

JANUARY

Seasonal Affective Disorder

On a bright, sunny day, we often feel happy and energetic. When it is cloudy and gray, we sometimes feel sad or tired. For certain people, the weather severely affects their mood. Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, occurs when an individual experiences severe depression as a result of seasonal variations in light. Individuals suffering from SAD often experience symptoms during the fall and winter months. However, there is a rare form of SAD that can take place in late spring or early summer.

Symptoms of SAD

- Tendency to oversleep
- Noticeable change in appetite
- Fatigue
- Decrease in energy
- Irritability
- Tendency to avoid social interaction
- Feelings of anxiety or despair

Symptoms that reoccur for at least two consecutive winters, without any explanation, may suggest the presence of SAD

How is SAD Treated?

Severe SAD

- If you feel depressed for long periods of time or contemplate suicide, seek professional help from your family doctor or health care provider
- Your health care provider will instruct you on what you can do to relieve symptoms of SAD

Mild or Low SAD

- Spend time outdoors during the day
- Rearrange your workspace so that you are sitting in direct sunlight
- Move furniture at work so that you are near a window
- Exercise regularly to help relieve stress and tension
- If possible, take a vacation in a warm and sunny destination

For more information on SAD, visit the *Canadian Mental Health Association* website at www.cmha.ca