

# Cold Cuts

Volume 11 Issue 2

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## Caring for Dry, Flaky Skin

Reprinted courtesy of the FootSmart<sup>®</sup> Catalog, a property of Benchmark Brands

**C**old weather not only exacerbates Raynaud's attacks, it also causes dry, itchy skin on hands and feet.

According to podiatrist Dr. Barbara Schlefman, dry skin becomes commonplace during the winter months due to low humidity. Turning up the heat may make you feel warmer, but it increases the amount of dry heat in your home that can, in turn, leach the moisture from your skin.

Other culprits include age and heredity. As you get older, your skin loses much of its natural moisture. And some people just have more of a tendency to develop dry skin than others.

Because many Raynaud's sufferers lack adequate blood circulation to their extremities, their skin dries out even faster, leading to decreased skin pliability and, eventually, cracked hands and feet. Keeping hands moisturized is relatively simple. Access to feet – covered by socks and shoes most of the day – is more difficult.

Dr. Schlefman recommends the following tips to maintaining soft, smooth skin on your hands, feet and heels throughout the winter months:

- **Drink a lot of water** to keep your body hydrated.
- **Use emollient creams and moisturizing agents.** For the feet, consider products such as Total Foot Recovery Cream with Shea Butter or Borage Skin Therapy Lotion. Creams like FootSmart NightTime

Heel Treatment Cream and FootSmart NightTime Foot Renewal Cream also contain Vitamins A and E to give skin extra protection from the harsh winter elements. Dr. Schlefman says to check labels; moisturizers with low water content work best.



**“DO NOT soak your hands and feet. Take only short, lukewarm showers or baths.”**

- **If the skin on your feet and heels is especially dry and scaly, use an occlusive dressing** – such as socks or plastic bags – to ensure that creams, ointments and lotions absorb into the skin. Many kits, such as FootSmart NightTime Heel Treatment Cream with 2 Heel Socks or Heel Wraps with Podiatrist's Secret Heel Treatment Cream, have a convenient, ready-to-use occlusive dressing and emollient

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Cold Comfort: A Story of One Raynaud's Sufferer

By Ronni Shulman  
Member



**T**he memory of my first Raynaud's attack is vivid.

It was more than 25 years ago. I was 25 years old, standing at the train station in suburban New York on a cold December morning. Suddenly I felt a pain in my toes unlike any I had ever felt before. My fingers throbbed, too, but my gloves must have provided some protection. My stockings and shoes were a minimal barrier against the freezing concrete ground.

The pain was a bit like the “brain freeze” you sometimes get when you swallow ice cream. It had that intensity, but it didn't stop. It took about 15 minutes on the overheated train before the feeling abated.

In that cold year the episodes became a dreaded daily occurrence, affecting both fingers and toes. I had no idea what was causing the pain, and I was puzzled because I had experienced previous cold winters without ever having such an intense reaction.

When I visited my mother at work one day – she was a medical assistant at a hospital – she mentioned my problem to one of the physicians. He took a quick look at my hand, then told me, “Move to Florida.” That unhelpful response, I later learned, is all too common.

My physician put my hands in ice water, but there wasn't much of a visible reaction. I felt like the person who complains about the TV not working, but then it works perfectly when it's sent to the repair shop. My complaints were pooh-poohed.

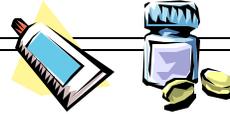
Eventually another doctor sug-

*(Continued on page 3)*



### Inside This Issue

- Caring for Dry, Flaky Skin
- Cold Comfort
- Special Letter to Members
- New Discussion Forum
- Hot Products



## Member Tips

**M**ore success stories and tips members would like us to share with fellow frosties:

- **Warm Tummy Bliss** - Peggy from New Jersey discovered that by putting a warm microwavable heat pack in her pockets—and holding it between her tummy and the waist band of her pants—it worked to keep her core warm, thus warding off a Raynaud's attack.

*Editor's Note: I bet those ThermaCare<sup>®</sup> disposable air-activated heat packs that adhere to the body would work great, too!*

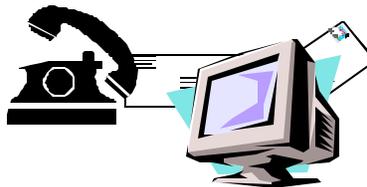
- **Microwavable Slipper Mystery Solved** - Several years ago, we sang the praises of those cozy microwavable Lava Booties that are truly functional in that they have real soles for walking—not like those rice-filled slippers that “squish” with each step. That's because the warmer is in a gel pack wrapped in a front pocket of the shoe. But several of you have contacted me saying you can't find them anymore, and the newer rice-filled booties don't serve the same function.

Well rejoice: Suzanne from Massachusetts found a great alternative! They are called “Cozy Soles”, and claim to be the only slippers that heat the *entire* surface of your feet with long-lasting warmth while providing the freedom to walk about comfortably. They are available from a number of merchants, but Suzanne found one site that offers a 10% discount if products are purchased for medical reasons: [www.heatrelief.com](http://www.heatrelief.com) or call 800-929-3949. The name sounds counter-intuitive because a number of their products work both ways (put the booties in the freezer for a few hours and they relieve burns, too). They look like a great resource for us frosties. Thanks for the discovery, Suzanne!

Please send your tips and ideas to [lynn@raynauds.org](mailto:lynn@raynauds.org), or use the contact form on our web site: [www.raynauds.org](http://www.raynauds.org).

**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.

## Member Connections



A member in Gainesville, Georgia would like to connect with fellow frosties in the area. Please contact us directly at the address below if you'd like to be put in touch together.

Anyone wishing to connect with other Raynaud's members, ask questions or share success stories, send your requests to: Cold Cuts, Raynaud's Association, Inc., 94 Mercer Avenue, Hartsdale, NY 10530, or e-mail [lynn@raynauds.org](mailto:lynn@raynauds.org).

## Q&A

Following is an answer contributed by **Dr. Hal Mitnick** of our Medical Advisory Board to a question asked recently on our web site:

**Q:** *I take Toprol, Lisinopril and hydrochlorothiazide (water pill) for high blood pressure. Can either or all of these be taken safely if one has Raynaud's?*

**A:** *We try to avoid beta blockers (Toprol) as there is some evidence to suggest they may worsen Raynaud's—hence working to lower that potential risk. ACE inhibitors and diuretics should be neutral. Calcium blockers would work for both hypertension and Raynaud's and are usually the class of drugs used first in this setting (e.g. nifedipine XL).*

**Editors note:** *Calcium channel blockers are clinically proven to help Raynaud's sufferers reduce the frequency and severity of attacks. They are also prescribed to treat high blood pressure, as they work to open the arteries so the blood flows more freely.*

*Keep in mind that the above guidelines are generalized, and won't be 100% accurate for every patient. Please consult your physician on questions regarding any specific drugs you're taking.*

*Submit your questions to: [lynn@raynauds.org](mailto:lynn@raynauds.org), or use the contact form at [www.raynauds.org](http://www.raynauds.org).*

## Medical Advisory Board



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# Cold Comfort:

## A Story of One Raynaud's Sufferer



(Continued from page 1)

gested I visit a rheumatologist. He took some blood tests, which indicated my cold agglutinin was abnormal and the antinuclear antibody (ANA) test was positive. The doctor told me the results indicated the presence of "Raynaud's phenomenon" and "autoimmune activity" such as lupus. I didn't know what any of these terms meant. I was sent away with a prescription for a vasodilator drug for the Raynaud's, to open the blood vessels so blood could flow more easily to my extremities.

The drugs had unpleasant side-effects and did little to help. I learned that the best course of action was to bundle up against the cold. I found battery-operated knee socks and mittens at a ski shop. Each were powered with heavy D-size batteries, housed in an orange-colored pouch on the outside. It couldn't have been more conspicuous than if it glowed in the dark.

I covered the batteries on the socks with leggings. Instead of having the batteries showing, I now had a huge lump on both calves. I bought a coat at the Army/Navy store, guaranteed to guard against temperatures to 40 degrees below zero. It was a drab green color, with a huge hood that also covered much of my face. This was the way I went to work to my executive position at a New York City public relations firm. A friend called me "the Michelin Man." I was an odd sight, but at least I was warm.

As long as I was protected by all this paraphernalia I was okay. But the mittens were bulky; I had to take them off to unlock my car and apartment. In those few seconds when my hands were exposed, the pain would hit. My fingers became blue, as if they were stained with carbon paper (it was the 70's).

I sought more practical solu-

tions to guard against the cold, with little success, and of course the Raynaud's Association didn't exist then. I did find chemical heat packs but they were used for the palm, not the fingers. I kept my hand in a fist to feel the heat. They didn't last very long, but they did help. I once found a butane-filled hand warmer, which was okay until the time it went up in flames when I was refilling it. I singed the whole front of my hair.

The worst day was when I couldn't get the key out of my front door. It was a particularly cold day. I took off my mittens and struggled with the key, but to no avail. I could-

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**“When I visited my mother at work one day – she was a medical assistant at a hospital – she mentioned my problem to one of the physicians. He took a quick look at my hand, then told me, “Move to Florida.”**

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n't lock the door or open it to go back inside. After about 10 minutes, in desperate agony, I rang the door of a neighbor. I was swaddled in my Michelin Man getup – and my tears had streaked my mascara all over my face. I saw my elderly neighbor look through the peephole – we didn't know each other – and I suppose my sobbing overcame her fear of the odd stranger. She opened the door and I told her of my plight. Her husband managed to get my key out of the

lock. I'm not sure she really understood why I was so upset.

Few people understand how painful Raynaud's can be. Like the doctor who told me to move to Florida, they make light of the condition. "Oh, it's just poor circulation." It's common.

It is common. So common that an estimated 5-10% of Americans have Raynaud's – but many of these people don't know what they have. Or that they should see a doctor, if only to rule out that their Raynaud's is part of an underlying disease such as scleroderma or lupus. Fortunately, only a small percentage of people with Raynaud's have a serious disorder. But primary Raynaud's is problematic too, and painful.

I am one of the more unfortunate Raynaud's sufferers. I was eventually diagnosed with systemic scleroderma. In the 10 years it took between the onset of Raynaud's and the diagnosis of scleroderma, I learned a lot. The research I did to find help for the Raynaud's attacks took a lot of trial and error, singed hair and wasted money for treatments and products that didn't work.

If the Raynaud's Association had existed then, I could have avoided much anguish. I would have found solace in talking to others who understood and shared my painful attacks.

When Lynn Wunderman, founder of the Raynaud's Association, asked me to work with her to help launch the organization, I felt honored and indebted. I wanted to spare others the frustration I experienced and the ignorance I encountered. And life is scary enough these days...I wanted to spare the world from the sight of an army of Michelin Men.





**Raynaud's Association, Inc.**  
94 Mercer Avenue  
Hartsdale, NY 10530

Dear Friend,

If you're reading this newsletter, most likely you're someone who knows the pain of Raynaud's and recognizes the adjustments that must be made to minimize and prevent Raynaud's attacks. We hope the Raynaud's Association has helped provide you with information and support.

Our figures show that we are having an impact. For example:

- Thousands of people have accessed our website [www.raynauds.org](http://www.raynauds.org) since it was launched in March 2001. We have been personally contacted by 425 patients and family members who have sought help this past year via the website. That's about 35 per month, or more than one person each day reaching out to us for help, information, or just plain moral support.
- Calls to our toll-free number 1-800-280-8055 continue to escalate. Each gets a personal response from our founder, a Raynaud's sufferer.
- Our newsletter, *Cold Cuts*, has a distribution of over a thousand sufferers – a 1371% increase since it began in 1994.

That's the good news. **The bad news is that we cannot continue to operate without your help.**

To date, we have asked for a small, voluntary donation. Yet only 6% of our "members" have paid in the past year.

The Raynaud's Association is staffed by volunteers. Its founders have borne the costs for website design and maintenance; newsletter production and distribution; insurance, accounting and legal fees. But as costs have increased – ironically due, in part, to the association's growth – the costs have become more than we can afford.

Most of the services we provide are not available anywhere else (see right). Our goal is to reach out to Raynaud's sufferers (an estimated 5-10% of Americans) and to help make both the public and the medical community more aware of Raynaud's. Long-range, we hope to fund medical research to find more effective treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

If you've benefited from what the Raynaud's Association is doing – and you'd like us to continue – *please* help us by sending a tax-deductible donation today. Urge your friends and families to help, too.

Warm regards,

**Lynn Wunderman**

Founder and Chairman

## Raynaud's Association Services



### A Partial List:

- **Maintains informative website**, including medical information, practical tips and peer support.
- **Created a Medical Advisory Board** consisting of leading Raynaud's researchers and physicians. This distinguished group reviews medical data, advises about new research and development, makes referrals, and provides expert input to the association's constituents.
- **Provides one-on-one help** to Raynaud's sufferers and their families, via phone and e-mail.
- **Scouts and reviews useful products** for Raynaud's sufferers.
- **Distributes and shares medical/educational materials.**
- **Makes referrals to other organizations and associations**, as necessary (particularly for those with secondary Raynaud's).
- **Sponsors occasional speaker events.**
- **Subsidizes the cost of hand and toe warmers** to ensure low prices for members.
- **Connects members with one another** (to talk about a particular therapy, share advice and support).
- **Responds to media inquiries about Raynaud's** to ensure that press attention to Raynaud's is accurate and sympathetic.
- **Functions as a clearing house** for the latest Raynaud's information.

**Launched January 2005:**

**NEW DISCUSSION FORUM** on our website. Now you can connect with Raynaud's sufferers all over the world!

Visit: [www.raynauds.org](http://www.raynauds.org)

## Hot Products for Cold Sufferers



**W**e continue to find products that make great companions and problem solvers for fellow frosties.

☀ **Cloudveil Enclosure Mitts** - This catalog is full of wonderful, warm apparel for cold weather enthusiasts. We may not exactly fit that description, but we appreciate their research in putting together this collection! In particular, check out the Enclosure Mitts — their warmest mittens, made for temperatures down to 20° below zero. They have two layers of Primaloft® One™ insulation, trapping hot air where we need it most. They give you more control than most mittens, as they have finger dividers to feel more glove-like. The stretchy fleece cuff and water-repellent outer shell also help to keep you warm and dry. Available in Black/Grey two-tone, men's sizes XS-XL for \$90.00 (women, try the smaller sizes). To order, call 877-255-8345, or visit [www.cloudveil.com](http://www.cloudveil.com). Please use source code # 4IA405.

☀ **Therapeutic Support Gloves** - These gloves are very similar to the Handeze brand we featured a few years ago. Both provide a layer of warmth while offering good dexterity for typing, playing the piano, and related activities. Other gloves we've featured for this purpose are totally fingerless, - just the palm and wrist are covered for warmth—and they do help. But these gloves cover about half the finger, just leaving the top half above the knuckle and tips open for

use. Like the Handeze gloves, these are made of a flesh-colored flexible fabric that massages the hands and wrists as you work. The flesh-tone color keeps them from being so noticeable around the office when in use. Available from the Gaiam Harmony catalog at [www.gaiam.com](http://www.gaiam.com) for \$34.00, or call 800-869-3446. Come in unisex sizes S,M,L, #15-0723. Please provide key code #H63P422X.

☀ **Toe Warmer Boots** - These are waterproof fabric boots with a thin heat-retaining lining of Radiantex for the insole. Rubber sole keeps feet dry on wet turf, and Velcro strap provides easy on and off. Available in Black, Dark Gray, and Navy. Sizes 6-12, both Medium (B) and Wide (D) widths. Black also available in Narrow (AA). Order item # 2707 from The Tog Shop for \$64.95. Call 800-367-8647 or visit [www.togshop.com](http://www.togshop.com). Use source code #J233R-J1.

☀ **Anti-Vibration Gloves** - For those of you whose Raynaud's may be related to working with vibrating equipment—especially outdoors—these gloves are made to order! They have a patent-pending gel palm to absorb shocks, impacts and vibrations from standard tools. Stretchable mesh back helps hands breathe, while pigskin outer palm and fingers help support a good grip and protect from abrasions. The description says, "Equip yourself with these gloves and say

good-bye to numbness and tingling." Comes in sizes XS-XXL. Order item #56154 from the Duluth Trading catalog. Call 800-505-8888, or visit [www.DuluthTrading.com](http://www.DuluthTrading.com). Price is \$44.99. Please use catalog # T2425124.

☀ **Reusable Hand Warmers** - Eddie Bauer is offering their own version of the Zap Paks we featured in earlier newsletters. Flip the disc inside the pocket-sized gel pack and it heats up nice and toasty—lasts up to 30 minutes. To make them ready for the next use, just heat in a microwave (time varies). Can be reused over and over. Order #N22-458-0829 for \$19.50 from the Eddie Bauer catalog by calling 800-426-8020, or go to [www.eddiebauer.com](http://www.eddiebauer.com). Please provide media code #439.

☀ **No Crack Cream**— That's a very powerful promise, but this product has been marketed specifically to prevent dry winter skin for over 60 years, so they must be doing something right. Ingredients include lanolin to moisturize, and allantoin "to promote healing and the growth of healthy tissue." Claims to be superior to ordinary moisturizers. We haven't tried it yet, but it certainly sounds promising! Available from the Vermont Country Store catalog, item # H2516. \$11.90 for two 4-oz. jars. Call 802-362-8470, or visit [www.vermontcountrystore.com](http://www.vermontcountrystore.com). Please use source code # 79306.



## Dry, Flaky Skin

(Continued from page 1)

already included. Using ointments and creams along with cotton or special gel gloves (available in some pharmacies and beauty supply stores) helps to keep hands moisturized overnight.

- **DO NOT soak your hands and feet.** Take only short, lukewarm showers or baths.
- **When in the shower or bath, use only mild soaps that won't irritate your skin.**
- **When drying off, pat your skin lightly.** Rubbing at your skin too hard can cause even further irritation and scaling.

*Dr. Schlefman has practiced podiatric medicine in Atlanta, Georgia for over 20 years. In addition to having served as President of the Georgia Podiatric Medical Association, she is also a delegate in the American Podiatric Medical Association House of Delegates, a member of The Podiatry Institute faculty and a diplomat (board certified) on the American Board of Podiatric Surgery.*

For more information on FootSmart's products, visit their web site:

[www.footsmart.com](http://www.footsmart.com).

### RAYNAUD'S ASSOCIATION MEMBER MAILING LIST UPDATE

We need to update our mailing list. Please let us know if your address is correct and confirm you want to continue receiving mail from the Association. **To hold expenses down, if we haven't heard from you in over a year, you may be dropped from the list unless you reply.** Your comments, suggestions, and ideas for the future are also welcome. Please return the survey to: Lynn Wunderman, Raynaud's Association, Inc., 94 Mercer Avenue, Hartsdale, NY 10530.

Thank you and warm regards!

I'd like to keep receiving the newsletters, my 2004-2005 contribution of \$20.00 is enclosed. *Note: If you recently paid by mail, thank you.*

Please remove my name from the mailing list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here for address change or correction



**Raynaud's Association, Inc.**  
94 Mercer Avenue  
Hartsdale, NY 10530

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- Cold Comfort: A Story of One Raynaud's Sufferer
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- New Discussion Forum
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