



Image courtesy of sr.uk.co.uk

# Helping Hands

Understanding Raynaud's Syndrome could mean you offer a much needed remedy and support to sufferers through your hand & footcare services

## ALEX FOX REPORTS

### What is Raynaud's Syndrome?

Named after French physician, Maurice Raynaud, who first recognised the condition in 1862, this phenomenon causes an interruption of blood flow to all extremities including the hands, fingers, toes, nose, ears, lips, tongue and nipples, when a spasm occurs in the blood vessels of these areas.

Spasms triggered by exposure to cold temperatures or emotional stress typically cause these areas to turn white, then blue, then bright red during the course of an attack, as these areas are over-sensitive to even the slightest changes in temperature. The symptoms can be coupled with swelling, tingling, numbness or painful stinging or throbbing and in severe cases, the areas may develop ulcers and manifest infections, which can lead to gangrene.

A Raynaud's attack can be a very uncomfortable and possibly painful process. It can also make everyday tasks, like buttoning a jacket or unzipping a purse, very difficult. It can occur both as a manageable primary disease or secondary issue, where it's related to another disease, usually autoimmune, such as scleroderma, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

Raynaud's Syndrome can occur at any age and be hereditary, in which case it tends to be mild. It is quite rare in children but

becomes more common in teenagers and occurs most frequently in women. It's more common in cold climates and, since there's little evidence to support the success of alternative medicine, it is advised to stop smoking, drinking and other stimulants and to avoid the cold wherever possible.

### Top tips

Sufferers are encouraged to purchase specialist heated gloves and socks as well as looking for creams and lotions that house ingredients such as magnesium (which dilates blood vessels and helps the body increase its nitric oxide) and l'arginine (an amino acid that works well as a vasodilator to help blood flow and circulate). In addition, products with lanolin, botanicals, neem oil, coconut oil and vitamins A and E can help retain moisture. Creams created for use on diabetic sufferers will work well for those with Raynaud's as the feet can get dangerously dry.

Creams chosen should be oil-based ointments and emollients for long-term protection. Emollients should be used in the bath, nails should be trimmed and filed, aqueous creams used instead of soap and gloves must be worn when washing up.

For more information, visit **Scleroderma & Raynaud's UK** [www.sruk.co.uk](http://www.sruk.co.uk)

**FACT FILE**  
It is estimated that up to 10million people in the UK are affected by Raynaud's Syndrome and it occurs most frequently in women.

## SPECIAL COSMETIC CARE

By Vitaly Solomonoff



Raynaud's Syndrome is a result of vasospasms and reduced circulation in distal parts of the hands and feet, i.e. fingers and toes. Sometimes, during attacks, earlobes and the tip of the nose can be also affected.

Three of the triggers of attacks that occur most frequently are the cause of extreme sudden vasoconstriction that lasts from several minutes to several hours. These triggers are low temperatures, vibrations and emotional stress.

The condition is often accompanied by migraines, some forms of arthritis and collagen diseases. The frequent or acute and long attacks affect the normal physiology of the skin and its appendages such as nails, sweat glands and the sensitive epidermal nerves that lead either to numbness or pain.

Proper cosmetic care is highly recommended and can be seen as additional and effective treatment help alongside the basic prescribed medications. The principles of the special skin and nailcare are predicted by the symptoms and the fact that blood vessels are highly prone to constriction and always ready to respond with acute spasms. Some of the principles are very similar to the specific care of diabetic foot syndrome due to poor circulation in the extremities, which both conditions share.

### The common approaches include the following:

- Avoid all types of vibration during the procedure. Even barely perceptible vibration produced by the best modern e-files can cause an attack in people suffering with the syndrome. The same is applied to vibrating equipment such as foot baths with a mode for vibrating foot massage and bubbles.
- Where possible, do not use cold implements or cold products. Use warm towels and warm (not hot) water. To warm products, rub them between your palms before application.
- Light massage with warm oil or massaging cream can be used effectively, but paradoxically, massage can sometimes cause an attack. So, ask your client about their individual specific response to massage, and if this is an issue, avoid even light massage.
- No products with highly active 'cosmeceuticals' should be used and all the potential irritants and high concentrations of essential oils should be avoided, including oils with cooling effects such as mint essential oil, birch essential oil or wintergreen. However, some essential ingredients like Eugenol, cinnamon extracts and oils are recommended and help to reduce risks of attacks. Insignificant concentrations of camphor are recommended while a high concentration of this active ingredient can be a trigger as well.

### The rule of thumb: warming services

- Hot paraffin is an excellent choice for those with Raynaud's Syndrome. However, make sure to keep skin warm right after removing the paraffin. Sharp temperature drops after intensive warming effects can become a trigger too, especially when your client experiences hyperhydrosis – a frequent companion to Raynaud's Syndrome.
- Using textile or terry mittens after a paraffin treatment helps to avoid temperature contrasts and keep the skin dry. Paraffin activates many physiological processes in the skin, including sweat production. Applying some professional antiperspirant powder or cream after the procedure is also an option.
- The best creams to apply after paraffin treatments are those based with water-in-oil type emulsions. They lock water into the outer skin layers and prevent quick water evaporation out of the skin's surface and help maintain the warming effect

longer than regular oil-in-water emulsions. Evaporation cools the skin. If your client suffers from extreme dry skin conditions, moisturising lotions with ingredients with lactic acid and its salts, urea and some other moisturising ingredients will ensure deep moisturisation and would be a sensible choice after paraffin removal.

- 'The Hot sand manicure & pedicure' is a simple and still excellent and effective spa service. Dipping hands and/or feet in hot sand for 15-20 minutes while relaxing brings deep warmth, which is beneficial to muscles and joints respectively.
- Warming masks based on various natural clays are a valuable application addition to the basic service for clients with Raynaud's Syndrome.
- Creams and lotions that highlight a warming effect, such as those containing magnesium salts (Epsom salts for instance) and Arginine, which is well known for its warming effect due to mild and safe dilatation of tiny blood capillaries, are all viable options for use and retail.
- Foot or hand baths must be used with warm, not hot water as you would when working with diabetic foot clients. Impaired skin sensitivity can be deceptive and hot temperatures can cause a burn. Mild surfactants used for diabetic foot treatments are recommended here as well. Magnesium salts are relaxing and a beneficial treatment.
- Nails can be affected by the syndrome too. The symptoms can display as slow growth, ridges, leukonychia and thinning – all results of poor circulation including the nail matrix area where the normal synthesis of keratin is disturbed. Nail polishes or any other artificial applications are good for protecting affected nails. Teach your client how to undertake local massage of fingertips in the matrix area, as this helps enormously, is simple and highly effective when it becomes a habit. The more frequently they perform this massage, the better.
- The most vulnerable part of the skin is the plantar or palm areas. It can be too dry or otherwise extremely wet if hyperhydrosis takes place. Simultaneously, all forms of hyperkeratosis and callus formation can be an issue. Avoid vibration when removing excessive calluses by using professional keratolytic products as this helps reduce the filing and vibration dramatically. If you work with severe forms of Raynaud's Syndrome where spasms happen too often and the risks of sores, ulcerations and even necrosis are high, use the same techniques as if working with a diabetic client and avoid files with crumbling abrasive particles as they could be a cause of the local necrosis.

It's also important to offer a friendly, comfortable and relaxing service and atmosphere. One of the triggers of Raynaud's attacks is stress, so avoid stressful moments during the service. Always explain what you are doing, show your knowledge of this condition and discuss every step of your treatment with the client. One professional procedure is good enough to manage the disease only along with homecare products. So, ensure to advise on proper care and appropriate products.



Images courtesy of sr.uk.co.uk

## EXPERT INSIGHT

By Lynn Wunderman, chairman of the Raynaud's Association, USA

Beyond the benefits associated with the moisture that paraffin wax baths proffer, the heat associated with soaking is hugely beneficial to sufferers. Some severe Raynaud's sufferers are actually prescribed paraffin waxes for therapeutic purposes.

Before any manicure procedure, check that the client does not display finger or toe ulcers. Since only about 10% of Raynaud's sufferers are even aware that they suffer from a medically-explained issue, look for the symptoms, such as white, blue or purple fingers and digital ulcers, along with cold fingers and toes. Parts of the process may actually be beneficial for 'Frosties' (the name given to sufferers), such as the wax and massage as both can help stimulate circulation.

If a sufferer has sensitive skin or ulcers, the process of cutting their nails or cuticles could be painful. Again, if the manicurist is attuned to the symptoms, they could suggest performing the best parts of the process and skipping some that might be troublesome. However, since most sufferers have the mild primary form, in general they should be fine with the standard manicure. If a manicurist believes the client maybe suffering the onset of Raynaud's, they should advise them to see their GP.

Oil acts as a humectant that can actually help trap more heat in the skin, so oil should be recommended. The idea of using

gel polish and other artificial systems on Raynaud's clients is arguable since, as an association, we have no knowledge on this subject. However, I would focus more on the ingredients used in the products and if they tend to dry the skin or nails, avoid use.

Keeping skin moisturised can help avoid cracked skin, which can be tender and painful during and for short periods after attacks. Also for those with digital ulcers, they should be careful not to allow skin to crack and potentially become infected. Ingredients that can help promote circulation are a plus – such as l'arginine and magnesium.

I would suggest sufferers with open or infected digital ulcers avoid most of the processes and nail polish. But nearly all sufferers could benefit from massage and the paraffin wax soaking.

[www.raynauds.org](http://www.raynauds.org)



Image courtesy of sruk.co.uk

## PRODUCT PICK

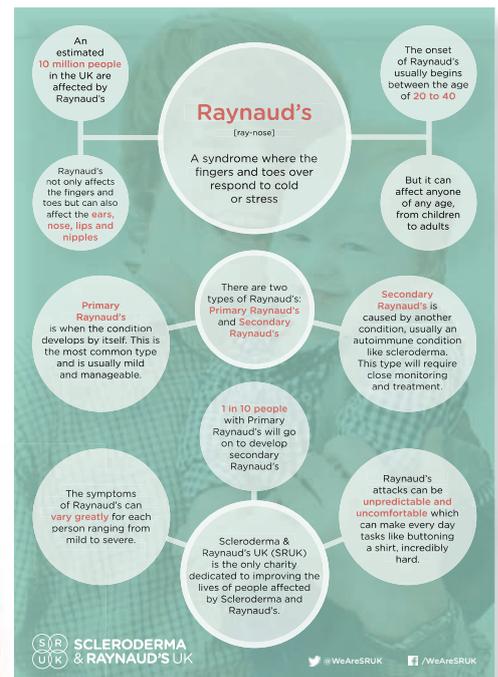
With a view to offering a colour polish line for clients with sensitivity issues or concerns, the Dr.'s Remedy line is an option that could alleviate their fears. As the first nail polish line to receive the *American Podiatric Medical Association* seal of approval, it affords a level of regulation that should comfort clients with concerns.

Dr.'s Remedy lacquers can minimise the appearance of dry brittle nails, hydrate nail cuticles and improve the wear-time of nail colour, finishing with a high shine. Each product is infused with a special blend of ingredients including organic tea tree oil, wheat protein, garlic bulb extract and lavender.

Vegan friendly, each Dr.'s Remedy product is free of formaldehyde, formaldehyde resin, toluene, parabens, camphor, xylene and phthalates. Available via [www.dltpodiatry.co.uk](http://www.dltpodiatry.co.uk)



"Since only about 10% of Raynaud's sufferers are even aware that they suffer from a medically-explained issue, look for the symptoms, such as white, blue or purple fingers and digital ulcers, along with cold fingers and toes."



To find out more about Raynaud's Syndrome, visit [www.sruk.co.uk/testme](http://www.sruk.co.uk/testme), the website of Scleroderma and Raynaud's UK. Here, you will find an online test to help identify if a person has Raynaud's and can download an information back.

Scleroderma and Raynaud's UK is a charity dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by Scleroderma and Raynaud's and improve awareness and understanding of these conditions, to support those affected, and ultimately to find a cure.