

Seasonal Affective Disorder

URL of this page: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/seasonalaffectivedisorder.html>

Also called: SAD, Seasonal depression, Seasonal mood disorder

Some people experience a serious mood change during the winter months, when there is less natural sunlight. This condition is called seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. SAD is a type of depression. It usually lifts during spring and summer.

Not everyone with SAD has the same symptoms. They include

- Sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Changes in weight
- Thoughts of death or suicide

SAD may be effectively treated with light therapy. But nearly half of people with SAD do not respond to light therapy alone. Antidepressant medicines and talk therapy can reduce SAD symptoms, either alone or combined with light therapy.

NIH: National Institute of Mental Health

Start Here

- Seasonal Affective Disorder [<http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder.printerview.all.html>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also available in Spanish [<http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/es/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder.printerview.all.html>]
- Seasonal Affective Disorder [http://www.nami.org/factsheets/SAD_factsheet.pdf] (NAMI) - PDF

Overviews

- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) [<http://www.psychiatry.org/seasonal-affective-disorder>] (American Psychiatric Association)
- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) [<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/seasonal-affective-disorder/DS00195/METHOD=print>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Seasonal Affective Disorder Sufferers Have More Than Just Winter Blues [<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2013/02/seasonal-disorder.aspx>] (American Psychological Association)

Treatment

- Beat the Winter Blues: Shedding Light on Seasonal Sadness [<http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/issue/Jan2013/Feature1>] **NIH** (National Institutes of Health)
- Light Therapy [<http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/light-therapy/MY00195/METHOD=print&DSECTION=all>] (Mayo)

Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

- Psychotherapies [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies/index.shtml>] **NIH** (National Institute of Mental Health)
- Seasonal Affective Disorder Treatment: Choosing a Light Box [<http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/seasonal-affective-disorder-treatment/DN00013/METHOD=print>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Seasonal Affective Disorder [<http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Seasonal+Affective+Disorder%22>] **NIH** (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Role of serotonin in seasonal affective disorder. [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23329523?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Article: Seasonal affective disorder. [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23198671?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Article: Ask the doctor. I suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD)... [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23193631?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Seasonal Affective Disorder -- see more articles [[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=seasonal+affective+disorder\[majr\]+AND+humans\[mh\]+AND+english\[la\]+NOT+\(letter\[pt\]+OR+editorial\[pt\]\)+AND+%22last+1+Year%22\[edat\]&tool=MedlinePlus](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=seasonal+affective+disorder[majr]+AND+humans[mh]+AND+english[la]+NOT+(letter[pt]+OR+editorial[pt])+AND+%22last+1+Year%22[edat]&tool=MedlinePlus)]

Organizations

- NAMI [<http://www.nami.org/>]
Also available in Spanish [http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=NAMI_en_espa%F10l]
- National Institute of Mental Health [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>] **NIH**

Teenagers

- Seasonal Affective Disorder [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/sad.html] (Nemours Foundation)
Also available in Spanish [http://kidshealth.org/teen/en_espanol/mente/sad_esp.html]

Patient Handouts

- Seasonal affective disorder [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001532.htm>]
Also available in Spanish [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/001532.htm>]

You may also be interested in these related encyclopedia pages:

- Seasonal affective disorder [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001532.htm>]

You may also be interested in these related MedlinePlus topics:

- Depression [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/depression.html>]
- Mental Health and Behavior [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/mentalhealthandbehavior.html>]

The primary NIH organization for research on *Seasonal Affective Disorder* is the National Institute of Mental Health [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>]

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