



Beating the Winter Blues



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SAD (SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER)

Seasonal Affective Disorder is a situational type of depression that is influenced by a person's environment. SAD typically occurs during the fall and winter months. It can have an impact on an individual's mood, energy levels, thoughts and feelings.

SAD is especially common in Northwestern Ontario due to the cold weather, lack of sunshine and lack of Vitamin D.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Lethargic
- Lack of Interest in things that you used to receive pleasure out of
- Overeating/ Not Eating Enough
- Not Sleeping/ Sleeping Too Much
- Moodiness
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Feeling Hopeless, worthless or guilty



WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

It's normal to have some days when you feel down. But if you feel down for days at a time and you can't get motivated to do activities you normally enjoy, see your doctor. This is especially important if your sleep patterns and appetite have changed, you develop unhealthy coping strategies, or you feel hopeless or think about suicide.

The specific cause of seasonal affective disorder remains unknown. Some factors that may come into play include:

- **Your biological clock (circadian rhythm).** The reduced level of sunlight in fall and winter may cause winter-onset SAD. This decrease in sunlight may disrupt your body's internal clock and lead to feelings of depression.
- **Serotonin levels.** A drop in serotonin, a brain chemical (neurotransmitter) that affects mood, might play a role in SAD. Reduced sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin that may trigger depression.
- **Melatonin levels.** The change in season can disrupt the balance of the body's level of melatonin, which plays a role in sleep patterns and mood.

TREATMENT



As parents/caregivers it's important to take care of yourselves, so that you can live a healthy life and be there for your children. Remember that small things can have a large impact. So get creative and enjoy doing some activities as a family. Here are some ideas to help battle the winter blues!

HealthyPlace.com

A 5-Point Winter Depression Plan

- 1. Take Vitamin D Supplements:** Sunlight can be short during the winter months, and your body doesn't store vitamin D.
- 2. Invest in a Light Therapy Box:** It can help your body create vitamin D and the light itself can improve your mood.
- 3. Nutrition:** Winter comfort foods are fine in moderation, but it's important to remember that good nutrition makes a positive difference to your mental health.
- 4. Exercise Outdoors When Possible:** It will get dark early, so working outdoor exercise in around work schedules can be tough. Consider a brisk walk at lunch or a lap around the parking lot when you arrive at work and the sun is up.
- 5. Schedule Fun Activities:** There are things about winter you could enjoy. Make a list of activities or holidays you look forward to this winter and put them on your calendar now.



100 Things to Do This Winter

- build snowman
- snowball fight
- make valentines
- fiesta
- marshmallows
- sugar cookies
- fruit leather
- life-size candyland
- shadow puppets
- stamping
- weather chart
- dominos
- ice bowling
- solar system model
- mini volcanos
- paper plate craft
- coin collection
- popcorn party
- rock candy
- mr. potato head
- play restaurant
- knock-knock jokes
- blind taste-test
- stained glass craft
- ice skating
- legos
- i-spy bags
- decorate plates
- make fudge
- animal shelter
- roll-a-snowman
- shrinky dinks
- skype w/cousins
- make bracelets
- ring toss
- bubble painting
- crazy dinner
- apple cider
- pajama party
- laminated faces
- magnet tests
- paper beads
- borax snowflakes
- cinnamon rolls
- paint by number
- ivory soap experiment
- spy training
- trivia game
- photo shoot
- cooties
- tp snowmen
- abc scavenger hunt
- thrift shop
- limbo
- splatter paint
- leap frog
- flashlight tag
- snow shoeing
- caramel apples
- indoor snow play
- snow angels
- yahtzee
- money cakes
- salt art
- sock snakes
- make caramels
- make bird feeder
- secret message painting
- paper bag puppets
- paint rocks
- simon says
- crazy 8's
- read-a-thon
- mazes
- paint snow
- hangman
- sledding
- tea party
- fondue
- scratchboard art
- hot chocolate
- interview kids
- spelling bee
- snow fort
- make soup
- plant bulbs indoors
- nerf target practice
- dot art
- paint w/cars
- paper dolls
- etiquette dinner
- minute to win it
- make pillowcase
- make lollipops
- love letters
- magazine collage
- paper snowflakes
- snow globes
- fried ice cream
- fishing booth

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