



# spotlight on health

## Scratching An Itch: Total Solution For Poison Ivy

(NAPSA)—As Americans head outdoors this summer, poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac are in full bloom, ready to wreak havoc on millions. Allergies to these plants are among the most common in the country. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, each year, anywhere from 10 to 50 million people in the United States develop the oozing, itching rash associated with these poisonous plants.

For the first time, a total solution is available for sufferers—a topical wash that completely removes the poisonous oil from the skin and provides lasting relief from symptoms, usually within 30 seconds of application.

The noxious plants all contain urushiol oil, a toxin that adheres to the skin and causes the symptoms associated with poison ivy, oak and sumac. The human body responds to the oil in such a way as to attack itself where the urushiol is attached. So the most important step in treating an allergic reaction is to completely detach and rinse the oil from the skin.

“Until now, poison ivy treatments have only temporarily blocked the itch but have not addressed the root cause of the reaction. Zanafel Poison Ivy Wash quickly eradicates the painful and irritating symptoms of poison ivy, oak and sumac by actually removing the urushiol oil from the skin so the affected area can begin healing,” said Robert Knechtel, M.D., J.D., president of Zanafel Laboratories Inc.

While many experts advise washing with soap and water immediately after contact, most people do not know they have



**There's now a topical wash that provides lasting relief from poison ivy symptoms.**

made contact with the poisonous plant until many hours after exposure. By that time, the urushiol oil will have adhered to the skin, so cleansing with soap and water is no longer effective. Zanafel, on the other hand, attaches itself to the oil and pulls it from the skin at any stage after contact.

“I have been a pharmacist for over 20 years and have always recommended washing poison ivy off the skin as soon as possible to minimize reactions,” says Rick Smith of Crivitz Pharmacy in Crivitz, Wis. “With Zanafel the affected area can be washed even days later and the poison ivy is arrested.”

### **How to Spot Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac**

One of the best ways to avoid contact with these toxic plants is to learn to identify their often indistinct characteristics. Poison ivy and oak leaves typically have three pointed leaflets that can be

smooth or jagged, with a longer middle leaf. The plants are reddish in spring; green in summer; and yellow, orange or red in the fall. Some plants may have a bunch of green flowers or white berry clusters.

Poison sumac has seven to 13 leaflets per leaf and grows as a shrub or small tree in standing water, peat bogs and swamps in the Northeast, Midwest and Southeast. Often confused with its nonpoisonous sister plant, poison sumac can be distinguished by the location of its fruit, which grows between the leaf and branch versus the end of the branch.

### **Preventing Contact**

The best precautions against contact with poison ivy, oak and sumac are to:

- Learn to identify the plants;
- Dress properly when outside by wearing long sleeves and pants to cover exposed skin;
- Cover your hands when gardening or handling foliage by wearing thick gloves;
- Avoid burning plants that even resemble these poisonous plants, as inhaling the burning oil and ash can produce severe reactions, even death; and
- Wash everything thoroughly after being outside, including tools, clothes, shoes and pets. Zanafel can be used on items and pets to effectively remove urushiol oil.

Zanafel Poison Ivy Wash is applied directly to the affected areas and typically takes only one application. It is available at retail and independent pharmacies. For more information or to locate a local pharmacy that carries it, visit [www.zanafel.com](http://www.zanafel.com) or call 1-800-401-4002.