



Seasonal Affective Disorder

Health Information

February 2024

Wow, we are already in February. When I was a child I used to think how slow the days go by, but now I think where has the day gone? Life gets so busy but we have to remember to take a few moments for our own health. This month I know is Valentine's Day and about love but it can also be cold and dreary weather outside.

What is Seasonal Affective Disorder? Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that is related to changes in seasons. SAD begins and ends at the same times every year. If you're like most people with SAD, your symptoms start in the fall and continue into the winter months, sapping your energy and making you feel moody. These symptoms often resolve during the spring and summer months. Less often, SAD causes depression in the spring or early summer and resolves during the fall or winter months.

Signs and symptoms of SAD may include:

- Feeling sad or down most of the day (nearly every day)
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Low energy
- Feeling sluggish
- Sleeping too much
- Craving excessive carbohydrates, overeating, and gaining weight
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Having thoughts of not wanting to live

Symptoms specific to fall and winter depression may include:

- Oversleeping
- Appetite changes, craving foods high in carbohydrates
- Weight gain
- Tiredness
- Low energy



Symptoms specific to spring and summer depression may include:

- Insomnia
- Poor appetite
- Weight loss
- Agitation
- Anxiety
- Increased irritability

What causes seasonal affective disorder? The specific cause of SAD remains unknown but some factors that may contribute to it are:

- Our biological clock (circadian rhythm)-the decrease in sunlight may disrupt our body's internal clock and lead to feelings of depression.
- Serotonin levels-this is a brain chemical (neurotransmitter) that affects mood. Reduced sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin and that can trigger depression.
- Melatonin levels-changes in seasons can disrupt the balance of our body's level of melatonin. Melatonin affects our sleep patterns and mood.

Risk factors:

- Family history
- Having major depression or bipolar disorder
- Living far from the equator
- Low level of vitamin D

Possible complications if not treated:

- Social withdrawn
- School or work problems
- Substance abuse
- Other mental health disorders (anxiety or eating problems)
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior

When to see your doctor? If you are experiencing signs and symptoms of SAD. Please schedule a visit to see your doctor. Your doctor may perform a physical exam, run lab tests, and /or perform a psychological evaluation to diagnosis SAD.

Possible treatments:

- Light therapy
- Psychotherapy
- Medications

Ways to help with SAD (Self-care):

- Make your environment sunnier and brighter
- Get outside
- Exercise regularly
- Normalize sleep patters

Please remember to take time and take care of your health. You are our shepherds and we need you healthy to tend to our Lord's sheep. Thank you for your time and dedication and please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Have a wonderful and blessed day.

Blessings,
Danielle



A group of Frogs

As a group of frogs was traveling through the woods, two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs crowded around the pit and saw how deep it was, they told the two frogs that there was no hope left for them.

However, the two frogs decided to ignore what the others were saying and they proceeded to try and jump out of the pit.

Despite their efforts, the group of frogs at the top of the pit were still saying that they should just give up. That they would never make it out. Eventually, one of the frogs took heed to what the others were saying and he gave up, falling down to his death. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?"

The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

