



FEBRUARY 2021

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons — SAD begins and ends at about the same time every year. Symptoms may start out mild and become more severe as the season progresses. If you're like most people with SAD, your symptoms start in the fall and continue into the winter months, draining your energy and making you feel moody. Less often, SAD causes depression in the spring or early summer. Don't brush off that yearly feeling as simply a case of the "winter blues" or a seasonal funk that you have to tough out on your own. Treatment for SAD may include light therapy (phototherapy), medications and psychotherapy. Take steps to keep your mood and motivation steady throughout the year.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SAD MAY INCLUDE:

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Having low energy
- Having problems with sleeping
- Changes in your appetite or weight
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless, or guilty
- Having thoughts of death or suicide

It's normal to have some days when you feel down. But if you feel down for days at a time and you can't get motivated to do activities you normally enjoy, contact your Employee Member Assistance Program (EMAP). If you don't have an EMAP, contact a doctor. This is especially important if your sleep patterns and appetite have changed, you turn to alcohol/drugs for comfort or relaxation, or you feel hopeless.



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