

Poison Ivy - Oak - Sumac

Definition

- A very itchy rash with blisters
- Caused by contact with the poison ivy plant

Health Information

Symptoms

- Rash is shaped like streaks or lines
- Red streaks with weeping blisters
- Rash found on exposed body surfaces (such as the hands). Also, can be on areas touched by the hands. Areas that can be affected in this way are the face or genitals.
- Very itchy
- Onset 1 or 2 days after child was in a forest or field

Cause

- Caused by oil from poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac plants.
- The oil is found in the leaves, stems, berries and roots of the plant.
- Oil may be carried on pet's fur.

Prevention of Recurrent Poison Ivy

- Learn to recognize the leaves of the poison ivy plant. Then try to avoid contact with it.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Poison ivy is caused by skin contact with the oil from the plant.
- The oil can also come from the fur of outdoor pets.
- Most poison ivy rashes can be treated at home.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Steroid Cream:

- To help with the itch, put 1% hydrocortisone cream on the rash.
- No prescription is needed.
- Use 3 times per day.

3. Steroids by Mouth:

- Severe poison ivy may need prescription oral steroids to clear it up.
- The steroids will reduce the swelling and itching.
- Give the steroids as directed.
- Try not to forget any of the doses.

4. Cold:

- Soak the involved area in cool water for 20 minutes.
- You can also rub the rash with an ice cube.
- Do as often as needed to help the itching and oozing.

5. Allergy Medicine:

- If itching becomes severe, give an allergy medicine, such as Benadryl.
- No prescription is needed. Age limit: 1 year and older.
- If needed longer than a few days, switch to a long-acting antihistamine, such as Zyrtec. Age limit: 2 years and older.

6. Try Not to Scratch:

- Cut the fingernails short.
- Help your child not to scratch.
- Reason: Prevent a skin infection from bacteria.

7. More Poison Ivy:

- New blisters may occur several days after the first ones. This means your child probably has ongoing contact with poison ivy oil.
- To prevent it from coming back, bathe all dogs or other pets.
- Wash all clothes and shoes that your child wore on the day of contact.

8. What to Expect:

- Most often, the rash lasts 2 weeks.
- Treatment can reduce the severity of symptoms.
- Treatment does not change how long they last.

9. Return to School:

- Poison ivy or oak cannot be spread to others.
- The fluid from the blisters or rash can't cause poison ivy.
- No need to miss any school or child care.

Call Your Doctor If

- Poison ivy lasts for more than 3 weeks
- It looks infected
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

Author: Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

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