

Poison Ivy & Poison Sumac

Poison Ivy & Poison Sumac is an allergic reaction caused by your skin touching these plants or their oils.

Poison Ivy & Poison Sumac can occur any time of the year, but is most common in the spring and summer.

You can develop a reaction after contact with anything that has come in contact and carries the plant's oil, including ashes and smoke from burning plants, or on clothes or tools. The rash typically is first noticed 24-48 hours after contact. Symptoms include itching, red blotches, blisters, fever, headache, swelling of your throat or eyes, overall swelling of your body, general feeling of discomfort. A rash can last up to 2-3 weeks. Mild cases can be treated by using antihistamines capsules or creams, by applying corticosteroid creams, by applying calamine lotion, or by soaking in colloidal oatmeal baths. More serious cases might require corticosteroids including prescription strength creams, tablets, or injection.

The best prevention is knowing what the plants look like and avoiding them. You might prevent a reaction if you can wash off the exposed area with soap and water within 20 minutes. Be sure to clean under your fingernails, wash clothes and shoes in hot water and detergent, and give your pets a bath if they have had contact with the plants.

Millions of people will develop an allergic rash after contact with a Poison Ivy or Poison Sumac plant. Many people are highly allergic to the urushiol oil found in these plants. If you break out due to contact with these plants several times a year, then you should consider receiving a vaccine to prevent this reaction. This vaccine is prepared from the resin of the plant *Rhus Toxicodendron*, which is the base substance of Poison Ivy and Poison Sumac. It is given as a shot in the arm for three consecutive weeks. A booster shot is recommended yearly, however some may require repeating the series of three depending on their response.

This vaccine is only given to adults.