

# VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

*Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery*

## **Raynaud's Condition**

There is a condition whereby the blood vessels clamp down and cause a lack of circulation in the hands or feet and in rare cases the face. This is called Raynaud's phenomenon. Color changes from red to purple or white may occur. It may start from exposure to a cold environment or just from emotional changes. Severe pain is often experienced but may be minimal at times. The real cause is not known.

We once called this Raynaud's disease but there is no definable pathology. The slowing of circulation is actually normal when your hands or feet are cool. It is just that this slowing is more severe and it may also occur for no obvious reason, spontaneously. Now we just call it a phenomenon. The important thing is that it is most often associated with other, much more severe illnesses.

Most often the condition is associated with diseases as CREST syndrome or scleroderma. We may discuss these another time. It may be associated with Lupus or arthritis conditions.

In the early stages of the condition the fingers may just become discolored and swollen. The lack of proper circulation though will make these areas more susceptible to infection, skin loss and easy injury. Those who are smokers have even worse problems.

Treatment for the Raynaud's condition is dressing warmly, not smoking, avoid stress, and the avoidance of certain drugs such as amphetamines. Some medications may help to minimize the condition but there is no real cure. You may have seen people with thin white gloves on their hands in the middle of the summer. They may be some of my patients with Raynaud's condition.

Many patients with this problem slowly lose parts of their fingers or toes over time. This year there may be a loss of the tip of the index finger and two years later the whole ring finger. A toe will become gangrenous. It must be removed before the infection spreads.

If you develop a wound or infection immediate treatment is necessary. As in all conditions with diminished circulation healing is slow, the progression of infection is fast and the potential for big problems is high. It is imperative to keep in close contact with your doctor.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.  
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**Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company**

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