

:: Poison Ivy ::

Whether it's warm or cold outside, you can contact poison ivy and get all the symptoms from it, including an itchy rash that can drive you crazy and interfere with your sleeping habits.

If poison ivy is being burned and you contact the smoke, you can suffer a reaction that could include breathing problems.

Something you can do to prevent getting the plant's oil on your skin is to wear long sleeve shirts and long pants as well as high shoes/boots and socks. In addition, if working in a garden area, wear leather gloves and eye protection.

Remember, if you contact poison ivy and touch another part of your body before removing the plant's oil, you could affect the part of your body you touched even though it wasn't directly exposed to the plant.

Here are some facts about poison ivy as well as a suggestion to help you prevent getting a reaction if the plant's oil does come in contact with your skin:

- As soon as you know you have been exposed to the oil of poison ivy/oak/sumac, wash thoroughly with lots of **warm** water and soap (water alone will work but not quite as well). Do not use a washcloth since this can spread the oil to other parts of the body.

- Anything you touched after your exposure should be washed in soap and hot water, hosed down or soaked in water and rubbing alcohol (including clothing, shoes, etc.).

- If you do contract a rash and develop blisters, the oozing blisters are not contagious to others (as long as the oil from the plants was initially removed from the skin).

- As long as the oil is no longer present, scratching does not make the rash spread. However, it does make the already-intense itching even more unbearable and can cause the rash to get infected.

- If you are in an area that is known for poison ivy/oak/sumac, you can use a barrier cream such as "IvyBlock" to coat your skin.