

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) isn't just a case of the Blues@Bit's a cyclical pattern of depression during winter months, with improvement during other times of the year. Symptoms of SAD include: tiredness and loss of energy, an increased need for sleep, craving carbohydrates, weight gain, withdrawal or general disinterest in socializing and an overall sense of hopelessness, unhappiness and/or irritability.

SAD is a manageable condition, but it is important to seek the assistance of a trained medical professional and not to self-diagnose the disorder to ensure you're getting proper treatment.

Here are some ways to counteract the effects of SAD:

***Get more sunlight. Ways to do this are enjoying the outdoors during sun hours**

and, when indoors, having a window near where one sits or works during the sunny part of the day.

***Eat healthy foods.**

***Exercise.**

***Spend time doing enjoyable activities with positive and upbeat people.**

***Prescribed light therapy may make a difference for some people in treating the**

symptoms of SAD. This involves exposure to a very bright light (usually fluorescent) for 30 minutes or more each day during the winter months.

***Some people may need mental health therapy and/or prescription anti-depressants during this time of year.**

***Avoid alcohol and illegal drugs, which can impair one's judgement when**

making decisions and dealing with other people and could make SAD worse.

If you think you may be experiencing the symptoms of SAD it is important to seek the

opinion of a trained medical professional. In cases of severe depression or if

having suicidal thoughts contact a medical professional or the emergency room of a local hospital immediately.