

DR. ROTHERMEL REPLIES: Dr. Schur's point about photosensitivity is well taken, and it is true that rashes can be exacerbated by fluorescent light. This patient, a high-school student, was exposed to fluorescent lights daily in school. She has been counseled to wear sunscreen both in school and outdoors. With regard to her complement levels, there have since been quite a few instances in which her total

hemolytic complement level has been normal in the presence of slightly decreased levels of C3, C4, or both. This is not an uncommon finding in our laboratory and may be due to the assay used to measure the total hemolytic complement.

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Bath Toys — A Source of Gastrointestinal Infection

TO THE EDITOR: It is widely documented that toys, particularly shared toys (such as those in day-care centers and doctors' waiting rooms), can be reservoirs of infection. It is also well established that polluted water is an important reservoir of infection of many kinds. A neighbor of mine, a toddler, had diarrhea due to giardia infection, and one of the antecedent events was the swallowing of several gulps of stagnant water squeezed from a bath toy in an outdoor wading pool. Yet, to my surprise, only one case report has documented infection of any type occurring from bath toys,¹ and in that case, the infection occurred in an immunocompromised patient in a hospital. One article has described the bacterial content of water-containing bath toys and suggested that they may pose a risk of infection.² Given the ubiquity of bath toys and their prima fa-

cie culpability in retaining dirty water, clinicians and epidemiologists may be overlooking a possible contribution to disease, or they may not be considering bath toys as distinct from toys in general. Further studies and case reports would help to define the spectrum of risk with which bath toys may be associated.

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1. Buttery JP, Alabaster SJ, Heine RG, et al. Multiresistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* outbreak in a pediatric oncology ward related to bath toys. *Pediatr Infect Dis J* 1998;17:509-13. [Erratum, *Pediatr Infect Dis J* 1999;18:9.]

2. Ruschke R. Kunststoff-Schwimmtiere als Biotope für Mikroorganismen und mögliche Infektionsquellen für Kleinkinder. *Zentralbl Bakteriol [Orig B]* 1976;163:556-64.

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