

Browntail Moth Caterpillars

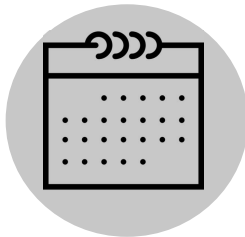
Fact Sheet



Browntail moth caterpillars have tiny poisonous hairs that can cause skin reactions similar to poison ivy and other more severe reactions.

The caterpillars may reach 1.5 inches in length and are brown with a broken white stripe on each side and two red/orange spots on the hind end.

Image from Maine Forest Service

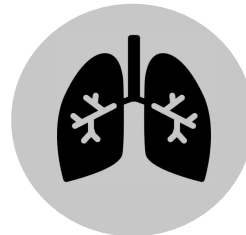


The caterpillars are active mid-April until early October. The hairs remain toxic for up to three years.

Signs and Symptoms



Skin Rash



Breathing and Other Respiratory Issues

Direct contact with hairs can cause a localized skin rash that may last a few hours to several days. The rash may be red, bumpy, and itchy. Certain people may have a more severe form of the rash that can last for a few weeks. In some cases, the hairs can be inhaled and can cause respiratory problems. The rash does not spread from one person to another.



There is no specific treatment for browntail moth rash. Home remedies can help with symptoms. This can include a cool bath with baking soda, hydrocortisone cream, and calamine lotion. If you are having trouble breathing, swallowing, or swelling of your mouth, tongue, or throat, call 9-1-1.

Prevention



Take a cool shower and change clothes after activity in areas with browntail moths to wash off any hairs.



Wear a mask, goggles, and coveralls when doing any activity that can stir up browntail moth hairs, like raking leaves.



Dry laundry inside during June and July to prevent browntail moth hairs from getting on clothing.



Perform yard work and clipping on wet days so browntail moth hairs do not get stirred up.

Control



Clip browntail moth webs in the winter and very early spring



Hose down structures with caterpillars and vacuum up with a HEPA filter vacuum



Hire a licensed arborist/pesticide applicator

After clipping webs, destroy them by soaking in soapy water. Hire someone to treat affected trees before the end of May to prevent development of toxic hairs. Pesticide use within 250 feet of marine waters is restricted.

For More Information, Visit:



1. www.maine.gov/dhhs/browntailmoth (Including frequently asked questions)

2. www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm (Includes browntail moth risk map)

You can also contact 211 Maine by dialing 211, texting your zip code to 898-211, or emailing info@211maine.org for more information.