

WINTER DEPRESSION AWARENESS

JANUARY 2024

WINTER BLUES ❄️

Many of us can fall victim to "Winter Blues" during the colder months. This is often caused by a decrease in sun exposure and vitamin D that may disrupt your body's internal clock and lead to feelings of sadness. Symptoms may include: having low energy, feeling sluggish, problems with sleeping, change in your appetite and weight, and loss of interest. It's important we recognize these symptoms and know what works best to avoid the effects.

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER ❄️

Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as SAD, is more serious and is difficult to treat alone. SAD is a subtype of major depression that comes and goes based on seasons. In addition to the symptoms of Winter Blues, those suffering from SAD can experience: feeling depressed, hopeless or worthless, mood swings, thoughts of death or suicide, and more.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Below are some tips for combating seasonal depression. If you think you or someone you know is dealing with SAD, it's important to speak up or reach out to your doctor or a mental health professional who can help create a plan for overcoming depression.



Bundle up for a walk, jog, swim indoors, or head to the gym. Exercise can work well in fighting mild-to-moderate depression.



Sunlight is a source of vitamin D, a vitamin linked to sharper thinking and better emotional health. Check with your doctor about what supplements are right for you.



Give yourself every opportunity for daylight, such as placing your exercise equipment or work area near a window. Also, lamps that simulate natural light can help.



Complex carbohydrates such as whole grains can boost your energy and are vital year around. Fruits and vegetables of deep green or orange, like broccoli, kale, and carrots, have nutrients that promote better mood & total health.



Some people find that wearing brighter colors or painting their nails a bright shade can improve their outlook. Scents can add to your feeling of well-being; try peppermint essential oil.



Slow down and curl up in a cozy chair with a good book, write in a journal, or engage in a relaxing hobby.

SOURCE: <https://wa-health.kaiserpermanente.org/tips-sad-coping-with-dark-days>