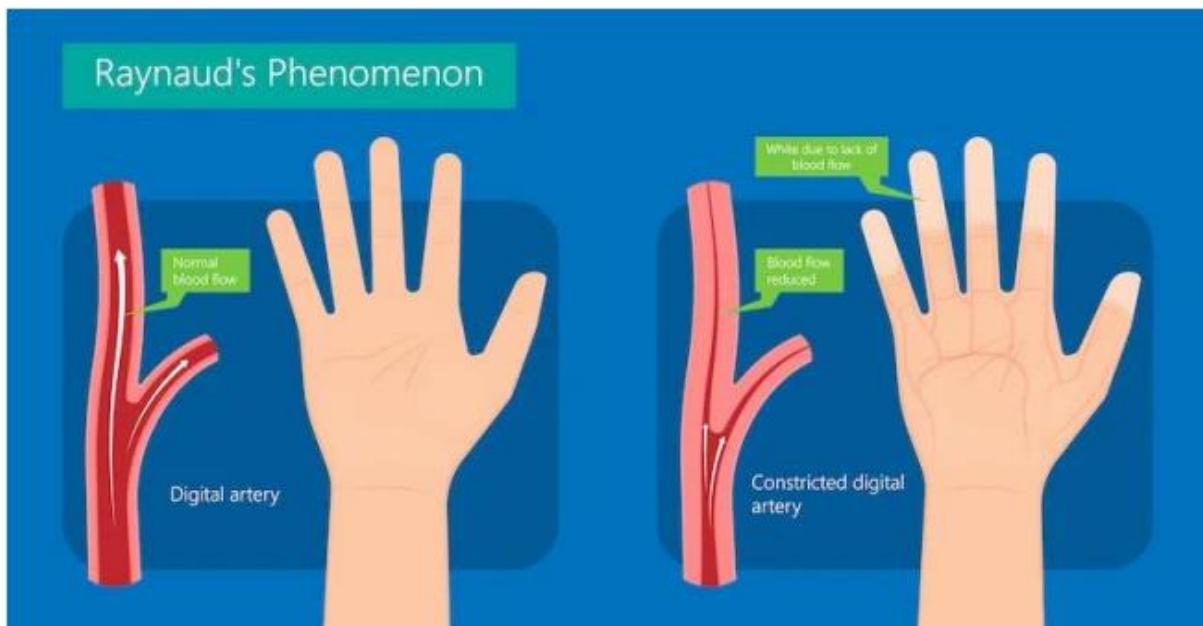


## Scottish Paediatric & Adolescent Rheumatology Network

### Raynaud's Advice Sheet

#### What is Raynaud's?

Raynaud's restricts the blood flow to the outer parts of the body. It usually affects the hands and feet but can also affect the ears, nose and lips. Naturally our bodies can cope when we come into contact with cold or warm environments. In the cold, our bodies narrow the blood vessels to help keep our blood close to our trunk (torso) where our larger organs are located. In contrast, during excessive heat our bodies do the opposite, dilating (widening) the blood vessels which allows blood to move around the body more easily, reaching the skin which allows heat to escape.



With Raynaud's, children will struggle to regulate their temperature in even mildly cold environments such as holding a cold glass of juice or washing their hands under cold water. These types of activities will result in children or young people experiencing a tingling or numb sensation and skin colour changes to the skin i.e.

- white when blood flow reduces
- blue as the oxygen levels in the skin fall
- and finally red as blood flow starts again.

Stress and anxiety can also cause narrowing of the blood vessels due to Adrenaline being released around the body, therefore it is important that young people are supported around exam times and transition periods.

Have a look below at some of our helpful tips and strategies to help reduce the amount of flare ups children and young people experience:

- It is important to keep your body's overall temperature warm – the best way to do this is by wearing loose layers as these will help trap in heat. Wear layers, starting with a vest top or thermal base layer, will keep your trunk (body) warm and help your blood to flow to your fingers and toes.
- Be aware of gaps in your clothing especially at your ankles, wrists and neck.
- Silver fibre 8% gloves are excellent for keeping your hands warm as long as you heat your hands before putting them on. They are available from various websites including [www.sruk.co.uk](http://www.sruk.co.uk)
- Warm socks are important too, wool is better than cotton as wool absorbs moisture and retains heat. Merino wool thermal socks are excellent and are easily available online or from outdoor shops. You can also get silver fibre thermal socks from [www.sruk.co.uk](http://www.sruk.co.uk).
- During winter you may want to wear warm, waterproof boots which cover your ankles and sheepskin insoles.
- It is important to try and keep your house at an even temperature, especially during winter. Help with heating bills may be available. Visit [www.mygov.scot](http://www.mygov.scot) to see if you qualify for help with heating costs.
- When going inside, try not to take off your outerwear immediately in order to give your body time to adjust to temperature changes.
- Hand and feet warmers are easily available and you can get versions that are either single use or rechargeable. These can be very useful to have especially when taking part in outdoor sports activities.

## Lifestyle:

- Avoid caffeine, especially energy drinks which have high caffeine levels.
- Avoid smoking, vaping or breathing in 2nd hand smoke as this will restrict blood vessels and likely to cause Raynaud's flare up.
- Keep your hands and feet well moisturised using non-scented creams such as Neutrogena, Aveeno or E45 and massage this in well.
- Always dry your hands and feet thoroughly especially in between the fingers and toes.
- Using vibrating objects such as an electric toothbrush, hand mixer or drill may cause your blood vessels to restrict.
- Try to reduce stress and anxiety levels by using Mindfulness, relaxation techniques or yoga

## Exercise:

- Exercise is a great way to lift your mood and reduce stress which can cause a flare up of Raynaud's. It is important to exercise within your own limits, a short 20 minute walk can be just as good as doing an intensive gym workout or exercise class. Remember that regular exercise helps boost blood flow around the body which is important for children and young people with Raynaud's.

Further Information For further information please go to: Scleroderma and Raynaud's UK website: [www.sruk.co.uk](http://www.sruk.co.uk)