



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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Feeling SAD and Blue?

As the dog days of winter are fast approaching people often start experiencing cabin fever or the winter blues. This is completely normal as people tend to get out of the house a lot less because it's so cold outside and it starts getting dark before we even leave work! However, some people begin feeling extremely down in the dumps during the winter months. This condition is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

SAD is a form of depression that affects people only during the winter months. It generally starts in late fall and continues through early spring. Scientists have not yet pinpointed the exact cause of SAD, but they believe it is most likely caused by the lack of sunlight during the winter months. Limited

sunlight can upset your body's daily biological processes such as your sleep-wake cycle as well causing problems with serotonin, which is the chemical in the brain that gives people a "happy feeling" while also playing a role in calming anxiety and relieving depression. Anyone who lives in an area where there is a significant decrease in the amount of sunlight during the winter can develop SAD. It usually emerges during a person's teens or early twenties and tends to affect women more commonly than men.

Common symptoms of SAD are:

- Feeling moody or anxious
- Slow, lethargic movement
- Lack of energy
- Increased drowsiness
- Social withdrawal

For more information on or support for SAD contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

1.800.327.2255

eni's **BalanceWorks®** program is a confidential 24/7 service provided by your employer to help achieve work/life balance.





- Increased appetite
- Carbohydrate cravings
- Weight gain

If you are experiencing SAD or even just the winter blues, there are steps you can take to alleviate the symptoms and start feeling like your easy breezy summer self. Moderate exercise has been shown to help, especially when working out first thing in the morning. Exercise naturally gives people more energy and decreases depression. Consider joining a gym. You will be able to exercise indoors where you are protected from the frosty weather and it gives you an excuse to get out of the house in the winter. Being active during the daytime is also recommended. Try to plan your daily activities while the sun is out, that way your body won't feel like it is missing out on as much sunlight. You may also want to rearrange furniture and adjust drapery to let the maximum amount of natural light into your home, a good tactic for those days when it really is just too cold to go outside.

Many therapists utilize light therapy with patients who experience SAD. Patients are often instructed to purchase and sit in front of a "light box", which simulates sunlight, for a half hour or longer, this treatment is called Bright Light Therapy. Another form of therapy is called Dawn Simulation. For this treatment a dim light goes on in the morning while you sleep and gradually becomes brighter over time,

like a natural sunrise. Therapists will sometimes prescribe antidepressants for patients who are deeply affected by SAD, but not responding to natural treatment.

Anytime you feel sad over the next few months because you are freezing and stuck in the house try to remember all the good aspects of winter such as cozy sweaters, hot chocolate, sitting by the fireplace, the fun-filled holidays, the beauty of fresh snow on the ground, watching children experience snow for the first time, and the best of all that vacation you are going to take to a warm sunny location!



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