
Cold Cuts

Volume 1 Issue 2

Published by The Raynaud's & Cold Sufferers Network

July 1994

Dr. Ronald L. Hoffman Speaks on Natural Therapies for Raynaud's Sufferers

On June 22, Dr. Ronald L. Hoffman, noted host of WOR radio talk show *Health Talk*, addressed the group on using natural therapies for helping Raynaud's sufferers gain some degree of control over the condition.

Dr. Hoffman reviewed three approaches to explaining the causative mechanisms underlying Raynaud's. The first, rooted in **Traditional Chinese Medicine**, involves a pattern of low energy caused by a *deficiency of male "Yang" energy — responsible for warmth and heat*.

The Chinese further differentiate Cold Syn (cold sensitivity) into two groups: Exterior Cold Syn and Interior Cold Syn, according to its location.

- **Exterior Cold Syn** — is due to the invasion of pathogenic cold onto the body surface, thereby obstructing the defensive Yang. This condition is manifested in a serious aversion to coldness.
- **Interior Cold Syn** — is caused by an attack on the internal organs by pathogenic cold or by loss of warmth due to insufficient Yang, and typically marked by intolerance of cold, accompanied by cold limbs.

Therapeutic treatment for Exterior Cold Syn involves relieving the condition with warm, pungent herbs which ventilate the lungs and expel the cold, such as schizonepeta, ledebeuriella root, and platycodon root, along with acupuncture.

The therapy for treating Interior Cold Syn is designed to warm the interior organs by supplementing and nourishing the Yin through warming herbs, like ginseng and ginger, which



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work to “stoke the internal fires”.

Dr. Hoffman's second explanation for the condition involves the **Autoimmune System**, manifested in the body mistakenly fighting off itself in the form of collagen vascular diseases, such as Scleroderma, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Lupus. The key issue to this approach is to explain the underlying cause, which is still yet to be proven, but there are a couple of theories:

- **Self-Imposed Environmental Elements which excite the immune**

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system — such as allergies to certain foods, exposure to irritating chemicals in the home, or foreign bodies in our bodies (e.g., hip replacements, silicone or even fillings). All can act as triggers which challenge the immune system.

- **The Evolving Nature of Our Diet** — since the 1920's and '30's, and the rationing associated with WWI, margarine and synthetic fats have become a regular part of our diet. Our immune system is set up based on cells talking to one another. Cell membranes are made up of fats. Synthetic fats (found in margarine and cookies) gum up the works and can cause problems.

For the devoted cookie-lover, however, take heart, it's never too late to change the composition of our cells. “Even people with serious medical conditions can successfully get an oil change,” says Dr. Hoffman. Natural ways to harmonize and put down the brakes on an overactive immune system include:

- **Essential Fatty Acids, such as Fish Oil** — found in cold water fish, such as salmon, herring and mackerel. Such polyunsaturated fats tend to stay liquid in cold temperatures. This great viscosity tends to promote circulation by thinning the blood and reducing clots.
- **Flaxseed Oil** — an alternative found in vegetables
- **Primrose and Borage Oils** — GLA oils especially good for Scleroderma
- **Vitamin E** — thins the blood
- **Magnesium** — a cheap, natural calcium channel blocker which works to open the blood vessels, much in the same way as prescription

Dr. Hoffman Addresses Group (continued)

medications, like Procardia and Verapamil.

- **Glandular Therapy** — taking either the form of Endocrine Therapy for women, replacing low levels of testosterone or DHEA, which has been associated at low levels in women with AIDS, or Thyroid Treatment, which can help promote warmth and increase a generally low body temperature.

The third and final explanation for Raynaud's is a behavioral view: the **Autonomic Nervous System** is out of control. If you remember back to high school health classes (whoa, a long time ago...), this is the involuntary nervous system which controls the heart, blood flow and other bodily functions automatically; we never have to think about them to make them happen.

In the case of a Raynaud's sufferer, however, when exposed to the cold, the blood vessels shut down in the

extremities in order to keep the heart and trunk warm. The result is cold hands and, possibly, feet, nose and ears. Those of us with Raynaud's may therefore benefit from reconditioning. **Biofeedback**, for example, is one method that can sometimes prove successful in "retraining" the body to respond differently when exposed to cold temperatures.

Dr. Hoffman concluded the session by explaining that holistic practitioners are considered "outliers" to date in the medical profession. Your doctor, when approached on the subject, may respond with one of three familiar reactions:

- 1 Go ballistic, viewing such measures as an end run on the medical community,
- 2 Consider such therapies ineffective, but harmless, so try it with nothing to lose, or
- 3 Become a believer and alter his/her practice to incorporate holistic

Dr. Hoffman Draws Record Attendance

Thank you all for your support in helping to make Dr. Hoffman's visit a success. We promised him an audience of 40 people and we delivered! (Actually, I lost count after about 38...)

This was truly a group effort in helping us identify a speaker, distribute flyers, find a meeting place, and spread the word among family and friends. Special thanks go to the Scleroderma Federation of the Tri-State Area for sending our flyers to their local membership. It gave us a real boost.

In total, we gained over a dozen new members as a result of the promotion from this meeting, including Dr. Hoffman's on-air announcements.

Hope you all have a warm and wonderful summer. See you next Fall!

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