

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression related to the change of seasons. The exact cause of SAD is unknown, but it is thought to derive from the reduction in sunlight during colder months, which can cause a change to your body's circadian rhythm, serotonin levels and melatonin levels, all of which regulate sleep, appetite and mood.

How to Fight SAD

Let the sunlight in. Maximizing exposure to natural light will boost your mood and energy levels.

Maintain your routines. It is important to keep up with your everyday activities. Make sure you continue going to your weekly book club, basketball game or dinner out with friends.

Focus on exercise. Exercise releases endorphins which improve mood. Research shows that exercise is comparable to therapy or antidepressants in its effectiveness in treating depression.

Reduce sugar. Not only does excess sugar promote weight gain, but there also is a connection between sugar intake and depression. Research shows that countries that consume the most sugar have the highest rates of depression. Sugar will provide a temporary energy boost, but in the end will leave you feeling sluggish and can increase anxiety.

Get outdoors. Spending time outside and breathing fresh air can help lift spirits and relieve stress. Going outside for a morning walk offers multiple benefits by exposing you to natural light and helping you get exercise.

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