

TREATMENT OF RHUS POISONING.

O. P. TERRY.

It seems there are almost as many "cures" for rhus poisoning as there are people susceptible to it. These cures vary from an ounce dose of epsom salt (taken internally, of course) to applications of Tr. Iodine and solutions of sugar of lead externally.

Those who know themselves to be susceptible to the poison should investigate the possibility of immunizing themselves by taking Tr. rhus toxicodendron. This paper outlines a successful method of treating the dermatitis after it has appeared. No claim of originality is made in the selection of the drugs used, but, it is believed, something new will be found in the manner of their application.

The following paragraphs give in order the steps in the treatment and if begun within a few hours after exposure to the poison will prevent the inflammation.

(1) Thoroughly wash the exposed skin with a heavy lather of laundry (strongly alkaline) soap in warm water, using a soft brush.

(2) Immediately mop off the skin with cotton saturated with ethyl alcohol (denatured with phenol is preferable).

(3) Then apply Tr. grindelia, using a pledget of cotton or soft cloth. Continue the application of this at four-hour intervals until all itching has ceased or until practically all swelling has disappeared. The skin now will feel dry and drawn. (The length of time required for this part of the treatment will vary from two to five days, depending upon the susceptibility of the patient to the poison and also upon the length of time elapsing between exposure and the beginning of the treatment. An average is about three days.)

(4) For the purpose of restoring the surface of the skin to a normal condition, now may be applied a mixture of 1/3 ounce each of ethyl alcohol, glycerine, and rose water, to which is added ten grains of phenol. This softens and aids in the exfoliation of the dead epidermis.

Purdue University.

