

YOUR SKIN HEALTH

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PREVENTIVE HEALTH

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ROSACEA AWARENESS MONTH

While a subtle, rosy glow to the cheeks lights up a face and reflects good health and inner radiance, the persistent ruddiness experienced by more than 3-million Canadians with chronic rosacea is not the glow they're looking for. Typically affecting fair-skinned individuals over the age of 30, and found in women more often than men, this chronic inflammatory dermatitis is often under-diagnosed, causes significant discomfort, and is commonly mistakenly associated with alcoholism.

People who suffer from rosacea are impacted both physically and emotionally; nearly 75% of people who have rosacea report that it has a negative impact on their self-esteem and on their careers. The good news is that while there is no cure, there are new developments in treatment for this chronic skin condition.

April is Rosacea Awareness Month! Do you think you may have rosacea, or do you have questions or concerns about your previously-diagnosed rosacea? An app-based virtual care consult is a convenient way to receive a diagnosis, get answers and even obtain a treatment plan without leaving your home or office.

In fact, dermatology concerns are one of the top three issues treated on the Medisys On-Demand virtual healthcare platform. [Click here](#) to check your eligibility for Medisys On-Demand or to learn more about telemedicine and virtual healthcare.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ROSACEA?

The first signs of rosacea often appear in adulthood, typically between the ages of 30 and 50. At first, the symptoms may be intermittent, with periodic redness and a burning sensation in the face. Over time, the redness becomes more permanent and dryness of the skin typically follows.

There are four subtypes of rosacea, the severity of which may be variable:

- Erythemato-telangiectatic rosacea (often called "couperose"), which is characterized by permanent redness and dilated blood vessels
- Papulo-pustular rosacea (or acne rosacea), characterized by lesions similar to acne
- Phymatous rosacea, a rare form of rosacea characterized by thickening of the skin
- Ocular rosacea, which involves the eyelids and/or conjunctiva, typically causing burning and itchy eyes and often accompanied by rosacea of the skin.

WHAT CAUSES ROSACEA?

The origins and causes of rosacea are only partially understood – rosacea is a complex disease and active subject of scientific research – but we know that it is caused in part by a genetic predisposition. This can lead to a defective skin barrier and a complex inflammatory cascade involving several naturally-occurring skin microorganisms.

Rosacea is not caused by alcoholism – a common and unfair misconception. Alcohol is, however, one of many triggers that can prompt or aggravate rosacea flare-ups in some patients (other triggers include sunlight, heat and environmental stress).

IS THERE A CURE?

There is no cure for rosacea; however, fortunately there are several effective measures for both rosacea prevention and treatment. If you have rosacea, dermatologists recommend gentle skin care with an emphasis on year-round sun protection and avoidance of possible triggers such as stress, exposure to extreme temperatures (hot or cold), spicy foods, coffee, alcoholic beverages and very hot drinks. The impact of these lifestyle factors on rosacea vary from person to person.

Many topical cosmetic products are available over the counter that aid in rosacea management. Mild, fragrance-free and alcohol-free skin products are recommended for rosacea sufferers and products with abrasive or skin-irritating ingredients should be avoided. For redness concealment,

choose a green-tinted foundation for the affected areas and layer a skin tone matching product on top. Hypoallergenic make-up is recommended.

"It is important to keep the skin well moisturized, especially during the winter," says Dr. Amina Bougrine, a leading dermatologist based out of the Medisys preventive health clinic in Montreal. Since sun exposure can worsen the symptoms of rosacea, it is recommended that rosacea sufferers use a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more on a daily basis.

"For those suffering from rosacea, it's important to stay cool when it's hot outside. In extreme weather conditions, I recommend keeping the face covered and protecting the skin with a good moisturizer," continues Dr. Bougrine. Stress management and a healthy, balanced diet also play a role in preventing rosacea flare-ups.

There are several effective medical treatments for rosacea as well, including:

- Topical treatments (ivermectin, metronidazole, azelaic acid and brimonidine),
- Oral treatments (antibiotics of the tetracycline family, isotretinoin)
- Laser therapies.

The once-a-day topical treatment Brimonidine (Onreltea) is a potent vasoconstrictor and temporarily reverses the redness caused by dilated blood vessels. The conventional topical therapies, metronidazole and azelaic acid, do reduce redness to a degree, although their main role is reducing acne-like skin lesions.

Oral tetracyclines have been another cornerstone of treatment primarily used to treat the acne-like lesions. They are antibiotics, but are thought to work via an anti-inflammatory mechanism. To avoid disruption of the gut flora or contribution to global antibiotic resistance, they can be given at sub-antimicrobial doses (for example, Doxycycline is used at the sub-antimicrobial dose of 40 mg instead of the usual antibiotic dose of 100 mg).

While the new Bimonidine is expected to be an important weapon in the arsenal against rosacea, energy-based treatments such as vascular laser and Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) are the most powerful methods for common forms of rosacea. This method treats the telangiectasia (tiny spider veins), that the conventional methods cannot, and also reduces background redness. Repeated treatments are required for optimal improvement.

Consult a dermatologist, your Medisys healthcare provider or your Medisys On-Demand virtual care team for proper diagnosis and treatment of any skin condition, including rosacea.

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WHAT TO EAT FOR RADIANT, HEALTHY SKIN

By Jessica Tong, RD, Medisys Vancouver

Today more than ever, both in adolescence and in adulthood, men and women feel increased pressure to look well-rested, youthful and attractive. We all know that nutrition is important for health and that an unhealthy diet can have a negative impact on our bodies' metabolism and weight, and put us at risk for chronic disease. However, we tend to forget that healthy, glowing skin starts on our plates and that what we eat can significantly affect our skin's structural integrity and how quickly it ages.

HERE ARE 7 EASY NUTRITION STRATEGIES FOR A LIFETIME OF HEALTHY SKIN:

1. Focus on a plant-based diet. Try to include vitamin A- and C-rich fruits and vegetables in your diet. Both are antioxidants and contain anti-inflammatory properties, which promote cell reproduction and combat cell damage. Vitamin C supports proper wound-healing (this includes those popped pimples!) It's also vital for collagen production. Rich in both vitamins A and C, raw red bell peppers are skin superstars – they even contain more vitamin C than oranges! (Keep in mind that vitamin C is heat-unstable so vegetables must be uncooked to enjoy these benefits.)

2. Choose high-quality, complete proteins at each meal. Complete proteins are rich in amino acids that produce collagen. Collagen, one of the most abundant proteins in the body, provides the skin with elasticity. Whole eggs, chicken, wild salmon and bone broth are excellent high-quality proteins and sources of collagen.

3. Include more foods rich in Omega-3. Omega-3 fats have anti-inflammatory effects that may help to reduce skin inflammation and irritation. Sources include wild salmon, halibut, trout, arctic char, sablefish, mackerel, walnuts, hemp and chia seeds.

4. Look for food rich in zinc. Zinc may protect skin from UV damage, and help treat skin lesions with the help of other vitamins and minerals. Inadequate zinc can also look like eczema, but the itchy rash won't improve when you moisturize the area. Eggs, pulses, shellfish (especially oysters), meats, poultry, liver, legumes and whole grains are sources of zinc.

5. Avoid deep-fried foods. It's a myth that greasy food causes oily skin. However, the consistent consumption of fried foods can damage cell structures and promote inflammation due to the oxidized fat they contain.

6. Cut down on sugar. Sugar has been linked to a process called glycation. Not only does glycation deteriorate your existing collagen and elastin stocks, but a diet high in sugar also prevents the body from making more, which results in wrinkles and loss of elasticity. Join the [Medisys 30 Day Sugar Challenge](#) and commit to cutting refined sugar for one month.

7. Stay hydrated. Proper hydration is very important to help maintain body temperature, digestion, absorption and transport of nutrients, as well as eliminate toxins and other waste from the body, but it is also essential to maintain skin tautness and clarity. It is recommended to aim for an average daily fluid intake of at least 3 L (12 cups) for healthy men and 2.2 L (9 cups) for healthy women. Also, limit alcohol as it dehydrates the skin.

If your skin is already inflamed, there are strategies to help calm it. Avoid topical agents that can activate the skin, such as serums, exfoliating scrubs and charcoal or mud masks. Avoid extractions and touching your skin too.

Worried about your skin and overall health? Meet one of our registered dietitians for more healthy diet advice, or connect with a healthcare professional virtually using the Medisys On-Demand app. [Click here to learn more about our nutrition coaching services.](#)





VIRTUAL CARE: REMOTE HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Imagine getting medical attention the moment you need it, anywhere in the world. Picture having a migraine during a busy workday or a sports injury on a Saturday and being able to connect instantly with a nurse or doctor. Envision receiving a diagnosis, a prescription or a referral in minutes – without spending hours in a waiting room. That's virtual healthcare, and it's quickly becoming a reality for Canadians.

Although only 9% of Canadian employers currently offer virtual healthcare as part of their employee benefits packages, 71% of Canadians are demanding it.¹ South of

the border, consumer usage of virtual healthcare doubled between 2016 and 2017 and about half of workers now have access to it.² Fortunately, experts predict that increased institutional interest in improving patient engagement and cutting costs will continue to propel this digital healthcare revolution forward in 2019.³

While patient convenience is the obvious victory of virtual healthcare, employers, doctors, nurses, caregivers and healthcare administrators also stand to benefit significantly from its adoption.

WHAT IS VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE?

A term often used interchangeably with telemedicine or telehealth, virtual healthcare is the process of delivering real-time medical care via a mobile device.

While telemedicine technically refers to the process of diagnosing and treating common ailments remotely, virtual healthcare takes it further with on-demand access to a broad range of technologies and non-clinical care services. Think mental health support and chronic disease management in addition to primary care.

Robust virtual healthcare platforms like Medisys On-Demand are currently operating with remarkable results. It not only provides ultimate convenience and continuity of care, but also offers solutions for many of the systemic problems Canadians face with traditional healthcare. Consider these realities:

- 20% of Canadians wait 7+ days to see their doctors
- 61% of family doctors say they can't accommodate urgent appointments
- 4.5-million Canadian residents don't have family doctors
- 40,000 Canadians visit an ER every year just to renew prescriptions
- Canadians take 2-6 days off work per year for doctors visits; those with kids take double

And yet, studies show that 70% of ER and clinic visits can be replaced by virtual consultations without any impact on care quality.⁴

HOW DOES VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE BENEFIT PATIENTS?

Virtual healthcare doesn't just provide patients with more convenient care, it offers healthcare on-demand to suit the ever-changing needs of Canadians and their families. The Canadian Virtual Healthcare Study⁵ recently revealed what Canadians care about most when it comes to the benefits of virtual healthcare:

- access to care during late hours and weekends (67%)
- convenience (66%)
- avoiding increasing wait times in emergency rooms during late hours for minor health problems (62%)
- less time missed at work (47%)
- more regular visits with a healthcare professional (45%)
- less stress (29%)

For patients with chronic conditions, mobility issues, those living in remote areas and those who require specialist visits, the benefits of virtual care are even greater.

Instead of incurring steep travel and time costs to keep inconvenient appointments, virtual care allows many patients with chronic illnesses to conduct follow up consults at home. This often empowers patients to become more active participants in their own care, improving healthcare continuity and overall outcomes.⁶

While accessing specialists has been historically difficult for those living in remote parts of Canada, virtual care has been shown to reduce wait times to see a specialist by 30% to 50%.⁷

HOW DOES VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE BENEFIT PHYSICIANS AND CAREGIVERS?

The benefits of virtual healthcare to physicians and other caregivers are staggering. Supplementing just one patient visit per year with virtual healthcare may save primary care physicians an average of five minutes per appointment, freeing up 47.8 million hours across the primary care workforce⁸ to see additional patients and accommodate urgent appointments.

Efficiency for medical professionals is another by product of virtual healthcare: since 68% of Canadians skip or avoid appointments due to barriers like long wait times, virtual care can reduce the prevalence of missed appointments, saving time and reducing administrative headaches for providers.⁹ With patients better able to book appointments around their schedules, physicians also experience better access to their patients, and both sides enjoy greater continuity of care.

Ultimately, effective virtual healthcare has the power to:

- Remove barriers to traditional care for patients
- Reduce strain on Canada's healthcare system
- Improve efficiency for healthcare providers
- Empower Canadians to become more engaged in their health

Fortunately, Canadian companies are increasingly considering the benefits of adding virtual care solutions like Medisys On-Demand to their health benefits offerings. How would virtual healthcare make a difference in your life? **[Click here](#)** to learn more.

IN THE NEWS

CMA a key player in national task force to scale up virtual care in Canada

Canada is lagging behind many other countries in the adoption of virtual care. To look at what's standing in the way, the CMA is joining forces with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the College of Family Physicians of Canada as part of a new task force. To read the full article, **[click here](#)**.

References

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RECIPE: GLUTEN-FREE, HIGH-PROTEIN DUTCH BABY

By Jessica Tong, RD, Medisys Vancouver

Inspired by David Eyre's pancake from the New York Times Cookbook, Jessica's version of the Dutch Baby is gluten-free and high-protein. The use of grass-fed butter also increases the content of omega-3 fats and vitamin K2.

Ingredients

- 2 large free-range eggs
- 1/2 cup gluten-free flour
- 1/2 cup lactose-free 2% milk
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 2 tbsp unsalted grass-fed butter
- Dark chocolate and sliced fruit as a topping (optional)

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 425° F.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk two eggs. Add 1/2 cup gluten-free flour, 1/2 cup lactose-free 2% milk, a pinch of nutmeg and a pinch of cinnamon and mix.
3. Melt 2 tbsp unsalted grass-fed butter in a 8-inch cast iron skillet with a heatproof handle.
4. When the pan is very hot, pour in the batter.
5. Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes until the pancake is golden brown.
6. Dust with powdered sugar and return briefly to the oven.
7. Serve with fresh berries or sliced stone fruit, or drizzle with dark chocolate and serve with bananas and strawberries as a topping.

Interested in learning more about how to achieve a healthy and balanced diet?

Download the Medisys Healthy Eating Guide!

Discover easy strategies for healthy eating, every day. Topics covered include:

- 12 Common Nutrition Myths Debunked
- Mindful Eating in Five Easy Steps
- Eating Healthy On-the-Go
- 7 Super Healthy Foods to Add to Your Grocery List
- How to Eat a Rainbow
- The Importance of Breakfast, Everyday!
- 8 Strategies to Get Rid of Processed Food
- Quick, Easy and Healthy Lunch Ideas



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