



HCSP FACT SHEET

HCV ADVOCATE

• EXTRAHEPATIC MANIFESTATION OF HCV •

Raynaud's Phenomenon

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Foreword

In someone with hepatitis C, Raynaud's phenomenon is generally caused by HCV-related cryoglobulinemia. The prevalence of Raynaud's phenomenon in the hepatitis C population is unknown, but it is believed to be an uncommon condition. In people with HCV-related cryoglobulinemia, however, one study found that 30% of people also had Raynaud's phenomenon.

Important note: Everyone with hepatitis C should be evaluated and receive HCV treatment. Current treatment is very expensive, and some insurance companies and Medicaid/Medicare are restricting HCV treatment to people with the most severe HCV disease. One of the conditions that qualify people for HCV treatment is extrahepatic manifestations. Discuss any symptoms with your medical provider and have them recorded in your medical records. If you are not approved for the drugs to treat hepatitis C, you may qualify for free drugs or co-pay assistance through a pharmaceutical patient assistance program. More information is available at the end of this fact sheet.

Symptoms

Raynaud's is a painful condition that affects the blood vessels in the fingers, toes, ears, and nose. When Raynaud's phenomenon affects the fingers it is easy to diagnose because the end of the fingers turn white. The diagnosis of Raynaud's is based on certain lab tests (for autoimmune diseases), and by physical exam.

Raynaud's affects more women than men – about 75% of all cases are diagnosed in women who are between 15 and 40 years old. It is estimated that between 5 to 10% of the U.S. population have Raynaud's Phenomenon.

There are two types of Raynaud's – primary and secondary. Primary is the milder form of Raynaud's that has no underlying disease or associated medical condition. Secondary is less common than the primary form but it is considered a more serious condition that is caused by another disease or condition.

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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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Raynaud's Phenomenon

Causes

The exact cause of Raynaud's is unknown but it is considered an autoimmune disease and has been linked to cryoglobulinemia, hypothyroidism, scleroderma, lupus, Sjögren's syndrome as well as occupational exposure to toxins, environmental factors (exposure to cold temperature) and certain medications, and can be triggered by emotional stress.

Below are some strategies for managing Raynaud's:

- Take action as soon as possible at the first sign of an attack:
 - ◆ Warm hands and/or feet
 - ◆ If outside temperature is cold go inside as soon as possible to warm up

- ◆ Run warm water over hands and feet or soak them in warm water
- ◆ Reduce immediate stress
- Stop smoking – nicotine causes skin temperature to drop which can contribute to the condition
- Stress reduction—biofeedback, meditation, and deep breathing exercises
- Exercise can improve overall health and reduce stress
- Consult with and regularly visit a medical provider

Medical treatment of Reynaud's may include calcium-blockers, and various topical skin ointments. One study published in 2005 found that the use of sildenafil (Viagra) improved blood circulation and reduced the symptoms of Reynaud's.

Related publications:

- **Patient Assistance Programs**
http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/Patient_Assistance.pdf
- **An Overview of Extrahepatic Manifestations**
http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/Extrahepatic.pdf
- **Cryoglobulinemia**
http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/Cryo.pdf

For more information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov • Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Insititute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Raynauds_Phenomenon/default.asp
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www.hepatitistattoos.org**