Love Your Gloves for Raynaud's Awareness Month!

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Do you know someone whose hands always feel cold? Do their hands and fingers sometimes go blue or white and then red and sore? PLEASE DON'T IGNORE IT! It could be something else!

Raynaud's Awareness Month (RAM) in February aims to highlight the problems associated with Raynaud's, that affects over 10 million people in the UK, (that's 1 in 6 of us!).

Raynaud's can affect anyone of any age – babies, young children, adolescents, mature adults and the elderly - those of all ages can experience distressing symptoms and struggle to keep warm.

During February 2015, the Raynaud's & Scleroderma Association (RSA) 'Love Your Gloves' campaign has been sent to many GP's practices and local hospitals, but if you'd like some posters to put up in your local school, community group or activity group get in touch info@raynauds.org.uk. We'll also be sharing stories via Facebook and Twitter to encourage people to share their experiences of Raynaud's and/or to show support for those who have it. We will be tweeting throughout the month to keep you up to date and share tips to help deal with Raynaud's, so sign up at @raynaudsuk

Those of you who don't suffer may be wondering what it is and why it's an issue. Raynaud's symptoms occur when small blood vessels in the body's extremities become over-sensitive to even slight changes in temperature. The blood supply is temporarily disrupted – usually to fingers or toes although ears, nose and other parts can go white, blue and red when they warm us. Pain, numbness and tingling are common experiences in an attack, which can be precipitated by exposure to something cold or even a slight change in temperature. Even experiencing stress or strong emotion can a trigger a painful Raynaud's attackThe condition has a real impact on daily life and can make everyday activities like shopping, using keys, holding cups, getting dressed - plus a myriad of other things most of us take for granted – very difficult.

While there are various ways to help ease the severity of Raynaud's - including medication to open up the blood vessels in more severe cases and natural products like ginger where it is milder - one of the best defences remains keeping warm. When even reaching into the fridge can cause a painful attack, this isn't always easy!

Those who have Raynaud's can find it upsetting and frustrating, particularly when others don't understand their condition. Lack of knowledge and awareness can mean the condition is trivialised by the public and the extent of how debilitating Raynaud's can be can leave sufferer's feeling isolated and alone.

Primary Raynaud's can be experienced in mild forms to very severe forms. It generally exists without any association with another disease and is often hereditary. Secondary Raynaud's is usually more severe and can be linked to forms of arthritis and it can indicate heart/ vascular problems or initial signs of more rare autoimmune, connective tissue diseases (connective tissue is everything between the skin and bone) such as scleroderma or lupus.

'A Raynaud's attack can happen suddenly – fingers or other extremities quickly become white and lifeless, turn blue and finally red again as the blood returns.' explains Liz Bevins, CEO, 'If you suffer from cold hands, please don't ignore it, as some of the above diseases have silent phases, so you have few symptoms or know no pain until the disease is in it's later stages. A few simple tests may be able to diagnose the above conditions much earlier, so we're encouraging you to go to your local GP and discuss any concerns you have.'

You can also tweet the phrase #loveyourgloves to show your support and let others know about this condition which affects so many people not only in the UK but across the globe. So, what are you waiting for? #loveyourgloves and spread the word!

A free information pack about fundraising for RSA, including leaflets giving tips on keeping warm and coping is available by calling Freephone 0800 917 2494. Emailinfo@raynauds.org.uk or you can also download the information at www.raynauds.org.uk/loveyourgloves

Silver Gloves – Why not purchase a pair of our Silver Fibre Gloves which reflect 95% of the bodies heat back into your hands and are perfect for people with Raynaud's or those who want to keep warm when cycling, fishing, riding or at work. Go online to www.rsa-shop.co.uk to view the range. For recommended products including heating aids, socks and more.

To make a difference donate today! Text COLD15 and the £amount (£5/£10) to 70070*

*Texts are charged at donation plus your network provider standard rate message.

-Ends-

Notes on the condition:

Scleroderma is the name given to a rare group of conditions that damage the skin, blood vessels and internal organs and is currently estimated to affect 8,000 people in the UK. Scleroderma as yet, has no cure.

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