

Poison Ivy

There is a small percentage of people that do not react to poison ivy or any of the plants in that family. For the majority of people, this rash can develop within 24-72 hours of coming into contact with the oil of a rhus plant, such as poison ivy, oak, or sumack. The rash appears as pimple-like areas that can also form in straight lines and have some weeping. On the face, you may just see a sun-burned appearance and swelling of the cheeks and eyelids.

Keep in mind that wherever the plant oil touches the skin that is not washed in time, the rash will appear in that order. The rash is not contagious. It erupts at different times because this was the order that the oil came into contact with the skin. One person cannot "catch" poison ivy from another. However, the oil can remain on unwashed clothing, sheets, socks, shoes and hats and can re-infect the person or affect another person that is handling those items. Wash all original clothing and sheets from the day of exposure.

The rash can be weepy and itchy or painful and in certain areas can swell. If it is mostly on the arms, legs or torso, try oatmeal baths or calamine lotion and benadryl for the itching. If there is some swelling, you can also try some hydrocortisone cream. If the face or groin area also is affected, then you should call your pediatrician.