
What is poison ivy?

- A plant found in most parts of the United States that causes a skin reaction.

What symptoms occur?

- Red, bumpy skin rash, which usually will progress into itchy blisters that ooze, harden, and then crack
- Eruption on exposed body surfaces (e.g. hands)
- Shaped like streaks or patches
- Extreme itchiness
- Onset of rash may appear as early as a few hours or as late as 2 weeks after the exposure

How is it spread?

- The fluid from the sores themselves does not spread poison ivy. However, anything that has poison ivy oil or sap on it can spread poison ivy for about 1 week, including the shoes and clothes the patient last wore into the woods, as well as any pets that may have oil on their fur.
- Be sure to wash them off with soap and water
- The rash begins 1 – 2 days after skin contact

How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Consult by primary care provider evaluation
- Over the counter treatments are available

Can poison ivy be prevented?

- Learn to recognize poison ivy
- Avoid all plants with three large, shiny, green leaves. Another clue is the presence of shiny black spots on damaged leaves. (The sap of the plant turns black when exposed to air.)
- Wear long pants and socks when walking through woods that may contain poison ivy
- Avoid scratching, and cut fingernails short

Is it contagious?

- If you think an individual has had contact with poison ivy, wash the exposed areas of skin with any available soap for 5 minutes
- Strong laundry soap has no added benefits. Wash within 1 hour, if possible. Washing after 1 hour is of little value in prevention of oil

When can the individual return to the general population?

- Following recommendations of physician

Should facilities do special cleaning?

- Special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017