

Treatments for Primary Raynaud's Phenomenon

Rheumatology

What is Raynaud's Phenomenon?

Primary Raynaud's phenomenon (RP) is a condition where the small blood vessels in the extremities (usually fingers and toes) of the body are too sensitive and over constrict causing colour changes, numbness and pain. Attacks often vary in frequency and severity as the seasons change.

Raynaud's phenomenon is described as "primary" when there is no underlying condition causing it. Primary Raynaud's phenomenon may affect up to 10% of the population and although painful and an inconvenience is not a sign of any more serious illness.

There are many different treatments which can help with Raynaud's, and this sheet will talk about them all. However you may need to try using a combination of them, either together or separately at different times of the year to find a regime which works for you. The Doctor or specialist nurse at the Rheumatology department, at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust will recommend some treatments for you to try first, however, if you decide you want to try different ones (particularly the prescription medications), then you can discuss this at your rheumatology appointment.

Natural and Over-The-Counter Therapies

People are often keen to avoid prescription medications if possible and like to try natural therapies first. These are available from many pharmacies and supermarkets as well as from health food stores. You may take more than one treatment at a time, however, it is best to only start taking one new one at a time in order to be able to identify whether it works. There is limited research into these treatments however many people do find them to be effective for Raynaud's phenomenon:

- Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) 500 - 1000mg daily
- Vitamin E (tocopheryl acetate) 200 - 400mg daily.

In addition to vitamins C and E there are many treatments you can try.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Gamolenic Acid (GLA) approx. 320mg daily you can get GLA in several ways:

- It can be bought on its own
- It can be found in evening primrose, starflower and linseed or flaxseed oils, in which case you need to work out how many of the oil capsules you need to take to get the correct dose of GLA. Try and find capsules with a high level of GLA so you do not have to take too many
- It can be found in Omega-3 fish oils. Either Maxepa 10000mg daily (5 capsules twice each day) or Omacor 4000mg daily (4 capsules) will provide the recommended amount of GLA. These two fish oils are available on prescription.

You only need to choose one of these ways of getting GLA. Many people find that GLA is very effective, however, it may take up to eight weeks to get full benefit. If there is no benefit after taking GLA for 3 months then stop and try something else.

Ginkgo Biloba Up to 240mg daily in three doses - Some people find that this produces a significant reduction in their Raynaud's symptoms.

Ginger 2000mg – 4000mg daily

Hawthorn, cayenne, magnesium, horse chestnut, dong quai, and prickly ash are also often used for treatment of circulation problems and some people report benefits in Raynaud's phenomenon. You should speak to a complementary therapy specialist for advice on dose.

All the above treatments should be avoided if you are taking warfarin or other blood-thinning treatments.

Dietary Changes: Dietary changes to try to help Raynaud's phenomenon include increasing consumption of omega-3 oils and antioxidant vitamins (particularly C & E). Using and eating more traditionally warming foods such as ginger, cayenne peppers and chillies can also help.

Prescription Therapies

Sometimes natural and over-the-counter therapies are not enough and it is necessary to take prescription medications. You should tell your doctor and pharmacist about all natural and prescription medicines you are taking so that they can check for any interactions. These will take up to three weeks to take full effect but do not need to be taken permanently if you do not want to. It is quite common for them to be taken only in winter each year however they are safe to be taken permanently. You may have to try several until you find the one which works for you. Side effects may include headaches, dizziness, flushing or low blood pressure. To try and avoid side effects it is recommended to start on a lower dose for a few days and go up to the full dose gradually.

Losartan 25mg-100mg daily or other angiotensin II receptor antagonists

Diltiazem 60mg three times daily or other calcium channel blockers

Fluoxetine 20mg-40mg daily or other serotonin reuptake antagonists

For further information please contact the Rheumatology Advice and Information line on 01902 695491 and select option 2.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

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Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。