

Poison Ivy

What is it?

Poison ivy is a straggling or climbing woody vine that grows in wooded areas and is known for its ability to cause an itchy rash (Government of Canada, 2013).

What does it look like?

Poison ivy leaves are 3 pointed with the centre leaflet having a longer stalk than the side ones. Poison ivy is easily confused with other plants.



Image © 2013 Government of Canada

How is it caused?

The rash occurs as a result of skin contact with the sap of the plant.

I've touched it, now what?

If you suspect you have come into contact with poison ivy, wash the affected area with soap and cold water, ideally within one hour of contact. Remove clothing and shoes and wash separately to remove any sap residue. If you have no access to soap, use a mixture of vinegar or alcohol with water. If a reaction does develop, see a healthcare provider for treatment.

Signs and Symptoms

Like many other natural hazards, the signs and symptoms of Poison Ivy can vary between individuals. Common symptoms include skin irritation, itchy rash, red inflammation, blisters and in severe cases, oozing sores (Government of Canada, 2013). Symptoms usually resolve within 7-15 days (Government of Canada, 2013).

Treatment

Poison Ivy can be treated with calamine lotion to soothe the irritation.

Risks

Poison ivy tends to grow in wooded areas.

Prevention

The best way to avoid skin contact with poison ivy is to wear protective clothing, such as long sleeves and long pants.

What does Camp Kawartha do?

If someone comes into contact with poison ivy, the first step would be to wash the affected area with soap and water. To help soothe itching, calamine lotion can be applied. Camp Kawartha will monitor the individual and seek treatment from a physician if necessary.

References

Government of Canada. (2013, May 29). [Poison Ivy](#).