any one of a number of mild antiseptic ointments. They

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should be dressed rather frequently so that the small pimple-like pustules can be removed and cleaned up. This, of course, should be done by a physician, since most people are not able to take care of these lesions themselves, and to keep them clean. In no case should the man return to his work until the skin has entirely cleared, and afterward he should use great precaution against contact with gasoline.

I should appreciate it if you would let me know any further developments in this case, and if I can be of any further use, I should be glad to do so. May I suggest in this connection that I can best be of service to this man's physician, and I should be glad to communicate with him, if possible.

I realize by this time that the patient has had ample time to either be cured or to become worse, and I am, therefore, quite sorry for the delay.

Very truly yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

cc Mr. Lewis

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