

Poison Ivy

WHAT IS IT AND WHAT CAUSED IT?

Poison Ivy causes contact dermatitis or an itchy skin rash to those who are sensitive to the oleoresin in the plant. The peak season is in spring when the plants are tender. Poison Ivy can be recognized by the glossy green leaves, which grow in groups of three. It generally grows as a low shrub, but can be a trailing vine.

HOW DID I GET IT?

The oleoresin is sticky and easily attaches to the skin, clothing and pets. You can experience poison ivy directly by touching the plant or indirectly by coming in contact with an object that has the oil from the plant on it.

ABOUT THE RASH

- Rash might include:
 - Redness
 - Itching
 - Blisters
- Often the rash may look like a straight line. This is because of how the plant brushes against the skin.
- The rash usually develops over 48-72 hours, but it can last 2-3 weeks.
- The various timing of the blisters give the appearance of the rash spreading, however, once the oleoresin has been washed off the skin or clothing, it will no longer spread.

CARING FOR POISON IVY AT HOME

- Wash exposed skin, clothing, and equipment with warm soapy water.
- Use cool water compresses to relieve itch
- Warm salt water compresses (1/2 tsp salt to 1 pint of water) applied four times a day will help dry weeping blisters. Domeboro solution may be helpful too. Use as directed. This is available in drug stores without a prescription.
- Calamine lotion will help dry small blisters and relieve itching.
- Oral antihistamines help relieve itch: Benadryl or Chlor-trimeton, use either as directed on package labeling. Both medications may cause drowsiness and alcohol should be avoided.
- Avoid scratching rash as this may lead to infection.
- For extensive involvement or rash that is near the eyes may require a prescription.

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional. When using an Over-the-Counter medication please be sure to follow the package instructions. [Contact Health Services](#) if you have any additional questions, concerns or to make an appointment.