

LIAISON

December 2022

Keep skin hydrated in winter



As we age, our skin loses moisture. This situation is exacerbated in the cold, dry Canadian winter.

Our skin is our body's largest organ. It's essential to keep skin hydrated in winter to prevent dry skin symptoms such as itching and redness. Here are eight tips to try.

1. Use a gentle, unscented, non-soap cleanser when bathing, to stay fresh without stripping our skin's natural oils.
2. Limit the length and frequency of showers – and make sure the water is not too hot.
3. Apply moisturizing lotion to damp skin right after bathing to provide the most benefit. Give extra attention to body parts that tend to be extra dry – like lower legs and feet.
4. Remember to use sunscreen before you go outdoors.
5. Protect your hands. Wear gloves outdoors and while doing activities that get your hands wet – like doing dishes. Avoid alcohol-based sanitizers – instead use mild non-scented hand soap.
6. Consider a humidifier to combat the dry air of the winter season.
7. Use unscented laundry detergent and avoid fabric softener.

8. Put soft, natural fabrics next to your skin and wear breathable layers.

Dry skin may be a symptom of a more serious condition. If you experience problematic dry skin, check with your family doctor.

Keep skin hydrated in winter

If you have lost a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic or any other traumatic event, you may still be struggling to grieve. Families bereaved during pandemics or violent events have more difficulty in grieving because the rites are disrupted or sometimes impossible to perform, which disrupts the grief and bereavement process.



Without being able to count on the support of the community and without being able to pay homage to the deceased, these people are at risk of prolonged and complicated grief, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental health problems. Can rituals used in a therapeutic setting help people overcome prolonged and complicated grief?

Whether conducted in groups or alone, under the benevolent guidance of a therapist or independently, at home or in public places, ritual experiences create an alternate symbolic reality that allows one to express one's emotions in a controlled and safe environment.

Different interventions are used in therapeutic rituals: meditating, communicating symbolically with the deceased or an imaginary friend, writing a letter, reading religious texts or poems, keeping objects and images to remember the deceased, lighting up candles, or holding a farewell ceremony.

Almost all studies show significant positive effects of following a therapy for prolonged grief, including rituals to decrease symptoms associated with prolonged grief, such as depression, post-traumatic distress, hopelessness and panic behaviours, intrusive thoughts and loneliness. Additionally, some studies have reported improved memory, positive mood, personal growth, and integration of meaning.

[Click here to read the full article on the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal.](#)



Planned giving can support healthy aging for future generations

Have you ever thought about how to change your world and make a difference in the lives of others?

A planned gift in your will, also referred to as a “legacy gift,” is one of the most significant and lasting gifts you can leave for future generations. It is an opportunity to ensure that we advance knowledge about aging and help make sure your children and grandchildren have access to age-appropriate, high-quality care and support as they get older.

Your lawyer, accountant or financial planner can help determine what kind of planned gift would be best for you, your family and your estate. You can leave a gift of life insurance or donate securities like stocks and bonds. If you have considered the RTOERO Foundation as part of your planned gift, you can designate a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your total assets.

Your professional team can also guide you on how you can create your lasting legacy with the RTOERO Foundation in a meaningful and lasting way. Please call Tammy Gonsalves, Manager of Philanthropy at the RTOERO Foundation at 416-962-9463 ext. 203 or 1-800-361-9888 to start the conversation.



Learn about Hanukkah and Kwanzaa traditions this December



While many are familiar with Christmas traditions, why not take some time to learn about other December holidays and their traditions that you may be less familiar with?

Hanukkah (December 18-26)

Hanukkah, which is the Hebrew word for “dedication,” is a Jewish celebration. The roots are from a Jewish story involving a menorah in the second temple of Jerusalem, that burned for eight days as the Jewish people rose up to defeat their oppressors. Also called

the Festival of Lights, during the celebrations one candle on the menorah is lit each night by a shamash candle which is the ninth candle on the menorah. In addition to lighting the candle, blessing and traditional songs are performed while gifts are exchanged each night. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Kwanzaa (December 26-January 1)

Kwanzaa is a holiday that honours African heritage and it was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. The word Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili phrase that means “first fruits,” and for seven nights a candle in a Kinara is lit to represent one of Kwanzaa’s 7 principles (unity, self-determination, collective work, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.) This celebration is meant as a reflection of the culture and contributions of the African community. Kwanzaa culminates in a communal feast called a Karamu. [Click here to learn more.](#)

RTOERO builds presence as trusted voice through 2022 Vibrant Voices advocacy



RTOERO's Vibrant Voices advocacy ended on a high note for 2022. With combined efforts from the Board of Directors, Political Advocacy Committee volunteers, members and staff, we exceeded our outreach and engagement targets for the year.

Our first target was to meet with 50 elected officials and senior government staff in 2022.

Results: This year we connected with **97** officials and staff from all levels of Canadian government through a series of virtual and in-person meetings. Some key highlights include meetings with:

- Ministers of seniors from various provinces

- Federal MP and government staff through our Day on the Hill event
- Ontario MPPs and staff at 6th annual Queen's Park event

Our second target was that 90% of webinar attendees have a better understanding of RTOERO's advocacy issues.

Results: We hosted three webinars on our advocacy issues and three virtual townhalls to help prepare members in Ontario for the provincial election. Based on data collected from surveys, 92% of webinar attendees agree that they have a better understanding of RTOERO's advocacy issues as a result of attending the webinars. Some key highlights include:

- Over 2,500 webinar attendees
- Expert speakers: Dr. David Suzuki, Dr. Paule Lebel and representatives from International Longevity Centre Canada (ILC)
- 87% of webinar attendees view RTOERO as a strong advocate on seniors issues

For more information email agerson@rtoero.ca or visit vibrantvoices.ca.



Look on the bright side this winter solstice



This year's winter solstice for the Northern Hemisphere is two weeks today, on December 21 at 4:48pm EST. The day with the fewest hours of sunlight is due to earth's tilted axis, and marks the moment when the hemisphere is tilted as far away from the sun as it can be. While many refer to this day as the "shortest day of the year" due to the limited hours of sunlight, here are five additional facts about this notable day:

- The roots of the term "solstice" come from the Latin words sol (sun) and sistere (stopped/stationary)
- The sun appears to stand still a few days before and after the solstice, due to the slightest elevation of the sun's path at noon making it appear to freeze in the sky
- This solstice marks the astronomical beginning of the winter season, and simultaneously the promise of brighter days ahead as each day after provides more sunlight
- The winter solstice is also called the hibernal solstice; hibernal meaning relating to, or occurring in, winter
- While winter (December) and summer (June) have solstices, spring (March) and fall (September) have equinoxes. At an equinox the sun's path places it directly over the equator, resulting in seemingly "equal" time of sunlight and darkness for those days

So on December 21, take a moment to celebrate that the days are only going to get brighter!

RTOERO post-secondary scholarship applications now open



RTOERO is proud to support students in their quest to improve the lives of seniors in Canada. This year RTOERO will award [20 scholarships](#) valued at \$3,000 each. RTOERO members can recommend students who are enrolled in college or university programs that lead to careers in seniors health and wellbeing, education, environmental stewardship, or that reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, or inclusion. The scholarship application deadline is **January 13, 2023**.

Last year scholarships were awarded to students in programs ranging from speech language pathology and biomedical engineering, to social work. Some recipients include:

Robert Hanley, MA – Healthcare Innovation
Emma Sypes, MD – Doctor of Medicine
Laurel Wilson, BA – Architectural Studies

Since completing his MA, Robert has been working to develop programs which strengthen the cognitive health of older adults, and help them cope with loneliness and isolation. Currently completing her third year of medical school, Emma is involved in numerous community outreach initiatives, including the Senior Isolation Prevention Program that connected medical students with seniors to provide social connection during the pandemic. Laurel is continuing her Architectural Studies degree, focusing on the creation of accessible, multi-generational, age-friendly spaces.

For more information, visit rtoero.ca/giving-back/scholarships.

Amazing facts about ears



Ears. They're flappy, have a weird shape and hug the sides of your head. Yet, they provide a symphony of information to the brain, every second of the day. Even as you sleep, your ears are processing sounds and information on a consistent basis.

In fact, ears are a crucial part of everyday life. Without the ability to process sound, life becomes extremely difficult. Navigating society as well as maintaining healthy relationships depend on your hearing. Your ears help you absorb your surroundings, keep you safe from danger and are key instruments to overall cognitive health. Hearing loss can have a significant effect on mental health as well - as it can contribute to depression, anxiety and dementia.

Here are 5 facts about ears you may not have known:

- Ears keep you balanced
- Ears are self-cleaning
- Ears have the smallest bones in your body
- Earlobes are constantly growing
- Ears are connected to the nose and throat

All these facts only prove how intricate and profoundly important our ears truly are. Keep them as healthy as possible by avoiding excessive noise exposure and by getting your hearing checked on a regular basis.

Article courtesy of [HearingLife](#)

RTOERO STAFF PROFILE



Name: Ewa Romanski

Title: Chief Financial Officer

How long have you been at RTOERO? I celebrated my 20th anniversary in November

How do you help RTOERO Members?

Through financial planning, analysis, ensuring proper controls and risk management, my work supports allocating financial resources for the services and activities offered to RTOERO members. I work closely with the Board of Directors, Audit Committee and district treasurers.

What do you enjoy most about working at RTOERO?

Working with wonderful, committed volunteers and colleagues at RTOERO. I especially enjoy assisting districts and treasurers with their financial needs.

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