

Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome

- Hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) is a disease that involves circulatory disturbances, sensory and motor disturbances and musculoskeletal disturbances.
- HAVS is brought on by the continuous transfer of vibration from a tool or workpiece into a worker's hands.
- Symptoms of HAVS include:
 - A bluish discoloration (cyanosis) of the skin of fingers and hands.
 - Whitening (blanching) of fingertips after cold or damp exposure (known as Raynaud's phenomenon).
 - Numbness, with or without tingling happens, before, during or after blanching.
 - Decreased grip strength and inability to sustain muscle power.
 - Reduced sense of touch and pain perception.
- If HAVS symptoms are ignored the tingling, numbness and loss of strength may cause you the inability to hold on to equipment and materials, which can lead to serious injuries.
- Treatment for HAVS includes:
 - Restoring immediate circulation to blanched fingers by putting your hands in warm water.
 - Swinging your arms or doing other exercises that increase blood flow.
 - Wearing warm, dry clothes and maintaining your core body temperature.
 - Taking periodic breaks from vibrating tools/surfaces.
- HAVS is a chronic and progressive disorder and the time from first exposure to vibration and the blanching of fingertips in the cold can vary from a few months to several years.

Notes:

Instructor Tips

- **Ask workers to share any experiences they may have had, or heard of regarding HAVS.**
- **Explain that attacks are more common in winter, but can occur year round.**
- **Stress the importance of seeing a doctor for specific screening tests in the event that HAVS occurs.**
- **Note: Review Toolbox Talk, Ergonomics (06), Vibration, for techniques to help reduce vibrations in tools and equipment.**

Jobsite: _____
Supervisor: _____

Date: _____
G.C. _____

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Work-Related Ailments (02)