Plant Allergy Treatment

Usually self-care at home is all that is needed for a reaction to these plants.

Self-Care at Home

If you are exposed to any of these plants or their oils, wash thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible. An alternative is rubbing alcohol, which can dissolve and remove the oils from your skin. If you can remove the oil within 10 minutes, you are unlikely to develop the rash.

Symptoms from a mild rash can sometimes be relieved by the following:

- Cool compresses with water or milk
- Calamine - A nonprescription lotion
- Aveeno oatmeal bath - A product you put in the bath to relieve itching
- Oral antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) - Caution: these medications may make you too drowsy to drive a car or operate machinery safely. Nonsedating antihistamines are now available over the counter and include loratadine (Claritin).

Nonprescription corticosteroid (eg, hydrocortisone) creams usually do not help. Do not attempt to treat severe reactions or to "wait it out" at home. Go immediately to the nearest emergency department or call an ambulance. Here are some things to do while waiting for the ambulance:

- Try to stay calm.
- Prevent further exposure to the "poisonous" plant.
- Take an antihistamine (1-2 tablets or capsules of diphenhydramine [Benadryl]) if you can swallow without difficulty.
- If you are wheezing or having difficulty breathing, use an inhaled bronchodilator such as albuterol (Proventil) or epinephrine (Primatene Mist) if one is available. These inhaled medications dilate the airway.
- If you are feeling lightheaded or faint, lie down and raise your legs higher than your head to help blood flow to your brain.
- If you have been given an epinephrine kit for a previous allergic reaction, inject yourself as you have been instructed. The kit provides a
premeasured dose of epinephrine, a prescription drug that rapidly reverses the most serious symptoms (see Follow-up).

- Bystanders should administer CPR to a person who becomes unconscious and stops breathing or does not have a pulse.
- If at all possible, you or your companion should be prepared to tell medical personnel what medications you take and your allergy history.

**Medical Treatment**

Like most allergic reactions, treatment is dictated by the severity of the reaction. Reactions that cover a large proportion of your body, make you uncomfortable enough to disrupt your normal activities, or do not get better within a few days may require treatment with prescription medications.

**more information from eMedicineHealth**

- When to Seek Medical Care
- Exams and Tests
- Next Steps
- Prevention
- Outlook

For more information, read the complete article, Poison Ivy, Oak, and Sumac on http://www.emedicinehealth.com.

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