

# Cold Cuts

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## Early Trial Of New Raynaud's Drug Shows Promise

By Ronni Shulman  
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**P**reliminary trials of a new topical treatment for Raynaud's phenomenon, *Vascana*, indicate the drug may help to increase blood flow to the fingertips of Raynaud's sufferers.

MediQuest Therapeutics, Inc., the pharmaceutical company that developed the drug, reported in its findings Nov. 13, 2006 at the annual American College of Rheumatology (ACR) meeting in Washington, D.C. that the 37 Raynaud's patients in the study demonstrated "significant improvement in blood flow with both doses of study medication compared to placebo." In addition, the company noted, "treatment was well tolerated with minimal or no serious side-effects." Trials were conducted at the University of Washington and Johns Hopkins University.

Patients with primary and secondary Raynaud's participated in the study; i.e., 11 with primary Raynaud's, 24 with Raynaud's secondary to scleroderma, and 2 with the phenomenon secondary to lupus.

According to Fred Dechow, M.D., Chief Executive Officer of MediQuest and a Raynaud's sufferer himself, "Vascana has the potential to become the first FDA approved treatment option for Raynaud's Disease in more than 20 years. There is currently no pharmaceutical product specifically approved by the FDA for patients suffering from Raynaud's Disease." Topical and ingested medications currently on the market are "off-label" products (developed for other medical conditions), he told the Raynaud's Association. These treatments include nitroglycerin ointments and patches, calcium

channel blockers, and other vasodilators and drugs that can improve blood flow to the skin or digits.

"Unlike conventional nitroglycerin ointment, which slowly penetrates the skin and then enters the patient's system, Vascana is rapidly absorbed," says Jeff Gregory, M.D., MediQuest's Chief Medical Officer. "It's non-greasy, pleasant feeling and smelling."



"We saw improved digital blood flow in the laboratory study presented at the ACR meeting, but we have to wait for more data before drawing conclusions."

*Dr. Fredrick Wigley, MD  
Johns Hopkins University*

Subjects in the trial are directed to apply Vascana immediately before exposure to cold temperatures or up to five minutes after an event, he added. One of the study investigators from Johns Hopkins University, Fredrick M. Wigley, MD – a member of the Raynaud's Association Medical Advisory Board -- is cautiously optimistic about the prospects for Vascana. "We saw improved digital blood flow in the laboratory study presented at

*(Continued on page 4)*



### Inside This Issue

- ◆ New Drug Shows Promise
- ◆ Stress Tips
- ◆ Sound Off About Pet Peeves
- ◆ Top Online Health Sites

## Stressed out? Close your eyes, and hum a tune.



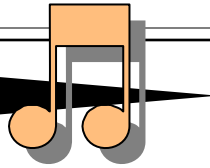
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**L**isten to these stats: A University of Michigan study found that 70% of teens feel stressed at least once a week, and 30% say they're stressed every day! And 80% of adults also say stress is a problem – and that work is the #1 cause. So, I guess everyone can use these stress-busters from *Woman's World* magazine:

- **Close your eyes** - and briefly think about something you value highly, like a loved one. Researchers at UCLA found that visualizing something personally important lowers stress hormones instantly – and keeps them lower for at least 45 minutes. In fact, regularly thinking about positive things improves brain function and helps prevent heart disease and diabetes.
- **Email**. Writing to a friend about what's bothering you is almost as good as talking to a therapist. It helps you reorganize the facts so they make more sense, which reduces your stress – even if you never send it. Writing down your feelings can also give you the insight you need to resolve the problem. And here's an added bonus: study after study shows that social ties reduce your risk of disease by lowering your heart rate, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- **Hum a tune!** Scientists in Sweden found that humming along to music lessens tension immediately. The secret? Humming requires you to

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Stressed Out ?



(Continued from page 1)

breathe in and out deeply - a medically-proven relaxation technique. And the vibration caused by humming is relaxing, too.

- **Pinch your earlobes.** It's called "auricular acupressure" - and researchers found that it can relieve anxiety instantly. In a recent study, when paramedics applied pressure to the earlobes of ambulance patients en route to the hospital, their anxiety decreased by 50 percent. So, simply pinch each earlobe between your thumb and forefinger for 20 seconds every half an

hour. And it'll trigger the release of feel-good chemicals that'll relax your muscles, brain and spinal cord.

To recap: If you want to de-stress instantly, close your eyes, "vent" in an email to a friend, hum a tune, or pinch your earlobes. And you'll be feeling relaxed and stress-free in no time.

*Editor's Note: Stress can trigger a Raynaud's attack just as easily as exposure to cold temperatures. Taking steps to reduce the stress in your life and how you cope with it can help reduce the frequency and severity of Raynaud's attacks overtime.*

**DISCLAIMER:** The Raynaud's Association does not endorse the drugs, treatments or products reported in this newsletter. Each patient's needs and experiences may vary. Member tips and product reviews are not clinically-based reports. So please review all treatment options with your doctor and use caution in exploring new products.



## Got a pet peeve you'd like to share with us?

Colleen in North Carolina tells us she's dangerously miserable in her office because of the cold drafts. It's taking her company *months* to rectify the situation. In the meantime, she's developed acid reflux from the chronic stress, now eroding the enamel on her teeth. Brrrrr! I get a chill just thinking about it! Anyone who'd like to share their experience with cold drafts, please contact Colleen directly at [cmccarthy1@nc.rr.com](mailto:cmccarthy1@nc.rr.com).

I have a few pet peeves of my own I'd like to share. How are we supposed to put coins in parking meters on blustery days? I refuse to remove my

mittens to accommodate the transaction, but it's almost impossible to succeed when you're standing outside freezing trying to hurry the process without the use of your fingers! Why don't they invent a swipeable card device for us?

Here's another one: I'm constantly cold on planes, and often need more than one blanket for long flights to cover my shoulders and feet properly. How many times have you been on an airplane and been told there are no blankets? It's happened so frequently on my trips that now I carry my own with me just to be safe. I'd pay extra for an airline that would let you reserve blankets with your tickets—how about you?

Share your pet peeves and solutions with fellow Frosties. Write to us at [lynn@raynauds.org](mailto:lynn@raynauds.org).

## Special Thanks to Our Newsletter Sponsor:



We're grateful to the folks at Wristies® for their generous contribution towards publishing this season's newsletter.

Wristies are fingerless gloves good for layering under a coat outdoors as a protective layer between a jacket and gloves or mittens. Made of cushy Polartec®, they also provide indoor warmth with the freedom to type or play the piano.

There's a great story behind the product, as they were designed by a young Girl Scout. Come in a variety of colors and fun prints.

Also check out their new Tubies neck gaiters—the warmest, most comfortable gaiter I've tried to date!

### Special Offer For Raynaud's Association Members!

Receive a **10% discount** on all purchases from Wristies. Use the **promo code "Raynauds"** at [www.wristies.com](http://www.wristies.com).

## Medical Advisory Board



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## Hot Products for Cold Sufferers



I'm happy to report we're finding more and more products to get us through the cold times. Here are a few.

⚙️ **Heated Fleece Jacket** — The heated apparel we've tested in the past had us so burdened with clunky batteries and awkward wires we felt like a robot from an old science fiction movie. But this jacket was made for us Frosties! The lightweight, fleecy jacket is powered by a thin rechargeable battery that hooks up to the inner heating elements through one pocket—except for the yummy heat, you won't even be aware that it's there! The jacket has three temperature settings, and three heating zones, so you concentrate the heat where you need it most. Available in unisex sizes S-XL, black only. It's got a great snuggly feel and is machine-washable. Sells for \$179.00. They also offer heated vests and cargo pants. Buy direct from the manufacturer Adventure Action Gear. Email them at [service@adventureag.com](mailto:service@adventureag.com), or call 310-412-1070 ext. #111.

⚙️ **Bearhands™ Mittens for Children** — These cute polar fleece mitts make staying warm fun and easy for younger Frosties. The mittens have warm Thinsulate™ lining and non-slip bear-shaped PVC pads that make things easy to grip. If greater dexterity is

needed (Youth Size only), they can easily slip their fingers out of the Velcro®-held flap without removing the full mitten, so hands stay warm and mitts aren't misplaced. Drawstring closure at wrists keep out snow and cold. Come in fun colors like cobalt, fuchsia, and orange. Sizes are Infant, Toddler Youth Small and Youth Large for \$11.95 to \$25.95 a pair. Order from Bear Hands Ltd.: [www.bearhands.net](http://www.bearhands.net), or call toll-free 877-805-9898.

⚙️ **Toasty Feet™** — These shoe insoles are made of Aerogel, the same advanced thermal insulation used by NASA to protect astronauts from extreme conditions. They are light and hand washable, and really cushiony. Come in Men's, Women's, and Youth sizes (trim to fit). The retail price is \$12.95 a pair, but good news! The manufacturer is offering a **25% discount** for our members. Order from [www.toastyfeet.com](http://www.toastyfeet.com), or call 800-967-9727. Give the **discount code "RYPW6047"** to qualify for the special pricing. It's available on all of the manufacturer's products on their website, so check out their other warming goodies. *Editor's note: Fit best in roomy, wider toe shoes.*

⚙️ **USB Heated Gloves** — Many thanks to Beth for locating this unusual product for us! These

mitts are similar in design to the Bearhands product described earlier, but these are made for adults, and specifically for keeping hands warm while typing. These wool mittens open up to resemble fingerless gloves, providing easy finger mobility. Now here's the best part: each glove connects to the USB ports on your computer (or videogame console) to keep your hands warm while working! There are two heat settings, and come in fun colorful designs (blue or pink with alphabet lettering), or a more muted grey stripe. Priced at \$22.99 per pair. To order, call Perpetual Kid at 703-652-4851, or go to [www.perpetualkid.com](http://www.perpetualkid.com).

⚙️ **Under Covers Foot Warmer** — For those of us who've chosen not to use electric blankets or mattress pads at night, here's an efficient foot warming alternative! The electric pad fits between your mattress and fitted bed sheet to warm only your feet on cold winter nights. Offers three heat settings. Choose from Twin (item # CM-72561 @ \$39.95) or Full/Queen (# CM-72562 @ \$49.95). For king-sized beds use two twin warmers. Available from Hammacher Schlemmer. Call 800-543-3366, or go to [www.hammacher.com](http://www.hammacher.com).

*Thanks for all of your discoveries! Please keep us posted on new products you believe will be of service to fellow Frosties.*





## Drug Shows Promise

(Continued from page 1)

the ACR meeting, but we have to wait for more data before drawing conclusions. Another study is underway to further test its use in real life situations.”

Daniel E. Furst, M.D., professor of medicine at UCLA Medical Center and another internationally renowned rheumatologist (and Raynaud's Association Medical Advisory Board member), also warns Raynaud's patients to temper their enthusiasm for the drug until more studies are completed. “This was a small clinical trial,” he noted, “and we need much more well-controlled data before we get our hopes up.”

MediQuest agrees that more work needs to be done – and positive results proven – before the drug is presented for final FDA review. Studies are currently underway in 18 centers throughout the United States and Canada. Additional trials will be conducted in Europe. “We've looked at fingers, but we also plan to see how Vascana works to prevent and reduce attacks on toes, noses, or other extremities” says Dr. Dechow. If subsequent studies are successful, he adds, Vascana could be available on the market in 2008.

Information about ongoing trials is available at [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov).

## Top 10 Online Health, Fitness and Nutrition Destinations

Week ending September 10, 2006 (US, Home and Work)

Brand or Channel	Unique Audience (000)	Active Reach (%)
WebMD	2,677	1.99
Weight Watchers	1,497	1.11
About Health & Fitness	1,480	1.10
Drugstore.com	1,237	0.92
Walgreens	1,215	0.90
Yahoo! Health	1,012	0.75
AOL Health	992	0.74
RealAge	973	0.72
Mayo Clinic	961	0.71
Medco	925	0.69

Source: Nielsen / NetRatings NetView

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- ◆ *Top Online Health Sites*