

***Ask the School Nurse:* Numb hands most likely due to circulation problems**

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Faculty Contributor

Lately I've noticed my hands and sometimes feet are often cold and discolored (ex: purple when cold and very red when hot). I've noticed that especially in the winter time, I have trouble with certain things like gripping a pen or pencil because my hands feel numb. What could this be?

Signed, Purple and Cold in Brevard

Dear Purple and Cold,

Thank you so much for this interesting question. I have met many students with this same issue, so you are not alone. The symptoms you are

describing are most likely related to a circulatory (heart and blood vessels) problem and the most common cause is known as Raynaud's Syndrome. This syndrome effects 5-10% of the population and women are more likely than men to have this disorder. The symptoms are commonly felt in the fingers and toes but can also effect the nose, lips or ear lobes.

Raynaud's is commonly triggered when you are exposed to cold or emotional distress. Normally, to maintain temperature, the body will move blood from the small exterior (outside) veins to deeper veins further from the skin. In Raynaud's, this normal response is intensified by sudden spasmod-

ic contractions of the small vessels to your extremities. The arteries of the fingers and toes may also collapse. This is what causes the discoloration of the skin. Whiteness indicates the decreased blood supply, blue (or purple) indicate a decrease in oxygen to the tissue, and red occurs when the blood returns to the fingers. As the "attack" ends, you may also experience throbbing and tingling in your hands. These episodes can occur for less than a minute, or over several hours.

Most cases of Raynaud's syndrome are not a health risk for you, but it may be important for you to see a doctor to make sure that you do not have another illness that is causing this. While

you are here at Brevard College, you can see the physician on campus for no extra cost and put your mind at rest.

There are some ways to decrease the severity of attacks and to promote overall well-being.

- Warm the hands and feet—go indoors in cold weather, run warm water over the hands, and take time to relax.

- Keep warm—avoid chilling the body by dressing warmly and use chemical warmers in gloves if you need to be outdoors in cold weather.

- Quit smoking—nicotine causes skin temperatures to

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A few things to remember this Valentine's Day

PHAT sex survey results

Last Monday, Feb. 9, through a ballot distributed during lunch, PHAT collected the top 3 answers out of what 134 students think of sex. The week of February the 8th - 14th is Sexual Responsibility week; February the 14th is National Condom Day as well as Valentine's Day. The Peer Health Advocate Team (PHAT) wanted to know the students' real opinions on different facets of sex. PHAT also has researched the real answers to these questions, just to compare what's fact and what's opinion!! If you would like to help the campus become healthier through fun and educational programs/events come join PHAT, meetings are every Thursday at 6 p.m. in the Institute Room. There are FREE condoms in Stamey Center and the Clinic, please don't hesitate to ask for one or take a few.

Q. What is the average number of times per week that undergraduate couples have sex?

Your answers: 1. 3 times a week 2. 4 times a week, 3. 5 times a week

The coreect answer: 112 times a year (slightly more than twice a week).

Q. What STD is most prevalent in the U.S.

Your answers: 1. Herpes 2. Chlamydia, 3. HIV/AIDS.

The coreect answer: Chlamydia, with 2.8 million new cases per year.

Q. What type of birth control do most people use?

Your answers: 1. The pill, 2. condoms 3. Withdrawal

The coreect answer: The pill

Q. At what age does the average person lose their virginity?

Your answers: 1. 16 years old, 2.15 years old, 3. 17 years old.

The coreect answer: 16.4 years old

Q. About what percentage of pregnancies are unplanned?

Your answers: 1. 50%, 2.30% 3. 75%

The coreect answer: 50%

Q. In your opinion, how often do married couples have sex?

Your answers: 1. 3 times a week 2. 5 times a week, 3. 12 or more times a week

The coreect answer: 45% of married couples report having sex "a few times a month." 34% report 2-3 times per week.