


Kansas Association of School Boards

May

Poisonous Plants

Myth	 Fact
Poison Ivy rash is contagious.	Rubbing the rashes won't spread poison ivy to other parts of your body (or to another person). You spread the rash only if urushiol oil -- the sticky, resin like substance that causes the rash -- has been left on your hands.
You can catch poison ivy simply by being near the plants	Direct contact is needed to release urushiol oil . Stay away from forest fires, direct burning, or anything else that can cause the oil to become airborne such as a lawnmower, trimmer, etc.
Leaves of three, let them be	Poison sumac has 7 to 13 leaves on a branch, although poison ivy and oak have 3 leaves per cluster.
Do not worry about dead plants	Urushiol oil stays active on any surface, including dead plants, for up to 5 years.
Breaking the blisters releases urushiol oil that can spread	Not true. But your wounds can become infected and you may make the scarring worse. In very extreme cases, excessive fluid may need to be withdrawn by a doctor.
I've been in poison ivy many times and never broken out. I'm immune.	Not necessarily true. Upwards of 90% of people are allergic to urushiol oil, it's a matter of time and exposure. The more times you are exposed to urushiol, the more likely it is that you will break out with an allergic rash. For the first time sufferer, it generally takes longer for the rash to show up - generally in 7 to 10 days