

What the plant looks like:



What the rash looks like:



For More Information Visit:

<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/tc/poison-ivy-oak-or-sumac-topic-overview>
http://www.medicinenet.com/poison_ivy/article.htm

Pictures:

<http://www.mikedidonato.com/2009/06/22/poison-ivy/>
<http://www.thegeminigeek.com/how-to-get-rid-of-poison-ivy-rash/>
<http://www.poison-ivy.org/rash/source/23.htm>
<http://www.poisonivyguides.com/poison-ivy-pictures.htm>

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Poison Ivy



Information on what it looks like, the causes, symptoms, treatment, and prevention.



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What Is Poison Ivy?

Poison ivy is a plant that can cause a skin rash called Allergic Contact Dermatitis when it touches the skin. The red, uncomfortable, and itchy rash often shows up in lines or streaks and is marked by fluid-filled bumps (blisters) or large raised areas (hives). It is the most common skin problem caused by contact with plants.

What Causes Poison Ivy?

The rash is caused by contact with an oil called urushiol found in poison ivy. The oil is present in all parts of the plants, including the leaves, stems, flowers, berries, and roots. Urushiol is an allergen, so the rash is actually an allergic reaction to the oil in these plants. Indirect contact with urushiol can also cause the rash. This may happen when you touch clothing, pet fur, sporting gear, gardening tools, or other objects that have come in contact with one of these plants. Not everyone is allergic to urushiol.

Symptoms

- Itchy skin where the plant touched your skin.
- Red streaks or general redness where the plant brushed against the skin.
- Small bumps or larger raised areas (hives).
- Blisters filled with fluid that may leak out.

The rash usually appears 8 to 48 hours after contact with the urushiol. But it can occur from 5 hours to 15 days after touching the plant. The rash usually takes more than a week to show up the first time you get urushiol on your skin. But the rash develops much more quickly (within 1 to 2 days) after later contacts. The rash will continue to develop in new areas over several days but only on the parts of your skin that had contact with the urushiol or those parts where the urushiol was spread by touching.

The rash is not contagious. You cannot catch or spread a rash after it appears because the urushiol will already be absorbed or washed off the skin. The rash may seem to be spreading, but either it is still developing from earlier contact or you have touched something that still has urushiol on it.



How Is The Rash Diagnosed?

The rash usually is diagnosed during a physical exam. Your doctor will examine the rash and ask questions to find out when you were exposed to the plant and how long it took the rash to develop. If you are not sure whether you were exposed to a plant, he or she will ask about your outdoor activities, work, and hobbies.

How Is It Treated?

Most poison ivy, oak, or sumac rashes can be treated successfully at home. Initial treatment consists of washing the area with water immediately after contact with the plants. To relieve symptoms, use wet compresses and take cool baths. Nonprescription antihistamines and calamine lotion also may help relieve symptoms. Moderate or severe cases of the rash may require treatment by a doctor, who may prescribe corticosteroid pills, creams, ointments, or injections.

How Is It Prevented?

The best way to prevent the rash is to learn to identify and avoid the plants. When you cannot avoid contact with the plants, heavy clothing (long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and vinyl gloves) and barrier creams or lotions may help protect you.