



RAYNAUD'S

ABOUT

Raynaud's is a condition that has an effect on the body's blood vessels when exposed to cold or when under stress. It is also sometimes called Raynaud's Disease or Phenomenon. This condition often affects the fingers and toes and happens when the arteries narrow or constrict which reduces blood supply to the body's tissues – sometimes referred to as a Raynaud's "attack". There are two main types of Raynaud's – primary and secondary.

Primary Raynaud's is more common and the symptoms are usually not as severe. There is no known cause for this type of Raynaud's. Secondary Raynaud's is the result of another condition or disease affecting the body. It is usually more severe but less common.

For most people, Raynaud's does not cause permanent damage or disability and can be managed with some simple lifestyle changes/adaptations.

SOME RISK FACTORS INCLUDE:

- Gender – more common in women than men
- Age – 15-30 years is common for symptoms of Primary Raynaud's; 40+years is more likely for secondary Raynaud's
- Living in a colder climate or more frequent exposure to cold environments – e.g. working in cold storage areas or even something simple like taking an item out of your freezer can trigger symptoms
- Associated conditions – Lupus, scleroderma and Atherosclerosis (conditions that affect the arteries)
- Repetitive hand tasks – use of tools that vibrate; heavy, repetitive hand actions that cause trauma to the soft tissue; typing; playing instruments such as piano
- Use of certain medications that have an effect on the blood vessels
- Smoking
- Carpal tunnel symptoms – hand can be more susceptible to cold temperatures
- Injury – fracture, surgery, cuts, sores

SYMPTOMS

- Fingers/toes that are very cold (can also affect nose, lips and ears)
- Skin changing colour in response to cold/stress – this is a result of reduced blood flow to the tissue. Skin will often turn white first with a lack of blood supply, then blue/purple and numbness, then red once the skin starts to warm up and blood supply returns to normal
- Pins and needles/altered sensation when cold areas are warming up

HOW HAND THERAPY CAN HELP

Therapists can help by providing strategies and aids that will help to manage the symptoms. They are a great source of information in helping you to better understand your condition, learn to identify triggers, and discuss activity and equipment modifications.

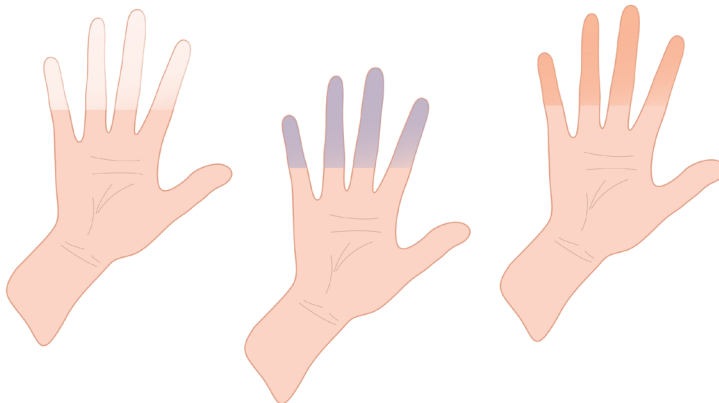
SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGING RAYNAUD'S INCLUDE:

- Keep warm in cold areas. Wear appropriate clothing – gloves, jackets with pockets, warm socks and shoes and try to keep dry
- Learn how to manage stressful situations – meditation, mindfulness, music, massage
- Try to limit caffeine and alcohol as they have an effect on the blood vessels
- Try to limit/quit smoking
- Try to maintain a healthy heart – regular exercise and healthy eating will help to ensure your blood vessels are healthy as well
- Take care of your hands and feet – take note of cuts, bruises, avoid tight rings, watches and clothing with tight cuffs
- Try to keep your work area warm where possible or ensure appropriate warm clothing is available – e.g. gloves for freezer work; turn car heater on a few minutes before getting in to drive
- Use of thermal gloves/heating pads
- Consider temperature of any air conditioning/cooling in your home
- Consider using insulated cups and containers for food and drink
- Regular moisturiser to protect skin integrity

It is important to see your doctor and alert your therapist if you notice any sores or infections of affected areas. Check your skin regularly and make note of any changes. Severely reduced circulation can lead to chronic or permanent tissue damage (ulcers, gangrene) and may in extreme cases require surgery and possibly amputation.

RAYNAUD'S PHENOMENON

Fingers become white due to lack of blood flow, then blue as vessels dilate to keep blood in tissues. Finally red as blood flow returns.



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ART AND SCIENCE OF
REHABILITATION FOR THE UPPER
LIMB - SHOULDER TO HAND*

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