

First Aid for Plant Poison

Calm the rash with cucumber

You can place slices of cucumber on the affected area, or mash it up to make a cucumber "paste" that you apply to the rash for soothing relief.

Ease the itch with banana and watermelon rind

Rubbing the inside of a banana peel on the affected skin can provide itch relief. An application of watermelon rind is another treatment.

Kill the poison with apple cider vinegar

Apple cider vinegar has also been shown to be an effective poison ivy home remedy. Soak a brown paper bag in apple cider vinegar, then place the bag on the rash to draw out the toxins.

Recover quicker with baking soda

To make a treatment for poison ivy rash, especially one red with blisters, mix 3 teaspoons baking soda and 1 teaspoon water and apply the paste to the affected areas. When it dries, the baking soda will flake off. If the blisters are oozing, mix 2 teaspoons baking soda in 1 quart (or 1 liter) water and use it to saturate a few sterile gauze pads. Cover the blisters with the wet pads for 10 minutes, four times a day. Do not apply on or near your eyes. (A less potentially messy way to get relief: Soak in a cool bath with 1 cup of baking soda mixed in.)

Sooth the itch with oatmeal

Grind 1 cup oatmeal in your blender until it's a fine powder, then pour it into a piece of cheesecloth or the foot section of a clean, old nylon stocking. Knot the material, and tie it around the faucet of your bathtub so the bag is suspended under the running water. Fill the tub with lukewarm water and soak in it for 30 minutes. You may find that applying the oatmeal pouch directly to the rash gives you even more relief.

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Cool the burn with aloe vera

The gel from an aloe vera plant can work wonders on a poison ivy rash. Apply the gel directly to the skin from the leaf or use a store-bought product for a quicker treatment.

Prevent spreading with rubbing alcohol

If you're going to be in areas where there might be poison ivy, it's a good idea to carry rubbing alcohol with you. Swiping it on your skin immediately after contact can slow down and minimize the discomfort by preventing urushiol the chemical responsible for the rash, from fully penetrating your skin.

Eliminate the urushiol oil with lemon juice

Lemon juice is a natural astringent. Apply it soon after contact with the irritating plant, before the plant's oil has time to fully get into your skin.

Lessen the severity of the urushiol with running water

Washing the affected body parts in cool running water and soap if it's available, immediately after contact aids in minimizing the size and severity of the developing rash. Avoid hot water, which can irritate the skin.

Reduce the rash with a cold compress and witch hazel

Apply cold compresses whenever the rash acts up, to reduce the itchiness and prevent you from scratching; remember, sharp nails can open blisters to infection. Witch hazel can have a similar rash-reduction effects; soak a cotton ball and pat it on.