



**ALLEN
HOSPITAL**
IOWA HEALTH SYSTEM

Occupational Health



TAKING CARE OF
your
BUSINESS

December 2010



Allen Occupational Health welcomes Carol Woods as Business Development Coordinator. Carol comes to Allen Hospital with over 20 year of experience in the healthcare industry. Carol received her MA in Community Health Education from the University of Northern Iowa in 1992 and her nursing degree from Hawkeye Community College in 1986. Her experience includes health/wellness coaching, marketing, sales, and healthcare management.

This experience along with her education will make her a great resource for our company clients. As Business Development Coordinator, Carol will work with local businesses to assist them with providing quality occupational and wellness services to their employees. We look forward to sharing her talents, skills and expertise with our company clients.

Hazards can cause secondary Raynaud's Phenomenon - How to protect your employees

Raynaud's phenomenon, sometimes called Raynaud's syndrome or disease, is a disorder of blood circulation in the fingers and toes (and in rare instances of the ears and nose). Exposure to cold temperatures abnormally reduces blood circulation to the extremities and causes the skin to become pale, waxy-white or purple. Thus, the disorder is sometimes called "wax finger" or "white finger."

What causes Raynaud's?

The exact cause of Raynaud's phenomenon is not known, however, the condition is aggravated by exposure to cold, smoking and emotional stress. People can also get Raynaud's phenomenon, because of certain underlying diseases (e.g. scleroderma, rheumatoid arthritis or lupus) or injuries. This form is known as "secondary Raynaud's phenomenon."

Within the workplace several hazards can cause "secondary" Raynaud's phenomenon. Exposure to vibration from power tools is by far the greatest concern. Handheld power tools such chainsaws, jackhammers, and pneumatic rock drillers and chippers can cause "hand-arm vibration syndrome." Raynaud's phenomenon is also seen in typists and professional pianists from repeated finger stress, as well as dentists and dental technicians. Environmental and occupational exposure of repeated chilling and rewarming of the hands, several times a day, over a period of years can also cause Raynaud's phenomenon. Additionally frostbite injury with damage to the blood vessels makes an individual susceptible to developing Raynaud's.

Any vibrating tool that causes your employee to feel tingling or numbness in their fingers after 5 minutes of continuous use, could lead to Raynaud's phenomenon. For example, 50% of 146 tree fellers examined in British Columbia had Raynaud's phenomenon; it affected 75% of workers in over 20 years of experience. Similarly, 30% of 1540 forestry worker in Quebec had Raynaud's phenomenon in chainsaw workers. After 20 years of chainsaw use, over 50% of the workers had Reynaud's phenomenon.

Continued on reverse....

ON-SITE FLU SHOT CLINICS

If you are interested in scheduling an on-site flu-shot clinic at your business, please visit our website at www.allenocchealth.com and fill out our Flu Shot Form located at the bottom of the home page.

HOLIDAY HOURS

CLOSED: Friday, December 24th

Open 8am - Noon:
Friday, December 31st

Allen Occupational Health at Prairie Medical Park Expands Services

Patients needing Physical and/ or Occupational Therapy will have the convenience of receiving treatment at our Cedar Falls satellite clinic at Prairie Medical Park in Cedar Falls. Stay tuned for more information!

Past-Due Accounts

We are continuing to tweak our billing processes. In the past, we have not re-billed on a consistent basis for past due accounts. In order to facilitate the billing process and assist our clients we will re-bill on a monthly basis for accounts with an outstanding balance older than 60 days. Any questions regarding these statements can be directed to Laura Mumaw at 319-235-3964.

What are the signs and symptoms of Raynaud's phenomenon?

Attacks of poor blood circulation in the fingers are the most noticeable symptom of Raynaud's phenomenon. Typical attacks occur when cold or emotionally upset. Symptoms usually include:

- Tingling and slight loss of feeling or numbness in the fingers, toes, nose or ears.
- Blanching or whitening of the fingers, usually without affecting the thumb.
- Blue skin that feels cold and numb.
- Numb, prickly feeling or stinging pain, sometimes with redness, upon warming or relief of stress.
- Sequence of color changes in the skin may progress from white to blue to red.

Occupationally induced Raynaud's phenomenon gradually gets worse if workers remain exposed to the condition that cause the problem. As the disorder gets worse, the attacks become stronger and more frequent. So it is extremely important to recognize the signs and symptoms in the early stages.

How do you protect your employees from secondary Raynaud's phenomenon and help those who have it?

Precautions can be taken to reduce the number and intensity of attacks. These precautions include the following:

- Protect the body from cold temperatures -- turn down the air conditioner or wear a sweater.
- Dress appropriately for cold weather by wearing layers, gloves, overcoat, hat and scarf.
- Avoid exposing your hands to extreme cold -- wear gloves when working in cold water or reaching into a freezer.
- Protect hands and feet from injury.
- Avoid tobacco and caffeine -- nicotine and caffeine can reduce blood circulation.
- Decrease stress and anxiety.
- Exercise regularly and drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration.
- During an attack warm fingers and toes (e.g. run warm water over fingers, soak feet in a bowl of warm water) and take time to relax.
- Protect the hands from damage and extreme temperatures.
- Keep warm at work -- wear gloves and warm clothing when working in the cold.
- Massage and exercise fingers during your breaks.
- If tingling, numbness or signs of white finger develop, promptly consult a physician.
- Use only well-maintained and properly operating tools.
- Hold vibrating tools as lightly as possible, consistent with safe work practices. Let the tool do the work.
- Rest vibrating tools on a support or work piece as much as possible.
- Store tools so that they do not have cold handles when next used.
- Use proper job design with scheduled breaks to reduce exposure to vibration.

It is important for workers to recognize if early symptoms of Raynaud's phenomenon have occurred, and then get appropriate advice to reduce further exposure to vibration.