

Self-Care Tips for Winter Blues and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

- Educate your self, family and close friends about SAD to gain their understanding and support. Here are some helpful web sites for more information and support:
 - SAD Information Page at the University of BC. Our site includes many resources available for free download. www.UBCsad.ca
 - Center for Environmental Therapeutics. Includes information on recent research and treatment, on-line screening and assessment tools for the public. www.cet.org
 - The Seasonal Affective Disorder Association. Based in the England, this is the world's longest established support organization for those with SAD. The site includes a low cost information pack available to order. www.sada.org.uk
- Share experiences regarding SAD and treatment with others for information, understanding, validation and support. Here are some helpful books on the topic:
 - Winter Blues, Revised Edition. Everything You Need to Know to Beat Seasonal Affective Disorder. By Norman E. Rosenthal, Guilford Press, 2006, about \$28.
 - Coping with the Seasons. A Cognitive Behavioral Approach for Seasonal Affective Disorder. Workbook. By Kelly J. Rohan, Oxford University Press, 2008, about \$30.
 - Seasonal Affective Disorder for Dummies. By Laura L. Smith and Charles H. Elliott, Wiley Press, 2007, about \$22.
- Get as much light as possible and avoid dark environments during daylight hours in winter.
- Rearrange workspaces at home and work near a window, or set up bright lights in your work area. Allow natural light to shine through open windows when temperatures are moderate
- Consider going without sunglasses in the winter except in very bright sun/snow or decrease the amount of time wearing them.
- Be aware of cold outdoor temperatures and dress to conserve energy and warmth. Many affected by seasonal changes report sensitivity to extreme temperatures.
- Reduce mild winter depressive symptoms by exercising daily – outdoors when possible to take advantage of natural light, but inside is okay too.
- Stay on a regular sleep/wake schedule. People who get up every morning and go to sleep at the same time, report being more alert and less fatigued than when they vary their schedules.
- Try putting your bedroom lights on a timer set to switch on ½ hour or more before awakening. Some people report it is easier to wake up when using this technique with lights.
- Some find it helpful to record their biological rhythms during fall and winter. They keep a daily log noting weather conditions and their energy levels, moods, appetite/weight, sleep times and activities.
- Arrange family outings and social occasions for day times and early evening in winter. Avoid staying up late which disrupts the sleep schedule and biological clock.
- Postpone making major life changes until spring or summer when possible.
- If you are able, arrange a winter vacation to a warm, sunny climate!