Oh No! It’s Poison Ivy Again

That itching. Those vesicles. As the mother of three active boys I knew all too well what they meant. My boys were into the poison ivy again. Maybe your kids, like mine, have recently made the discovery of a little three-leafed plant that left them covered in blisters that itched and spread wherever they scratched.

Conventional medicine treats poison ivy, as it does most rashes, with oral or topical steroids. This removes the rash (a short-term solution) by blocking the body’s immune response. Homeopathic principles dictate that whenever symptoms are suppressed they are not resolved, but rather driven deeper into the body to reappear at a different time and perhaps in a more serious form. Keeping this in mind, I urge moms to treat their family’s itchy summer rash themselves, without harmful steroids.

When treating poison ivy, most people who are familiar with homeopathy automatically think of *Rhus tox* (the Latin name for poison ivy) because it is the remedy made from the poison ivy

plant. *Rhus tox* is indeed a powerful treatment for poison ivy, but it must fit the symptoms in order to work. Actually, the most common remedy for poison ivy is *Anacardium.*

Keep the following list of remedies with their identifying features handy and you'll be prepared whenever someone in your family accidentally comes in contact with this troublesome plant.

Pay special attention to the location of the rash, the type of pustules that form, and the general demeanor and preferences of the person when making your choice. As always, anything that seems peculiar is especially helpful in pointing to the correct remedy.

Remedies:

- ***Anacardium* 30:** Think *Anacardium* for swelling and rashes that itch intensely and burn when they are scratched. While scratching makes the itching worse by causing the eruptions to becoming red and inflamed, rubbing actually brings some relief to the sufferer. The symptoms are usually worse on the left side and at night-time. Warm applications and a warm bed increase the agony, but interestingly, the person usually welcomes a warm drink. This is generally the 1st remedy to consider, but make certain it fits.

- ***Croton Tiglium* 30:** The rash that calls for *Crot-t* blisters with inflammation and itching. Common areas of

outbreak for this remedy include the scalp, the face in general, near the eyes, the genitals, buttocks, or lower limbs. Like the *Anacardium* patient, scratching aggravates and leads to burning and much pain. Also like *Anacardium*, the rash may be worse at night and on the left side of the body.

We can distinguish *Crot-t* from *Anacardium* by the presence of yellowish eruptions. In fact, *Crot-t* is known as the yellow remedy. The pustules can ooze yellowish matter, which then dries to form thick grayish/brownish scabs.

Light pressure ameliorates, but the person feels tight all over his body and mentally inflexible and rigid. Quite frankly, he cannot bear the rash.

- ***Graphites* 30:** Honey-like symptoms point us to the remedy *Graphites.* When the rash is scratched, the resulting discharge is sticky and yellowish. It may also burn. The torso and limbs are most often affected and they become crusty-looking. Relief comes from such rough rubbing and scratching that the sufferer actually tears her skin. Being wrapped up may improve the situation as well because the person is generally chilly and feels thick and dull.

- ***Sulphur* 30:** When scratching causes the pustules to bleed yet brings relief to the individual, look to *Sulphur*. There may be a yellowish or white discharge after scratching, and what remains of the pustule will be crusty and dry. This remedy will be indicated when the person feels better in the warmth of his bed as well as from taking a bath and washing up. Generally, *Sulphur* symptoms are left-sided and afflict the scalp. Facial swelling may be present. The person requiring this

remedy may be irritable and though the warmth of the bed is comforting, he may be restless at night and have difficulty sleeping.

- ***Rhus tox* 30:** Unlike *Anacardium*, hot showers actually bring relief to the person needing *Rhus tox.* Outbreaks may be on the face, around the eyes, the genitals, and on the palms in particular. Vesicles may line up along a scratch and the skin itself may actually look angry. Similarly, the individual is irritable and his mind is restless. Resting is of no help; movement and dry, warm air ameliorates. Aggravations include a warm bed, nighttime, and scratching.

Administer the chosen remedy in the 30th potency three to four times a day, reducing the frequency as symptoms improve. If a lower potency like 12X or 6X is all you have on hand, you can use it, but you may have to administer more frequently. If you don't see even the tiniest bit of improvement after the second or third dose, try the remedy that seems to be the next most likely choice.

Prophylactic use

If you're one of those people who always seems to get a rash if you're anywhere near a poison ivy plant, I've seen excellent results with the following protocol. Use four doses of *Rhus tox* 30 in one day at the onset of the season to help minimize the intensity of the exposure. This is done one day a week for a month.

So although the suffering from this plant is noteworthy, the solution is always near at hand.