

## Identifying Raynaud's in Breastfeeding Mothers

Scleroderma and Raynaud's UK is the only charity dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by Scleroderma and Raynaud's. We exist to improve awareness and understanding of these conditions, to support those affected, and ultimately to find a cure.

### What is Raynaud's?

Raynaud's phenomenon is a common condition thought to affect up to 10 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 or stress. The blood vessels constrict restricting blood flow which causes a Raynaud's attack.

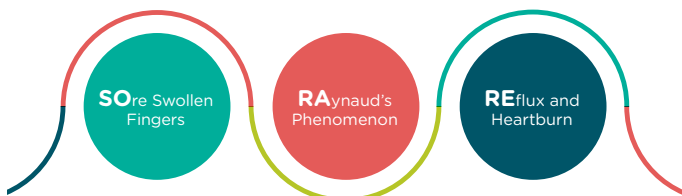
### Top 5 Signs of Raynaud's

- 1 Cold fingers, toes, ears, nose, lips, tongue or nipples
- 2 Colour changes in the skin in response to temperature changes or stress
- 3 Colour changes in the affected area to white, (then sometimes blue, then red)
- 4 Numbness, tingling or pain in the affected area
- 5 Stinging or throbbing pain upon warming or stress relief

Symptoms of Raynaud's can last for a few minutes to several hours.

Sometimes Raynaud's can be a sign of an underlying condition, like scleroderma, although this is rare it's important to spot the signs early:

The early warning signs are often there



### What is Scleroderma?

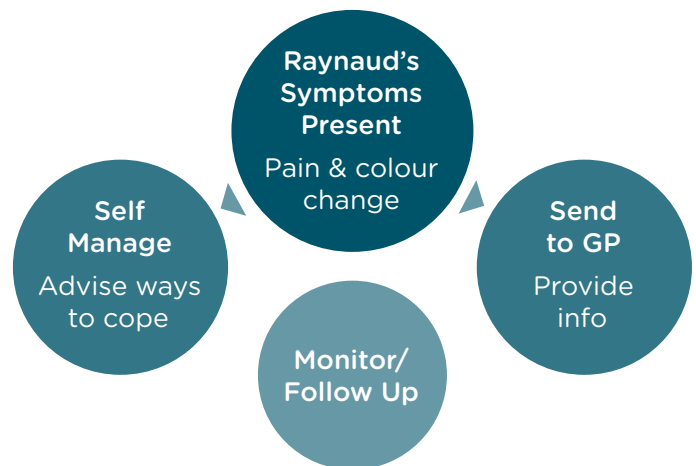
Scleroderma is a rare, chronic, autoimmune condition affecting 12,000 people in the UK.

The body attacks healthy tissue by overproducing collagen, which causes hardening and scarring, reducing normal function. Scleroderma can affect the skin, joints, blood vessels, tendons and internal organs.

### Referring Patients

If Raynaud's isn't diagnosed or misdiagnosed as thrush or mastitis, often un-necessary antibiotics are given to mother (and baby). Unfortunately, this will not make a difference to their condition and may ultimately cause further problems.

If you suspect Raynaud's or Scleroderma then please refer them to their local GP for further examination.



### Providing Information and Support

As a health visitor, if you notice one of the key signs in breastfeeding mothers, provide information on how to manage the condition at home:

- **Keep Warm**  
Always breastfeed in a warm environment
- **Use Heating Aids**  
E.g. Microwaveable Breast Pads
- **Cover Up Baby & Mum**  
E.g. use a blanket

We would also encourage you to direct families to our website for further information and downloadable publications: [www.sruk.co.uk](http://www.sruk.co.uk)

### Order your Information Pack

For more information about the conditions or to receive your free literature pack, simply send your details to [info@sruk.co.uk](mailto:info@sruk.co.uk) quoting HV WEEK or call one of our friendly team on **01270 872776**.