

Raynaud's Phenomena

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What is Raynauds Phenomenon?

This is a condition in which the blood supply to the extremities, usually the fingers and toes but sometimes also the ears, nose and nipples is interrupted.

The stimulus is usually a change in temperature or stress.

During an attack they first become white and dead-looking, they may then turn blue and finally bright red.

There may be considerable pain, numbness or tingling.

Raynaud's can be classed as a primary condition; this means it occurs spontaneously without any underlying condition being present.

It can be hereditary in which case it is fairly mild.

Women are affected nine times more than men.

Secondary Raynaud's is less common and is associated with underlying diseases such as Scleroderma (systemic sclerosis), Sjogrens syndrome and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Notes:

The Advice Line Service: 01744 646454

We have an answer phone service in the Rheumatology Department if you require any advice or need to change your therapy appointment.

Remember to speak slowly and clearly state the name of the person who message is for.

Leave your name, hospital number and contact number.

When will we call you back?

If you call the Advice Line Monday - Friday we will attempt to call you back on 2 occasions within 2 working days.

The advice line is not open at weekends or bank holidays and is not for medical emergencies.

Treatment

Raynaud's does not always require medication.

In many patients with a mild condition, wearing warm clothing, protecting themselves from the cold and avoiding a change in temperature will obviously help.

In severe cases, drug therapy is indicated and your consultant will discuss these with you.

The treatments available provide symptomatic relief rather than cure.

Surgery has shown to have limited results so is no longer a popular option, however in severe cases it may be suggested.

How can you help yourself

Stop smoking, smoking is known to provoke attacks and it has been proved that smoking can reduce the temperature of extremities (hands, feet, etc.) by one degree over a 20-minute period.

Avoid stressful situations, use relaxation techniques.

Avoid excessive intake of alcohol as this can worsen your condition.

Keep warm, try and maintain a constant body temperature.

How you can help yourself continued:

This can be achieved by:

- Avoiding standing still for long periods in the cold or draughty areas and keep moving to maintain body warmth
- A daily routine of exercise helps increase the blood supply to the tissues
- Have a good diet, try small regular meals to maintain your energy heat levels, at least one hot meal a day
- Consider wearing several thin layers of clothing or thermal underwear
- Wear thick / thermal gloves and socks (portable hand warmers are available from outdoor shops), you may be offered silver gloves and/or socks if your symptoms are extreme
- Always use gloves when getting items out of the fridge or freezer
- Thick-soled shoes are advised, make sure the shoes are not too tight causing restricted circulation; consider water-resistant footwear for wet weather
- Before going to bed have a warm drink, wear warm night-clothes, take the chill off the bed by using a heated blanket or covered hot water bottle

- If hands or feet get cold it is important you warm them up gradually.
- **Children** - you may need permission from their school for them to stay inside cold days; however this should not be an excuse to avoid exercise
- Health and Safety precautions should be taken for Science/Cooking lessons - cold numb hands could get burned
- Take care when showering/bathing – check the water temperature.