

Poison Oak

Sometimes a severe case of poison oak will respond to oral steroids. This requires a long taper, to keep from getting a "rebound" effect with worse symptoms than before.

Using prednisone 5mg tablets,

Week 1, 6 tabs every morning (30mg total daily)

Week 2, 4 tabs every morning (20mg total daily)

Week 3, 2 tabs every morning (10mg total daily)

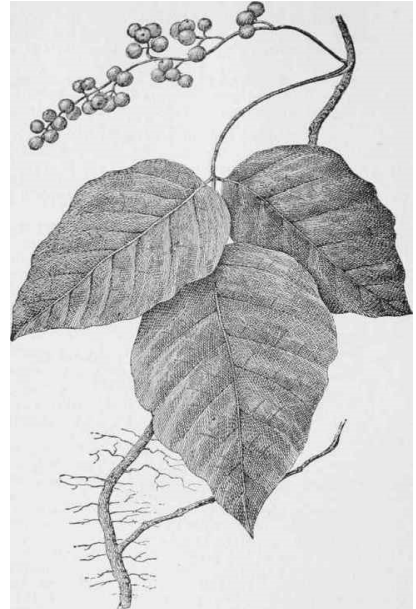
Week 4, 1 tab every morning (5mg total daily)

Week 5, 1/2 tab every morning (2.5mg total daily)

Then stop when gone.

Total rx: 95 tablets.

- Mark your calendar with appropriate dosages on specific dates to avoid confusion.
- Prednisone can affect your appetite and mood. Forewarned is forearmed! Plan to behave responsibly.
- Please call if you have any concerns while taking this medication.



To the above, you can add the following medicines:

1. Hydrocortisone acetate 1% or triamcinolone 0.1% cream, as needed. These are anti-inflammatory, and tone down the immune system overreaction. Using a cream does not usually have any systemic (full-body) effects. Steroid creams thin the skin and may cause light sensitivity.

Apply a thin layer to affected areas twice a day. More often is not better, and increases the risk of side effects to the skin.

Only apply very tiny amounts on the thin skin near the eyes.

Avoid UV light (sun, tanning bed, lightbox) while using, to avoid sunburn.

2. Diphenhydramine/Benadryl pills, 50 mg up to 4 times a day. You can back down to 25 mg if it is working well. Diphenhydramine is an over-the-counter antihistamine that may or may not help.

3. Calamine or other zinc-oxide lotion or cream. This is a mild antiseptic and astringent that can help with itching and swelling.

Poison oak can take a long time to clear up. It is not contagious!

Keep your nails short, your clothes clean, and your hands clean, to prevent any bacterial infection of the rash.

Due to the swelling and blistering, I recommend that you increase your fluid intake temporarily and take approx 3 liters per day total fluids until it resolves. (Imagine a 2-liter pepsi bottle full of water; drink a total of one-and-a-half of these daily, enough to keep your urine colorless.)