

## What is Raynaud's Disease?

This disease affects more women than men and usually occurs in colder climates. Raynaud's affect the peripheral extremities, usually the toes, fingers, ears or nose. Coolness, tingling or numbness can be triggered by cold temperature changes or stress. Raynaud's are affected small vessels that spasm in the circulatory system. A factor of Raynaud's may be that it is an inherited disorder.

When there is pain with Raynaud's it is due to the blood vessels experiencing spasms therefore limiting the flow of blood to the vessels. If the condition persists the vessels can become scarred and thicken causing discoloration to the tissue of white to a dark blue in color.

There are two different forms of Raynaud's. Primary Raynaud's will have no underlying disease and is the most common form. Where secondary Raynaud's is also known as Raynaud's phenomenon and is marked by an underlying disease, such as:

Scleroderma- This is hardening or scarring of the skin.

Rheumatoid arthritis –Which is an inflammatory condition that causes pain and stiffness in joints.

Lupus – Is an autoimmune disease that affects skin, joints, organs or blood vessels.

Sjogren's syndrome – Is an autoimmune disorder that can culminate with scleroderma, rheumatoid arthritis or lupus.

Atherosclerosis

Medication

Environmental

The signs and symptoms are not like frostbite, but depend on the frequency, duration and severity suffered. One might experience cold fingers, toes, ears or nose. Raynaud's can affect different joints at different times with stinging, tingling, numbness or swelling being noted.

Raynaud's can be diagnosed by a thorough medical history and blood work. Two blood tests that are used are the antinuclear antibodies test and also the erythrocyte sedimentation rate test.

It is important to avoid over the counter cold medications, beta blockers and birth control pills as these can have an adverse effect on Raynaud's. Medications that might be prescribed are :

Calcium channel blockers – These relax and open up blood vessels.

Alpha blockers – These control the norepinephrine, a hormone that restricts blood vessels.

Vasodilators relaxes blood vessels

Surgeries or procedures that might be implemented are: nerve surgery, amputation or chemical injections to the infected area.

Home remedies that might be suggested are:

Exercise

Don't smoke

Avoid caffeine

Avoid triggers

Control stress

Make a list of what to tell the Dr before your visit:

List your signs and symptoms along with triggers that cause the vasospasms.

Keep list of questions to ask the Dr that are of concern to you.

Give a good medical history of medical conditions of which you have already been diagnosed.

Take a list of your medications.

If you have any questions or comments, e Mail me at [gheffelmire@dearborncounty.in.gov](mailto:gheffelmire@dearborncounty.in.gov)