

Lets Talk About it:

Feeling S.A.D. this year?

Q: Every Winter I get depressed, where I really do not want anything to do with the holidays, I become withdrawn and feel sluggish. I have heard that some people have “winter blues” Could that be my issue?

A. Although, many people become depressed during the holiday season, even more respond to the excessive stress and anxiety once the holidays have passed. Recent studies have shown that there are also environmental factors which can contribute to the feelings of depression around the holidays. Some people suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) which can result from fewer hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter during the winter months. Researchers have found, however, that photo therapy, a treatment involving a few hours of exposure to intense ultra violet light, is effective in relieving depression symptoms in patients with SAD.

Common Signals of SAD are:

- A change in Sleep Patterns
- Extreme fatigue and drop in energy levels(slow, sluggish, lethargic movements)
- Decreased creativity and concentration
- Carbohydrate craving and increased appetite
- Social withdrawal
- Reduction in Sex Drive
- Feeling of depression, restlessness, irritability, anxiety or boredom

The term depression is used to refer to a common medical condition with very specific symptoms. These symptoms can include:

- Feelings of sadness
- Loss of interest and /or pleasure in once enjoyed activities
- Changes in sleep, appetite or weight
- Irritability
- Withdrawal
- Feelings of fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and worthlessness
- Thoughts or feelings of suicide

Other studies on the benefits of photo therapy found exposure to early morning sunlight was effective in relieving seasonal depression. Recent findings, however suggest that patients respond equally well to photo therapy in combination with medications and

counseling. It is important that individuals seek an assessment from a mental health professional before any form of treatment is conducted. Ben Gordon Center offers mental health, substance abuse and recovery services for adults, children and families in our community. If you or someone you love is experiencing these symptoms call today at 756-4875 or 1-866-BGC 0111 24 hours a day 7 days a week

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