



Cold Hands & Feet

Signs & Symptoms

- Fingers or toes turn pale white or blue, then red, in response to cold temperatures.
- Pain when the fingers or toes turn white.
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet.

Causes

Cold hands and feet can be a symptom of the conditions that follow.

- Poor circulation. This is most often due to diseased arteries.
- **Raynaud's disease.** This is a disorder that affects the flow of blood to the fingers and sometimes to the toes.
- Any underlying disease that affects the blood flow in the tiny blood vessels of the skin. Women who smoke may be more prone to this.
- **Frostbite.** (See at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Stress.
- A side effect of taking certain medicines
- **Cervical rib syndrome.** This is a compression of the nerves and blood vessels in the neck that affects the shoulders, arms, and hands.

Often the cause is unknown and not serious.

Treatment

Emergency care is needed for frostbite. If a medical condition causes cold hands and/or feet, treatment for the condition is needed.

Questions to Ask

After exposure to cold temperatures, do you have **signs and symptoms of frostbite** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com?



NO

With cold hands and/or feet, do you have weakness in the arms, hands, or feet?



NO

When exposed to the cold or when you are under stress, do your hands or feet turn pale, then blue, then red, and get painful and numb?



NO



Self-Care / Prevention

- Don't smoke. If you smoke, quit.
- Avoid caffeine.
- Don't handle cold objects with bare hands. Use ice tongs to pick up ice cubes, etc.
- Set your indoor thermostat at 65°F or higher.
- Wear mittens and wool socks to keep hands and feet warm.
- Don't wear tight-fitting footwear.
- Wiggle your toes. It may help keep them warm by increasing blood flow.
- Stretch your fingers straight out. Swing your arms in large circles like a baseball pitcher warming up for a game. This may increase blood flow to the fingers. Skip this tip if you have bursitis or back problems.
- Meditate. Learn and practice biofeedback.