

SAD

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

The average age SAD presents itself is **20** years old.

Up to **6%** suffer from SAD

Another **10 to 20%** may have a milder version of SAD.



Females and those who have a history of depression or anxiety are considered at a higher risk for developing the disorder.

SAD IS A TYPE OF DEPRESSION THAT BEGINS AS THE HOURS OF SUNLIGHT DIMINDE AND TENDS TO DISAPPEAR AS SUMMER MONTHS APPROACH.

Seasonal change doesn't just mean shorter days for millions of Americans. It also means a dramatic shift in their mood and outlook on life.



The fact that SAD is temporary – lasting sometimes up to six months – it is still important that the individual seek treatment for it.



Unfortunately, the diagnosis of SAD isn't always clear cut, and may at first be diagnosed and treated as depression

The chances of getting SAD begin to dip as a person ages.



SAD CAN HAVE SYMPTOMS SUCH AS:

- a general lack of interest in life
- tendency to sleep longer
- an increase or decrease in appetite
- weight gain
- withdrawal from relationships
- impact on productivity at work or school



HIGHER RISK IN NORTHERN STATES

Studies have shown that people living in northern states such as Massachusetts, New York and even Ohio have much higher incidents of SAD than those living in sunny Florida.



CHILDREN SYMPTOMS ARE OFTEN A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF AN ADULT.

Children may exhibit SAD by acting out or having trouble with discipline as the seasons change.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO STRUGGLE WITH OR ARE AT-RISK FOR SAD:



SEEK SUNLIGHT – The days may be shorter, but it doesn't mean the sun is completely gone. Look for ways to expose yourself to natural sunlight. Bundle up and take a walk during the morning. Be conscientious of your need for sunlight during the day especially if your work environment offers few windows. Use lunch breaks to get outdoors or to sit by a window.



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF – A healthy diet and exercise program can be a challenge to begin or maintain throughout the winter months, but both play a vital role in how you feel both physically and emotionally. Sunlight provides our bodies with vitamin D. It may be beneficial to add to your diet foods that are rich in vitamin D such as kale, spinach and orange juice.

HAVE HOPE –

Just because you have SAD doesn't mean it will be a disorder that you struggle with your entire life. Your doctor may prescribe an antidepressant or light therapy. Light therapy is a way to treat SAD by exposing someone to artificial light for a certain period of time.

Some individuals may experience SAD once in their life and others may see it appear sporadically throughout their life. Regardless, talk to your doctor if symptoms begin to interfere with your life. For more information on seasonal affective disorder, visit premierhealthnet.com/familyhealth

SOURCES: Joseph Allen, MD, Family Medicine of Vandalia; American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP); National Institutes of Health (NIH)