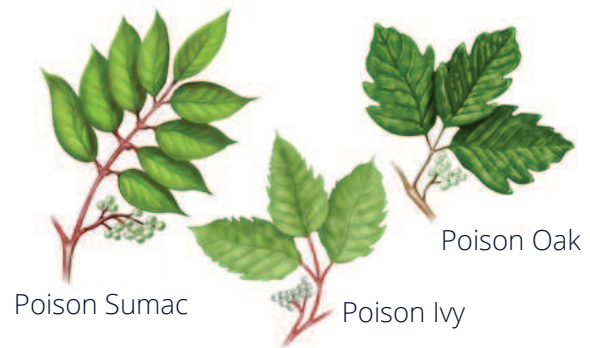


# Poison Ivy Management

## What is Poison Ivy?

Poison Ivy is a common plant found throughout Northern America. It is similar to two other plants called poison oak and poison sumac. These plants cause allergic dermatitis - meaning the body's immune system released certain chemicals that cause a skin reaction. Most children are allergic to poison ivy. Almost half of children who come in contact with either poison ivy or poison oak have an allergic reaction



"Leaves of three, let them be!"

## Poison Ivy Rash

- Poison ivy has an oil called urushiol that can cause allergic skin reactions.
- The oil is easily wiped from the plants to other objects, including clothes, toys, and pets. Smoke from a burning plant can also contain the oil.
- Children may present with symptoms within a few hours or days after coming in contact with poison ivy. These symptoms include:
  - Small bumps where the plant oil touched the skin that quickly turn into blisters. The rash is shaped like streaks or in patches.
  - Severe itching
  - Redness and swelling
  - Blisters that break and ooze fluid will then become crusty. \*\*The fluid from the blisters does not make poison ivy spread.

## Prevention

- If you think your child has come in contact with poison ivy, wash the exposed area with soap for five minutes. Pay close attention to under fingernails.
- Thoroughly wash contaminated clothing, including shoes and shoe laces,
- Wear long pants or socks when walking through woods that may have poison ivy.
- Pets can carry poison ivy oils if they come in contact with it. Wash your pet after it has come in contact with the plant.



## Treatment

- As with all allergies, preventing exposure to the allergen is most important. If your child spends time outside, be sure they are familiar with what poison ivy and poison oak plants look like.
  - Poison ivy is a red-stemmed, three-leaved plant whose shiny green leaves turn bright red in the fall.
  - Poison oak has green shiny leaves that also grow three to a stem.
- The rash will heal within about 2 weeks. In most cases, the rash can be treated at home. You can help ease your child's discomfort with the following:
  - Bathing in cool water or using cool compresses.
  - Using calamine lotion.
  - Benadryl to help with the itching.
- If the rash is on the face, eyes, or appears to be infected, please contact the office to schedule an appointment to be evaluated.

