

Beat the Winter Blues

November 2017

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Seasonal Depression, also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder, is a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons.

Seasonal depression normally starts in the fall and continues throughout the winter months. Typically, seasonal depression takes a negative toll on the person's energy and makes the person exhibit more moody behaviors.

Some symptoms may include:

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Having low energy
- Having problems with sleeping
- Experiencing changes in your appetite or weight
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide

Specific causes remain unknown, however, there are a few factors that play a part:

- **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 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.

TIPS TO AVOID SEASONAL DEPRESSION:

- Get out of the house and take in some natural sunlight
- Exercise, eat healthy, and maintain a regular sleep schedule
- Declutter your home
- Stay socially active, be around people
- Keep a journal, find a new book to read
- Pick up a new hobby/craft
- Find new seasonal activities (pumpkin patch, ice skating, experiment with new recipes, movie nights, hot chocolate/apple cider)

For more information on these groups please contact your therapist.