



Scleroderma & Raynaud's UK launch simple test to help millions affected by Raynaud's, get the help they need.

This winter the UK is set to have the heaviest snowfall for many years, bringing misery and suffering for millions of people with Raynaud's and Scleroderma. Many of us take it for granted that chilly hands will disappear once spring arrives, but that's not the case for many people with Raynaud's.

A trip down the frozen aisle of the supermarket or simply sitting in an air conditioned office anytime of the year, can trigger a painful attack for up to one in six people in the UK, living with a little known condition called Raynaud's.

Raynaud's is a condition that affects the blood supply in the body's extremities - usually the fingers and toes - and many people living with the condition will regularly experience colour changes to the affected area, pain and discomfort.

Up to 10 million people in the UK are affected by Raynaud's yet many living with the condition are not aware they have Raynaud's or that support and treatment¹ is available and left to deal with the impact alone

Research from Scleroderma & Raynaud's UK (SRUK), the only UK charity dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by Scleroderma and Raynaud's, reveals that only 4% are able to identify the symptoms of Raynaud's. SRUK is tackling this lack of understanding by getting everyone affected to unite and **#raise your hands** during February.

SRUK has launched a simple online test, accessible via their website to help identify if you may have Raynaud's. At the end of the test you will be told if you could have Raynaud's and the next steps to take, which could include top tips on keeping warm or downloadable information to take to your GP.

For many with Raynaud's it will be a mild inconvenience but for 1 in 10 people affected by Raynaud's they will go on to develop an autoimmune condition like scleroderma (which can cause disability and can be life-threatening), Arthritis or lupus, which may need further treatment and close monitoring.

If you are affected by any of the 5 symptoms below, take the test today at www.sruk.co.uk/testme

Top 5 signs of Raynaud's

- Cold fingers and toes
- Colour changes in the skin in response to cold or stress
- Colour changes in the affected area to white, then blue and then red
- Numbness, tingling or pain in the fingers and toes
- Stinging or throbbing pain upon warming or stress relief

Other parts of the body can be affected by Raynaud's including the ears, nose, lips, tongue and nipples. Symptoms can last for a few minutes to several hours.

"We are encouraging more people to seek medical help and advice if they regularly experience one or more of the main symptoms which include pain, numbness or tingling in the body's extremities" says Sue Farrington, Chief Executive of SRUK,

"We know that despite a quarter of people saying that they had experienced symptoms, only 10% on average have visited their GP. This needs to change - Raynaud's can be a minor but uncomfortable inconvenience, but for those more seriously affected by Raynaud's or Scleroderma, it's crucial that they seek medical treatment and support as early as possible. We hope with our online test people can self-manage the condition better, seek treatment where necessary but above all know that they are not alone, we are here to support and assist people in coping with the painful and sometimes life-changing effects of the condition"

SRUK currently supports over twenty five thousand people in the UK living with the conditions but this is just the tip of the icebergⁱⁱ.

For more information about Raynaud's and Scleroderma, the signs to look out for, how to manage symptoms and take our #raiseyourhands online test, go to www.sruk.co.uk and download a Raynaud's information pack today.

Email: info@sruk.co.uk



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-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

For more information, to arrange interviews with key spokespeople, to review case studies and for relevant imagery, please contact Tracey Spray on 07703 320803 or email tracey.spray@sruk.co.uk with your request.

What is Scleroderma?

Scleroderma is a rare, chronic disease of the immune system, blood vessels and connective tissue.

It is an autoimmune condition, meaning the immune system becomes overactive and attacks healthy tissue in the body. The name of the condition comes from the Greek, 'sclero' for hard, and 'derma' for skin. This hardening of the skin can be one of the first noticeable symptoms of the condition, as the body produces too much collagen. This excess of collagen can affect the skin, joints, tendons and internal organs. It causes scarring and stops the affected parts of the body from functioning normally.

Signs of Scleroderma

- Sore swollen fingers
- Raynaud's Phenomenon
- Reflux or Heartburn

What is Raynaud's?

Raynaud's phenomenon is a common condition thought to affect up to ten million people in the UK.

In people who have Raynaud's, the small blood vessels in the extremities are over-sensitive to changes in temperature. This causes a Raynaud's attack where the fingers sometimes change colour, but not always, from white, to blue, to red. A Raynaud's attack can be a very uncomfortable, possibly painful, process. It can also make everyday tasks, like buttoning a jacket or unzipping a purse, very difficult. Raynaud's symptoms generally affect the fingers and toes, but all extremities can be involved, including the ears, nose and nipples.

About SRUK

- SRUK is the UK's only charity dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by Scleroderma and Raynaud's
- We are a pioneering charity, formed by the merger of the Raynaud's & Scleroderma Association (RSA) and the Scleroderma Society in March 2016
- We're dedicated to providing the best support and care to people with the conditions, while spearheading research in to new treatments and ultimately looking for a cure

Other key findings from the research include:

- Despite being as common as hay fever and arthritis in the UK over three quarters of people have never heard of Raynaud's or don't know anything about the symptomsⁱⁱⁱ
- Misinformation is rife with 35% of people worried they could pass Raynaud's on, 43% concerned about passing on Scleroderma
- Worryingly, one in five and one in four people^{iv} would be afraid to touch someone with Raynaud's and Scleroderma respectively; roughly one in five people^v would be embarrassed to say they had the conditions

For further information visit www.sruk.co.uk or call us on 0207 000 1925

Email: info@sruk.co.uk



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ⁱ A range of treatments exist to relieve the symptoms of Raynaud's, these include; Nifedipine, Iloprost, Botox and acupuncture

ⁱⁱ Up to 10 million people in the UK live with Raynaud's

ⁱⁱⁱ 55% of people have not heard of Raynaud's and 24% have heard of it but know nothing about it

^{iv} 20% of people would be scared to touch someone with Raynaud's and 24% of people someone with Scleroderma

^v 18% of people would be embarrassed to say that they suffered from Raynaud's, 22% for scleroderma