

LIAISON

February 2020

Show your heart some love



This is the time of year when love is in the air. Instead of doing something romantic for your significant other, let's take time to show ourselves some love. The key to a happy heart begins with establishing healthy habits. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, "8 in 10 cases of premature heart disease and strokes caused are preventable through healthy lifestyle behaviours."

We can show our hearts some love by making small changes that will have huge impacts on our overall health.

Stay active— The average adult heart pumps up to 7,500 liters of blood a day. Introducing low-impact activities like swimming, walking or dancing are great ways to increase blood flow and reduce heart disease.

Eat well— Cut back on meals that are high in calories, saturated fat and sugar. Make healthy eating a priority by adding at least five servings of fruits and vegetables to your daily diet. They are a good source of vitamins and minerals that help reduce the risks of having a stroke.

Manage stress— When experiencing stressful situations, try meditation, Tai Chi or yoga. Managing stress through relaxation techniques can help to decrease blood pressure and provides many short- and long-term health benefits.

Showing your heart some love by working on these healthy habits will have a positive impact on your mind, body and soul. Your heart will thank you.



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February is Black History Month



The theme for Black History Month 2020 is: Canadians of African Descent: Going forward, guided by the past. The poster (left) features a Sankofa bird with feet forward and head turned backward, reflecting on the past to build a successful future.

To celebrate Black History Month, RTOERO is posting notable Canadians of African descent on our Facebook page weekly for the month of February. Each week features a different theme (education, change makers, French Canadians, arts and culture). Click here to see today's post! This week's theme for our posts is education. In addition to the notable people featured on Facebook, we wanted to do a feature in Liaison as well: **Anderson Ruffin Abbott (1837-1913)**.



Born in Toronto, Anderson Ruffin Abbott graduated from the Toronto School of Medicine, becoming Canada's first black doctor in 1861. Aware of social implications of the American Civil war, he became a surgeon for the Union Army. Abbott took charge of a hospital in Arlington and became close friends with the Lincoln family. He was among the few who stood vigil over Lincoln as he lay dying.

Upon Abbott's return to Canada, he was elected to the boards of the Chatham Collegiate Institute and the Wilberforce Educational Institute. He was active in amalgamating local schools that met "the requirements of the youth, irrespective of sex, creed or nationality." Abbott continued his work in education by becoming a high school trustee when he moved his practice to Dundas, Ontario.

Canada's aging population is on the rise, but do we have the resources to match?

By 2026, [more than 20 per cent](#) of our population will be 65 years and older, the majority of whom will be women. Our aging population is expanding, but the opportunity for specialized care is limited – Canada is home to only 304 geriatricians.

Given the mismatch between the number of geriatricians and our aging population, new models of care have been proposed to extend the reach of geriatricians.



Some suggest that the specialty should focus on increasing the capacity of all healthcare providers to care for older people rather than increasing the number of geriatricians recruited to provide this care. Consistent with this approach, primary care physicians can obtain 'Care of the Elderly' training to provide them with additional skills to care for older adults. Research is another avenue we can use to spread the reach of geriatric medicine.

The American Geriatrics Society has proposed a [four-part approach](#) to address this problem: more geriatric experts, more geriatric training for the whole work force, more public health education to empower older adults and caregivers, and more health policy that can support us all as we age.

It's important to understand the gap in geriatric care between need and supply. By raising awareness of this issue, we can start a conversation and plan appropriate models of care to optimize the health and wellness of our population.

Article courtesy of Dr. Paula Rochon and Nathan Stall

Paula Rochon is a geriatrician, the vice-president of research at Women's College Hospital and the RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto. Nathan Stall is a geriatrician and research fellow at the University of Toronto and Women's College Research Institute.

Coming soon: income tax letters and Tax Tips

It could be said that there are 5 seasons in Canada – winter, spring, summer, fall... and tax season. To assist with income tax preparation, Johnson Insurance automatically mails statements of premiums paid along with a summary of claims incurred and processed in 2019. Once the mailing is underway, the income tax letters will also be made available on the [Johnson Members Only website](#). Please watch your mail in the coming weeks - it is anticipated letters will be in policyholders' hands by the end of February 2020.



Once again the RTOERO auditors are creating our popular Tax Tips document with information related to items of particular interest to seniors when preparing annual tax returns. Tax Tips 2019 will be available online and emailed to members later this month. As always, remember that this document is a general resource – for specific tax advice, consult your financial advisor.

Treat yourself to a mid-week getaway

One of the best parts of retirement is knowing that any day can be a vacation. So why not treat yourself to a mid-week getaway! Extended vacations can be expensive and stressful, while local getaways require less planning, are less stressful and can be booked on a whim! In addition, booking mid-week is often more affordable than week-ends.



You can find lots of great travel deals using [Venngo](#), take advantage of 10% off Fairmont hotels or discounted show and attraction tickets offered through Tickets at Work. Canada is a beautiful country and Via Rail gives you the opportunity to see it up close with a train ride across the country; with Venngo you'll get a 10% discount. If you aren't ready to start planning yet, there is always the last minute travel club, featuring deals that are up to 65% off!

Haven't signed up for Venngo yet? It's simple! Visit rto-ero.venngo.com and click the create account option, type in your RTOERO membership ID, and away you go!

How to make the most of visiting a friend or loved-one in hospital



Hospitals are often not the most welcoming of places, and can be boring and busy all at once. Often, the only consistent activity are the regular check-ins for tests,

medications or charts. Here are some tips for making the most of your visit with a friend or loved-one during their hospital stay:

- Bring them time consuming, distracting and engaging activities like puzzles and games that can be enjoyed in bed or bring them a mobile device to watch a TV series on.
- Ask if there are any languages or skills they haven't had the time to pursue and bring them books or videos of that interest. This can help motivate and make them feel like there's opportunity in their stay.
- Obviously health is top of mind, but keep it light and let them take the lead on talking about it. Listen more and let them lead conversation. Respect if they prefer silent company.
- Check before visiting. Don't make the person you're visiting feel obligated to expend their limited energy to entertain your visit. Visiting isn't the only way to show support.
- They may be bored, frustrated and physically uncomfortable during their stay. Illness is physically, socially and emotionally taxing; being your own healthcare advocate is very demanding when you don't feel well. Ask if you can assist them with doctors or paperwork.
- Hospital rooms aren't arranged for convenience and can feel sterile. The smallest things make a big difference for a long stay. Bring (or send) basics like chargers, extension cords, headphones, a full robe and slippers so they can walk around, and plushies and blankets to pad the bed. Familiar comforts are encouraging.

It's always nice to see a familiar face and visit with friends or family, but the gesture goes so much further when the visit is at the hospital. Working to make your visit a more positive, supportive experience is a great way to show you care.

Hypertension and your eyes

Hypertension is a medical condition where the blood pressure in the arteries is abnormally elevated. It can, if left untreated, become a major risk factor to your overall health. Hypertension can also affect your eyes and sight. High blood pressure, as it is often referred to, can cause damage to the blood vessels in the retina, affecting the back of the eye where an image is focused. This disease is called hypertensive retinopathy.



Genetic factors do play a role in your risk for this disease and luckily there are medications available to stabilize your blood pressure. There are also some lifestyle changes that you can follow in order to reduce these risks altogether. Here are a few tips:

1. [Exercise regularly](#)
2. Quit smoking
3. Limit your alcohol intake
4. Reduce your stress level

5. Eat a healthy diet (we recommend a diet filled with fruits and veggies, as well as proteins such as salmon and chicken. It is important to significantly reduce the amount of salt, fat in your diet and to eliminate your intake of processed foods.)

Unfortunately, signs of hypertensive retinopathy only manifest themselves late in the disease. Some symptoms include double or cloudy vision, headaches and if very advanced, loss of vision. Your optometrist may be able to detect hypertension through an eye exam. If your eyes are showing early signs of the disease, your optometrist will be able to refer you to a health professional for diagnosis.

[Article courtesy of IRIS](#)

Four things to consider before bringing a foster dog home

Fostering dogs helps to reduce overcrowding in shelters, can save a dog's life and helps to prepare them for adoption to a forever-home.

Once you've decided fostering is for you, here are some things to consider before you bring the precious pooch home:



- Finding a reputable dog rescue organization that is run by volunteers (in which nobody is compensated financially) because profit should not be made in rescue, it should be about saving dogs! You can look-up an organization and check reviews on www.pawsadvisors.com.
- Foster policies and procedures vary by organization. Some will even provide food and supplies for the foster dog's care, while others will not. Make sure you ask about and understand these policies and procedures prior to committing.
- Be patient if the dog is not your best friend as soon as you meet them. Most organizations will give you a dog based on your preference and experience level. Each dog will come with their own history and personality. It takes about three days for the dog to decompress and three weeks to start to know your routines.
- Don't forget to ask questions about the dog (how long have they been at the shelter, any medical or behavioural issues, how they are with other dogs, if they're housetrained).

Fostering can be an incredibly rewarding experience and it's easy to get attached to the dog. Despite the heartache of saying goodbye, just remember, your heart breaks once so theirs doesn't have to break again.

**Protect your home while
you're travelling during winter**

A winter vacation can be exactly what we need to break the winter blues, but we won't enjoy it thoroughly if we worry about the safety of our home. Whether the trip is a short getaway or a winter-long stay, making sure all is well back home is of great importance.

Some of the most common types of losses that people face when away during the winter months include theft, vandalism, water damage, electrical and heating malfunctions, and damages that severe winter conditions are known to cause. Keep these tips in mind before you travel:

- Check your property insurance policy to determine the restrictions or exclusions that may apply when you are away. Some of these apply after only 4 or 5 days away from home.
- Leave the furnace running at an appropriate temperature to prevent pipes from freezing.
- Ensure smoke detectors are in working order.
- Unplug unnecessary appliances and electronic equipment.
- Arrange for someone to check your home regularly (inside and outside), to collect mail and shovel snow; make sure this person knows how to get in touch with you should anything happen.
- Consider a home security system; invest in deadbolt locks and slide locks if not already done.
- Make sure anything freestanding outside has been secured or stored.
- Secure your valuables, including important documents to protect your financial and personal information.
- Refrain from using social media to announce that you are away. Use email instead to send pictures and travel updates to friends/family.

Now you can enjoy your time away!

Article courtesy of Johnson Inc.

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RTOERO STAFF PROFILE



Name: Jessica Martin

Title: Administrative Office:
Executive Assistant

How long have you been at RTOERO? It will be 2 years in April.

How do you help RTOERO Members?

In the executive office I help with everything from our various political advocacy initiatives to communications with the members and district executives. I work closely with members of the RTOERO committees, am the main support for the Political Advocacy Committee (PAC) and Project Service to Others (PSTO), and play a supportive role for our annual meetings, forums and workshops.

What do you enjoy most about working at RTOERO? I think a big part of what makes RTOERO such a special place to work is that the staff genuinely care about the work we do and the impact it has. But beyond that it is truly wonderful to work for a member-based organization comprised of such a large and diverse body of people who genuinely care about what RTOERO represents.

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