



Some of the twigs your friend wants to start his fire with are poison ivy rootlets. He has plant resin on his hands and perhaps on his clothing. The resin is oily and contains urushiol, the chemical responsible for poison ivy allergies in roughly 50% of the population. If the rootlets are burned the urushiol escapes in the smoke and can cause a life-threatening allergic reaction in sensitized people. Stop Dave from lighting the fire and have him thoroughly wash his hands with soap and cold water and, if possible, change his clothing. Check for known allergies to poison ivy in your group.