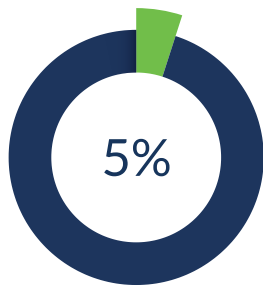




MANAGING THE WINTER BLUES

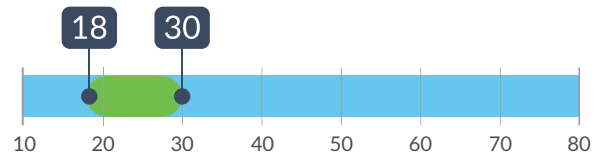
Wellness Tips

With the loss of daytime hours during the fall and winter, some people may experience the winter blues. It is normal to feel mild changes in mood and energy, but if a depressed mood lasts more than 2 weeks, they may be experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This is a form of depression that is related to changes in the seasons and should be managed with professional treatment.



5% of adults in the U.S. experience SAD

SAD is most common in women between 18 and 30 years old.



Symptoms can vary with each individual, but they typically occur during cold, dark months and then disappear the rest of the year. The causes of SAD may be linked to a disruption in circadian rhythm with the decrease in sunlight. Serotonin and melatonin levels affect mood and sleep and can also change with the seasons, leading to symptoms of depression.

Symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):

1 Tiredness or low energy

2 Feeling depressed most of day

3 Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed

4 Sleep disturbances

5 Weight gain

6 Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

7 Feeling of hopelessness

8 Thoughts of suicide

Tips to Manage the Winter Blues:

- 

1 Connect with others. Take advantage of virtual gatherings or plan a socially distanced visit during a mild winter day.
- 

2 Spread kindness. Acts of kindness are both helpful for the giver and the receiver. Consider volunteering for a local charity.
- 

3 Get outside. Head outside for physical activity and exposure to Vitamin D. If you work remotely, place your desk by a window.
- 

4 Find ways to be festive. Decorate for the holidays or try a new recipe. Use time inside to start a new tradition.
- 

5 Tackle a DIY project or start a new hobby. Saving money, learning a new skill, and being active all help reduce stress and improve your mood.
- 

6 Focus on the positives and small joys in life. Enjoy family time at home, play a game, or read a book. Try to follow every negative thought with a positive one.
- 

7 Give yourself grace. It's okay to not be positive or happy all of the time.
- 

8 Consider a light therapy box. This mimics natural outdoor light and is thought to affect brain chemicals linked to mood and sleep.
- 

9 Consider mind-body therapies. Try relaxation techniques, meditation, guided imagery, or music/art therapy.
- 

10 Seek professional help. Contact your primary care provider, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or the National Alliance on Mental Illness. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available at 1-800-273-TALK.

#ibpwellnesstips
Healthier Together

Resources:

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/seasonal-affective-disorder>
[mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

Please note that this tip sheet is educational and not intended for diagnosis and/or treatment. Discuss any symptoms you have with a physician.