

Cold Cuts

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Raynaud's Phenomenon & Digital Ulcers

By:

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In 1862, Maurice Raynaud described a three-stage series of color changes of the fingers and toes occurring in response to environmental cold and emotional stress. Although not all persons with Raynaud's phenomenon have all three color changes; the classic sequence is one of blanching or whitening followed by a dusky blue-purple phase and, in some individuals, a third phase of exaggerated redness as blood flow returns to the fingers. Associated symptoms include pain, numbness and burning.

Blood flow to the fingers and toes is ordinarily around 40-50 fold that required for nutrition and oxygen supply. It is ordinary to reduce blood flow to the hands when in cold environments and to increase hand blood flow when warm. In this way, the body can carefully regulate the core body temperature for optimum organ function. Due to the reduction of blood flow in the extremities of individuals with Raynaud's phenomenon, they are unusually sensitive to even minor temperature changes and have difficulties with simple tasks like holding iced drinks or reaching into a freezer.

Raynaud himself recognized that the phenomenon could occur as an isolated clinical problem in persons who were otherwise healthy but that it was also a sign of systemic illness. Modern physicians view Raynaud's phenomenon in much the same way. An estimated 10% or more of the healthy population including both men and women experi-

ence Raynaud's phenomenon. In these persons said to have primary Raynaud's phenomenon, the blood vessels are structurally normal but seem to have a heightened response to environmental stress. In this "haystack" of a very common complaint lies the "needle" of secondary Raynaud's phenomenon. Secondary Raynaud's occurs when the blood vessels have been damaged or narrowed. In this instance, normal levels of blood vessel closure in response to cold superimposed on the narrowing lead to blockage of blood flow to the finger tips.



"We go by the simple rule that if the patient can't tell if a therapy is working then it probably isn't and something different should be attempted . "

Individual episodes of Raynaud's phenomenon do not worsen the disease. Treatment of Raynaud's phenomenon has the goals of 1) maximizing patient function 2) reducing symptoms and 3) preventing digital ulcers. Inadequate blood flow is the primary basis for the formation of ulcers, although poor health of local skin tissue is also contributory. A patient who develops finger tip ulcers is

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New Medical Advisory Board



By Lynn Wunderman
Chairman

We're pleased to introduce the newly-appointed Medical Advisory Board (MAB) for the Raynaud's Association. The Board, comprised of prominent physicians in the field of rheumatology, will provide a valuable resource to the Association in serving the information needs of our members, while helping us secure increased credibility among a broader audience in the population as well as the medical community.

Daniel E. Furst, M.D.
UCLA Med School-Rheumatology Division

Thomas Lehman, M.D.
Cornell University
Hospital for Special Surgery

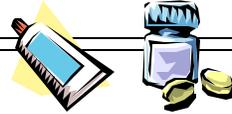
Hal J. Mitnick, M.D.
NYU Medical Center

Fredrick Wigley, M.D.
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Board functions include:

- Reviewing and contributing to published materials.
- Helping to keep us up-to-date on medical research and treatments.
- Assist us in addressing more challenging health questions posed by members through our web site and toll-free number.
- Act as a resource with the media as we seek increased awareness of Raynaud's with the general public.

Several members have already benefited from professional referrals and medical advice secured through our MAB members. Please join us in giving the doctors a warm welcome!



Member Tips

Members have sent us success stories they'd like us to share with fellow frosties:

- **Dry-Sol Liquid for Sweaty Feet** - James' feet suffer a great deal. The fact that they also sweat makes him feel colder even with toe warmers. So, he got a prescription antiperspirant for underarms and uses it twice a week on his toes (MD says it's OK): Dry-Sol liquid in Dab-O-Matic bottle: Aluminum Chloride (Hexahydrate) 20 % in 60cc bottle; NDC #593662710-6. Less sweat = less cold!
- **Vitamin B6** - Jim has a friend who is a nutritionist and has recommended high doses of Vitamin B6 to help alleviate his attacks. Jim claims it has almost eliminated his symptoms. (*Editor's note: Be sure to make your doctor aware if you are taking or plan to use any such supplements, as they may interact with other medications or have negative side effects.*)
- **Norvasc** - Joyce wrote to tell us that she's had great success with Norvasc. She's gone from constantly

purple hands and feet to having only an occasional problem when she's extremely cold. She hopes other members with have the same success! (*Editor's note: Norvasc is a calcium channel blocker — the family of medications proven to clinically help reduce the severity and frequency of attacks for patients with severe Raynaud's.*)

- **Old-Fashioned Wristers** - To help hands stay warm in chilly offices but still have fingers free to type, etc., Kimberley started knitting "wristers" for herself, and found other folks asking for them. There's not room here for the full instructions, but Kimberley would be happy to e-mail them to fellow frosties. Write to her at kshaw@wellesley.edu. Here's a photo of the wristers:



Q&A

Following is an answer contributed by **Dr. Thomas Lehman** of our Medical Advisory Board to a question asked recently on our web site:

Q: My daughter has Raynaud's and I was wondering if there are certain over-the-counter medications she should avoid. Could you tell me what they might be?

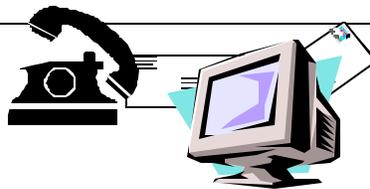
A: Since the final step in Raynaud's is caused by a spasm of the blood vessels, the simple answer is to avoid anything that stimulates the vascular system. These are mostly cold remedies and "diet pills." The easiest way to screen legitimate over-the-counter medications is by reading the label. As a general rule, anything that says it should be avoided by people with high blood pressure or glaucoma should be avoided by people with Raynaud's. There is no direct relationship between glaucoma and Raynaud's, but many of the drugs that cause certain types of glaucoma also cause narrowing of blood vessels and may aggravate a sufferer's Raynaud's condition.

It is important to note that while over-the-counter drugs which should be avoided by people with high blood pressure should also be avoided by Raynaud's sufferers, some prescription drugs which treat high blood pressure may be used to effectively treat Raynaud's (such as calcium channel blockers).

Please keep in mind that the above guidelines are generalized, and won't be 100% accurate for every OTC medication. For this reason, please consult your daughter's physician if you have doubts or questions regarding a specific drug she's taking.

Please submit your questions to: lynn@raynauds.org, or use the contact form on our web site: www.raynauds.org.

Member Connections



The following members have asked for experiences, interest or contact from fellow frosties:

- **Sympathetic Ear** - Josephine would like to correspond with fellow sufferers. If you're looking for someone to talk with about your Raynaud's, please e-mail her directly at jorta@wrsinvest.com.
- **Athletes with Raynaud's** - Angela in Boise, Idaho would like to connect with other athletes who have Raynaud's' - particularly runners. She can be reached at engrwamission@yahoo.com.

Anyone wishing to connect with other Raynaud's members, ask questions or share success stories, send your requests to: Cold Cuts, Raynaud's Association, Inc., 94 Mercer Avenue, Hartsdale, NY 10530, or e-mail lynn@raynauds.org.

Hot Products for Cold Sufferers



We're happy to introduce the following problem-solvers to fellow frosties.

☀ **Warm Skin** - This cream is different from others we've featured, in that it doesn't offer immediate warmth or relief. Instead, it's to be used for protection *before going outdoors*. The product actually helps insulate your skin from the cold. Unlike petroleum-based creams, Warm Skin is an emulsion. That means it has a low water content and fatty acids high enough to form a protective barrier for the skin. If that wasn't enough, ingredients include aloe and glycerin to soften and smooth chapped, callused skin. Users include players for the NFL, the U.S. Postal Service, and is endorsed by Ann Bancroft, the first woman to the North Pole and leader of the American Women's Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1993. It's sold in a 2.5 oz. tube for \$9.95 and 16 oz. jar for \$16.95 (including shipping). These prices are direct from the distributor (save vs. standard retail rates). Call 203-438-0640, or visit www.warmskin.net.

☀ **Polartec Fingerless Gloves** - I'm always searching for the ultimate fingerless gloves to offer that perfect balance between dexterity and warmth. I found some great ones at REI this winter. They're made from Polartec, so they're fleecy comfy and wind-resistant. Available at REI at www.rei.com for \$32.00, or call 800-426-4840. Come in black, unisex sizes XS-XL, #702-174. Please provide code #DNHL106D.

☀ **Silk Toe Sock** - Funny to look at, but oh so warm...These are socks with toes, literally! Made of silk, with a touch of spandex for comfort, and machine washable. Come in solids (cream, navy, red and black) - #913, or striped "rainbow" version (#2301) from the WinterSilks Catalog. Solids are \$10.95; stripes start at \$12.95/pair. Call 800-648-7455 or visit www.wintersilks.com Use source code #W313208.

☀ **OxyPro Chi Machine** - Promises to increase blood circulation and energy flow. Machine resembles a comfortable ankle rest with a hand controller to adjust the speed of the relaxing elliptical motion. Don't know how well it works for Raynaud's symptoms, but it looks sure to relax muscle tension! Order item #95-1007 from the Gaiam Catalog. Call 800-254-8464, or visit www.gaiam.com Price is \$168. Machine weighs 13 pounds. Please use key code # L16P95L.

☀ **Ugg Muffs** - I just received a pre-season notice from Neiman Marcus that these hot little numbers are available for pre-order (delivery the end of September). We've mentioned Ugg's sheepskin boots in earlier newsletters - they are a Raynaud's sufferer's best friend for the feet! Now they've extended the toasty warmth to the hands with these cute little muff bags that do double duty: First, the cozy muff shapes make great hand warmers. Second, they're functional handbags, at least for the bare necessities, like a cell phone, keys and some cash. Come in two styles: **F l u f f M u f f B a g** (#NMOS4_V2639 @ \$175.00: Pink or Cream), and the Sun-

dance Muff Bag (#NMOS4_V2634 in Pink or #NMOS4_V2655 in Black, both @ \$130.00). Get'em while they're hot, because I expect them to roll off the shelves just like last year's boots! Order today at www.neimanmarcus.com.

☀ **Flat Panel Space Heater** - This space heater is only 5" thick, but dispenses heat twice as fast and more evenly than conventional space heaters. But wait, there's more! It's also safer than most heaters, as it's designed to prevent contact burns, so you won't get fried if you accidentally touch the grill. And, it's whisper quiet. This heater sounds too good to be true! Measures 31"x5"x26" and weighs 16 pounds. Order #TE557 for \$129.95 from the Gadget Alert Catalog by calling 800-429-0039, or go to www.gadgetalert.com. Please provide source code #14ER10B. (If ordering from the web, add a "W": #W14ER10B.)

Send your hot product alerts to lynn@raynauds.org.

DISCLAIMER: The Raynaud's Association does not endorse the drugs, treatments or products reported in this newsletter. Each patient's needs and experiences may vary. Member tips and product reviews are not clinically-based reports. So please review all treatment options with your doctor and use caution in exploring new products.



The Lockhorns © 2004; reprinted courtesy of Bunny Hoest and King Features.



Raynaud's Phenomenon and Digital Ulcers

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well advised to treat their circulation and skin integrity with great care – much the way a diabetic would manage foot care.

If an ulcer occurs, infection and further tissue damage becomes the primary treatment agenda. Topical antibiotic creams or systemic antibiotics are necessary, as well as specific guidance as to wound dressings. Your health care provider should be informed if the ulcer has redness around its margins; pain is increasing; there is drainage of pus; or the ulcer appears to be deepening or increasing in size.

The Table summarizes current options for treatment. Not all patients need medication. Keeping the central body warm with layered clothing; wearing hats to minimize heat loss through the scalp; careful planning of daily activities to avoid cold exposure are three simple recommendations that benefit all. In some ways, Raynaud's severity is under the control of the patient. For example, if a medication is working, that individual may decide to risk more cold weather activities and thus risk more actual Raynaud's attacks. Since quality of life is improved with medication, they are considered beneficial.

Not all patients respond to all or even any of the current recommended treatments. This does not mean that treatments shouldn't be tried. We go by the simple rule that if the patient can't tell if a therapy is working then it probably isn't and something different should be attempted. None of the therapies should be expected to eliminate all attacks. Success can be defined as reduced number or severity of attacks, increased tolerance of cold, and/or reduction in the occurrence of digital ulcerations. Some patients do well by treating their Raynaud's phenomenon in cold weather only.

Reprinted with chart updates by permission of the Juvenile Scleroderma Network, Inc., *For Kids' Sake* newsletter, Winter 2003.

Treatment Options for Raynaud's Phenomenon

General	Plan activities to avoid cold exposure Dress central body in layers Wear hats Wear gloves and warm footwear Avoid smoking and passive smoking Keep skin soft & pliable with moisturizing creams
Blood Vessel Relaxants	Calcium channel blockers: Nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia & others) Isradipine (DynaCirc) Felodipine (Plendil) Amlodipine (Norvasc) Others
Block Angiotensin Effects	Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (Losartan) Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (Enalapril, Captopril, others)
Adrenergic Blockers	Prazosin (Minipress) Doxazosin (Cardura)
Phosphodiesterase Inhibitors	Pentoxifylline (Trental) Cilostazol (Pletal)
Blood Thinners	Low Dose Aspirin (81 mg daily)
New Therapy	PDE-5 Inhibitors (Viagra and others) Endothelin Antagonists (bosentan) Prostacyclins (Flolan, Remodulin, Iloprost) L-Arginine Supplements

* *Editor's note: These agents are not FDA approved; some have more evidence than others that they work for Raynaud's Phenomenon.*



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