

Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac



Contact with poison ivy/oak/sumac plants can cause an allergic rash. Mild rashes can be treated at home and mostly cause discomfort from itching, burning, or blistering. Severe, widespread rashes require medical treatment.

Signs and Symptoms:

- An itchy or burning rash appears within 2 to 3 days as small red bumps that usually blister. Blisters can be different sizes and may ooze clear fluid.
- The bumps and blisters may look like straight lines or streaks on the child's skin.
- The rash may begin to look crusty as it heals.

What to Do:

1. Wash skin and scrub under fingernails immediately with soap and water.
2. For itching, use calamine lotion (avoid using on the face, especially near the eyes, or on the genitals) or an oral antihistamine such as diphenhydramine (avoid antihistamine-containing creams or lotions which can worsen the rash and itching).
3. Cut fingernails short to keep the child from breaking the skin when scratching.
4. Place cool compresses on the child's skin as needed.
5. Wash all clothing that the child has recently worn, plus any items or outdoor pets that may have come into contact with the plant.

Call a doctor or seek medical attention if:

- the rash covers a large portion of the body, or is on the genitals or the face
- the rash is getting worse despite home treatment
- the skin looks infected (increasing redness, warmth, pain, swelling, or pus)

Seek emergency medical care if the child:

- has a known severe allergy to poison ivy/oak/sumac
- develops swelling around the nose or mouth
- complains of chest tightness or difficulty breathing
- sounds hoarse or is having trouble speaking
- develops redness or swelling widespread over the body
- becomes dizzy or lightheaded
- was given a dose of injectable epinephrine



Think Prevention!

Teach children what poison ivy/oak/sumac look like, and how the plants' appearances can change during different times of the year. Make sure kids always wear long-sleeved shirts and pants whenever playing close to these plants.

Note: All information is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult a doctor. Review this with a doctor prior to use.