

# Natural Help 4...

## Raynaud's Disease



### What is Raynaud's Disease?

Raynaud's disease is a **circulatory condition that affects blood supply to the skin** and peripheries and causes the extremities of the body to lose feeling and become numb.

Raynaud's Disease is most commonly associated with **cold temperatures** and stress and sufferers of this condition will find their toes and fingers feel very cold or may even lose sensation in response to a stressful situation or exposure to cold. During a Raynaud's attack, the arteries and blood capillaries narrow, reducing blood circulation to affected areas, usually the extremities such as toes, fingers, ears and the tip of your nose.

This reduced peripheral blood flow is a normal protective mechanism to **prevent excessive heat loss** from these areas and **preserve the body's core temperature**. Similarly, in times of stress the body goes into a "flight or fight" response which causes the blood flow to the fingers and toes to be significantly reduced so that blood is conserved for the vital organs and muscles.

In people with Raynaud's syndrome these responses are exaggerated - causing troublesome symptoms at inappropriate times. The reduced blood flow leaves the extremities looking pale or even blue and cold as no warm blood reaches these areas.

### Diagnosing Raynaud's Disease

There are no blood tests that can specifically diagnose Raynaud's syndrome , but generally health care practitioners will make a diagnosis based on the description of your symptoms. Your doctor may examine you and order further tests to rule out other conditions and diseases of the arteries, and to determine if there is a possible underlying condition that is causing Raynaud's.

In some cases your practitioner may ask you to place your hand in cold water to bring on an episode of Raynaud's in order to make a more accurate diagnosis.

### What are the Symptoms of Raynaud's Disease?

People with Raynaud's syndrome may notice their skin changing color, first it becomes pale and then it changes to blue, when they are cold or stressed – most noticeably in the fingers. They may feel a prickly **numbness in toes** and sometimes a stinging pain with throbbing and redness when they begin to relax or warm up as blood returns to the extremities.

**Symptoms of Raynaud's** occur in the extremities and may include the following

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in affected areas.

- white or bluish color
- **numbness in toes** or other extremities
- loss of sensory perception
- mild swelling
- redness with sensations of throbbing and/or tingling once blood flow returns to normal

## What Causes Raynaud's Disease?

Though its causes are not completely understood, [Raynaud's](#) seems to be caused by an overreaction of blood vessels in the extremities to temperature and stress. In normal physiology, when a person's body is exposed to cold, the blood vessels in the extremities become narrowed and slow down blood supply to the fingers and toes. In the case of an individual with Raynaud's these blood vessels narrow dramatically, causing troubling symptoms.

There are two **types of Raynaud's Disease** - it can develop as a complication of an underlying disorder (Secondary [Raynaud's](#)) or it can develop independently in the absence of any other underlying health conditions (Primary Raynauds).

### Primary Raynaud's Disease

This is the most common form of the disorder and typically it tends to affect the digits of both hands and both feet. Researchers are now exploring the possibility that there may be a genetic link to the development of **Primary Raynaud's Disease**.

Certain other factors may also increase an individual's **risk of developing Primary [Raynaud's](#)**. Women are generally more commonly affected as are people who live in cold places and those who suffer from chronic stress.

### Secondary Raynaud's Disease

In less common cases, [Raynaud's](#) is caused by another underlying problem. Although secondary [Raynaud's](#) is less common, it is often more serious than Primary Raynaud's and extra care should be taken. **Conditions that may cause Secondary [Raynaud's](#)** include:

- Scleroderma, a condition that causes hardening of connective tissue
- Lupus
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Other diseases that affect the arteries including atherosclerosis
- Smoking
- The use of beta blockers
- Certain Chemotherapy agents and some over the counter cold and flu medications can also predispose an individual to [Raynaud's](#).

## Help for Raynaud's Disease



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

**Treatment of Raynaud's** often includes treatment of the underlying condition (in Secondary **Raynaud's**) and treatment to reduce the frequency of attacks and prevent tissue damage. There are a number of treatment methods including conventional medical methods, biofeedback and herbal and homeopathic remedies.

## Medical Treatment

A number of **allopathic medications** on the market work on the principle of dilating the blood vessels in order to prevent the symptoms of **Raynaud's**.

Examples are Calcium channel blockers such as amlodipine (Norvasc), Alpha blockers such as prazosin (Minipress) and Vasodilators.

In some cases a chemical injection is recommended which works by blocking the sympathetic nerves in affected areas. In severe cases surgery on the nerves in the hands and feet may be performed.

## Biofeedback

Studies have shown that biofeedback is capable of **helping people with Raynaud's Disease** to control their hand temperatures and to increase blood flow to affected areas. Biofeedback requires training the body to reduce sympathetic responses to stress and reduce vasoconstriction, thereby allowing greater blood flow to the extremities. Biofeedback can result in significantly reduced symptoms, although it must be understood that this is not a quick fix and requires up to 20 sessions of training.

## Natural Remedies for Raynaud's Disease

As Raynaud's Disease is related to **poor circulation**, the most successful treatment methods are those that provide **long-term assistance with circulation problems**. Herbal and homeopathic remedies specific to the condition and containing ingredients such as Rosemary, Ginger, and Ginkgo biloba can do just this – in a natural manner! Used regularly, these work to effectively restore the function of the circulatory system; improving blood flow to the extremities while helping to prevent tissue damage. These **herbal ingredients** also address the **underlying triggers of Raynaud's** by reducing inflammation and stress levels while working to guard against cold fingers and toes.

## Are there Other Complications that May be Related to Raynaud's Disease?

Severe Raynaud's is rare, but when it does occur there are a few potentially serious complications. In some cases, blood flow to the fingers or toes is permanently damaged resulting in deformities. If an artery is affected and an area becomes completely blocked from blood flow skin ulcers or gangrene can occur, which can

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be difficult to treat. In the most severe cases where the tissue dies as a result of Raynaud's, amputation of the affected area is usually necessary.

## What Should you do During an Attack?

At the first signs of an attack, the most important plan of action is to warm the area affected. Do the following to help gently warm your fingers and toes:

- Perhaps the most obvious step – get out of the cold and move to a warmer area!
- Place your hands under your armpits or between your thighs to warm them up.
- Keep things moving. **Numbness in toes** and fingers is a common symptom so wiggle your fingers and toes and if this fails try doing windmill motions with your arms, and jogging on the spot. Movement will help to **keep the blood flowing properly**.
- Run your fingers and toes under some warm water.
- Get the blood flowing by massaging your hands and feet.
- If a stressful situation has triggered the attack then remove yourself from the situation and practice some deep breathing or other relaxation techniques.

## Tips for Coping with Raynaud's Disease

Raynaud's Disease is a condition that you have to learn to manage and adapt to. While this may be difficult at times, there are a number of ways to prevent and cope with attacks.

- Dress warmly outdoors and avoid getting cold. Winter is often a difficult time for those with Raynaud's so it is essential to cover up with hats, gloves, thick socks and ear muffs in cold weather.
- Consider moving to a milder climate. While relocation may seem like a huge preventative measure, it is definitely something worth considering if you live in an area with extremely cold winters.
- Exercise regularly! Keeping fit with a regular exercise routine will **encourage circulation and reduce the chances of Raynaud's attacks**.
- Don't smoke and avoid secondary smoke. The nicotine in cigarettes causes the blood vessels to constrict resulting in a drop in body temperature in the extremities. This can induce an attack - so if you are a smoker, try to stop smoking naturally.
- Manage your stress levels. Stress is a common trigger of Raynaud's so find ways to recognize and better manage your stress. Avoid those situations that tend to stress you and adopt stress relieving techniques such as yoga, meditation or deep breathing exercises.
- Look after your hands and feet. Avoid wearing things that may constrict blood flow to these extremities such as tight rings, tight socks or wrist bands.

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic



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medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

## **herbal & homeopathic remedies:**

1) All Native Remedies products are manufactured according to the highest pharmaceutical standards - using only the best quality raw ingredients from nature's medicine chest.

2) Native Remedies and our suppliers are registered with the FDA as accredited suppliers and manufacturers of health supplements. Our products are sold all over the world and are manufactured to strict international standards in a GMP accredited manufacturing plant.

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This includes formulation, acquiring and testing of raw ingredients as well as final manufacturing. This gives us the confidence to say that when you are buying a Native Remedies product, you are buying the safest and the best! We know what goes into our remedies - which is why we know what you will get out of them!

4) Manufacturing is done strictly according to the principles of GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) and all raw ingredients undergo stringent testing before being approved by our registered manufacturing pharmacists.

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It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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The formula remains true to the **whole spectrum method** of herbal extraction, ensuring the bio-availability and balance of all the active ingredients contained in the remedy. This method of manufacture also significantly reduces the likelihood of side effects and maintains all active ingredients in perfect balance – exactly as nature intended!

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