

Hidden disabilities

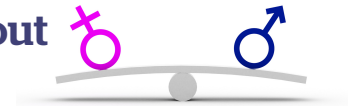
Raynaud's Phenomenon

Reasonable Adjustments

The phenomenon is sometimes known as Raynaud's Disease or Raynaud's Syndrome or simply as Raynaud's.



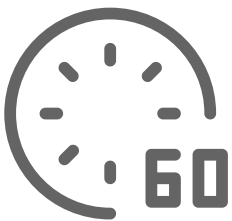
Raynaud's is a common disorder, affecting about 10 million people in the UK, and more women than men.



Raynaud's causes a restriction in blood flow to fingers and toes and sometimes other extremities such as ears and nose. This is the result of a temporary spasm in small blood vessels.



The effects are not continuous and tend to be triggered by cool temperatures as well as by anxiety and stress. Affected areas turn white, then blue and then red as the blood returns.



For periods between a few minutes and several hours, a person may experience pain, numbness, swelling and pins and needles, all of which can cause difficulty moving their fingers and toes.

The Raynaud's and Scleroderma Association says many people with Raynaud's have not seen a doctor because they did not realise their condition had a name or that anything could be done about it.



Raynaud's can develop on its own or as a secondary to another underlying condition such as lupus or rheumatoid arthritis. Where it is secondary, the effects can become more serious.

Vibration white finger is where secondary Raynaud's develops because of exposure to vibration, e.g. power drills or hedge trimmers.



It is recommended that those with Raynaud's keep their whole body warm and especially their hands and feet. They should also try to minimise stress levels.



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Reasonable Adjustments

With Raynaud's, cool or cold conditions create the adverse effects.

Someone with the condition would find doing the following in a cool or cold environment difficult:

- waiting or queuing;
- operating a computer; and ,
- eating using a knife and fork.

Whether or not the effect on a person's day-to-day activities is more than trivial will depend on the severity of their condition.

Primary Raynaud's can be relatively mild, although that may be because the person has altered their behaviour to ensure it does not become a greater problem, for example by wearing gloves all the time.



There could be indirect effects that are substantial e.g.:

- a person can still carry out activities, but it is painful;
- a person has been advised by a health professional as part of a treatment plan to limit certain activities or only do them in a certain way or under certain conditions; and
- a person spends as little time as possible outside in the winter.



The following could be examples of substantial adverse effects:

- feeling severe pain when shopping in an air-conditioned supermarket or taking an item out of the freezer compartment; then being unable to take money out of a purse or tap in a pin number in order to pay;
- having to constantly move table in a restaurant to find somewhere which is sufficiently warm in order to avoid having a painful episode which might also cause difficulty eating (use of cutlery) and paying;
- avoiding the use of shopping bags with handles in order to avoid restriction to the fingers.



Raynaud's can go away with time, but the condition will usually last more than one year. Its effects may well fluctuate, some people for example only experiencing symptoms in winter.

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Work Place Reasonable Adjustments: what you and your colleagues can do at your workplace



Always consult the individual.

Adjustments depend on the severity and nature of the person's condition. Possibilities are:

1. Providing access to regular hot drinks and water, to keep hydrated.



2. Giving permission to wear warm clothes.



3. Providing protective gloves if it is necessary to remove stock from fridges.



4. Enabling regularly exercise for the hands and feet.



5. Facilitating a warm working environment with the ability to close windows.



6. Providing a small personal heater by the employee's desk.



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Work Place Reasonable Adjustments: what you and your colleagues can do at your workplace



7. Avoiding cool (not just cold) workplace temperatures.



8. Avoiding air conditioned workplaces.



9. Allowing flexibility on seating arrangements. Move desks if necessary.



10. Ensuring meetings, training and office outings are held in suitable environments.



11. Avoiding the need for the employee to work outside or having to go between extreme temperatures.



12. Reserving a space for the employee in an on-premises car park during winter.



13. Avoiding stressful work situations

Appropriate adjustments may include the kind suited to conditions such as RSI.