

Reducing Risk for Poison Ivy Rash:

Rashes from exposure to poison ivy are due to a skin irritating oil found in all parts of the plant: leaves, stems, vines, roots, flowers and fruits and is still active in dead wood. The oil can transfer to clothing, boots, gloves and tools, and is often on the coats and feet of domestic pets, so exposure can occur far away from the actual plant. The oil can be present in the smoke when poison ivy is burnt while clearing the landscape, and can cause reactions to the skin as well as eyes and lungs.

Wear protective clothing, long pants, long sleeves and gloves to keep skin from coming in contact with the irritating poison ivy oils. Wash clothes and gloves in hot soapy water immediately to avoid future contact with the oil on the clothing. Attempt to wash shoes and boots or use them carefully with the knowledge they may have oil on them—see manufacturer’s suggestions for appropriate soaps and treatments.

Clean all tools used in cutting vines or digging out roots, and if you can’t be complete, be careful as the oils are long-lasting. Use grease-cutting soaps such as dish liquid.