

**PRESS RELEASE**

**February 2018**

**Online test could help millions know if they have Raynaud’s.**

Up to 10 million people are affected by this condition in the UK, yet SRUK’s researchreveals that only 4% are able to identify the symptoms of Raynaud’s. Worryingly only 10% of people on average who had Raynaud’s symptoms would visit a GP.

A city centre walk in clinic was set up last summer offering a free test for Raynaud’s. In a week over 600 people took the test with 87% being given a positive diagnosis of whom 45% were totally unaware of the condition.

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 pain and discomfort during a Raynaud’s attack, making some every day activities almost impossible.

Claire Miller told us, "I struggle with watching my boys play football, as my feet and hands will go numb and painful despite wrapping up and taking my medication. Even chopping vegetables can be dangerous"

Scleroderma & Raynaud’s UK, has launched an online test to help identify in under a minute, whether you have Raynaud’s, as part of their #KnowRaynaud’s awareness campaign this February.

The online test has been developed with the support of three consultant rheumatologists specialising in Scleroderma and Raynaud’s ensuring this tool follows the clinical diagnosis pathway, giving users a trusted result. Users of the test will answer 5 simple yes or no questions and receive a result as to whether they may have Raynaud’s or not. Further information is provided to users who may have Raynaud’s including self-management information and for those identified as at risk of having an underlying condition they are being encouraged to see their GP.

If you have cold fingers and toes that change colour from white, to blue/purple and then red, which go numb, tingly or cause pain, then take the test today at www.sruk.co.uk/testme

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.

Sue Farrington, SRUK Chief Executive said:

“We want everyone to get to #KnowRaynauds this February, so they can access the support and advice to help them better manage their condition.

Another reason to know if you have Raynaud’s is because it can be the first sign of an underlying rare condition such as scleroderma or lupus. One person in every hundred will go onto develop an autoimmune condition. This is why we shouldn’t ignore the symptoms. Early diagnosis is vital to ensure people can be screened and if necessary get treated much sooner.”

**For more information about Raynaud’s, the signs to look out for and how to manage symptoms, take SRUK’s online test, go towww.sruk.co.uk/testmeand download a Raynaud’s information pack today.**

For further information visit www.sruk.co.uk or call us on 020 3893 5998 or email: info@sruk.co.uk

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**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.

**#KnowRaynauds for Raynaud’s Awareness Month**

SRUK is tackling this lack of understanding by getting everyone affected to unite and **#KnowRaynauds** during February. During February we need you to help increase awareness and understanding of Raynaud's and why it is important that everyone knows the signs and symptoms to look out for. For further information and how to get involved, visit[**www.sruk.co.uk/get-involved/knowraynauds**](http://www.sruk.co.uk/get-involved/knowraynauds)

**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.

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

**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

**About SRUK**

* SRUK is the UK’s only charity dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by Scleroderma and Raynaud’s
* 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 SRUK research includes:**

1. 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 symptoms[[1]](#endnote-1)
2. Misinformation is rife with 35% of people worried they could pass Raynaud’s on
3. Worryingly, one in five[[2]](#endnote-2) would be afraid to touch someone with Raynaud’s; roughly one in five people[[3]](#endnote-3) would be embarrassed to say they had the conditions
4. 45% of the UK’s population are unaware that they may have Raynaud’sV
5. Out of 556 people who received a Raynaud’s diagnosis at a mobile testing clinic. 25% of those had abnormal results. 7% had non-specific changes and 18% were showing marker changes related to scleroderma. V

For further information about our research findings contact info@sruk.co.uk, visit www.sruk.co.uk or call us on 020 3893 5998

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1. 55% of people have not heard of Raynaud’s and 24% have heard of it but know nothing about it [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. 20% of people would be scared to touch someone with Raynaud’s and 24% of people someone with Scleroderma [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. 18% of people would be embarrassed to say that they suffered from Raynaud’s, 22% for scleroderma

IV 632 people tested at the Mobile Clinic in Leeds City Centre, June 2017. 250 people (45%) were unaware of Raynaud’s when they entered the clinic

V Out of the 556 people who received a Raynaud’s diagnosis, 75% had a normal capillaroscopy, 7% had non-specific changes (meaning the results were not normal but were not marker for a specific autoimmune condition) and 18% were showing changes related to scleroderma. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)