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Announcements:

- Keep checking the newsletters for upcoming Lunch and Learn Presentations.
- If you would like to receive the Wellness Works newsletter or any other wellness information via e-mail, please contact Sally Barclay at Barclay@iastate.edu

The Winter Blues

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Here come the winter months, and with them come many things; frost, shorter days, longer nights soul crushing, cold walks to the bus stop, and the constant wishes of being on a beach in the Caribbean. While all those thoughts may contribute to a bad day, a few of them contribute to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is brought on by the dreary change in the environment brought on by the winter months. Days get shorter, nights get longer and to add insult to injury, it is freezing. Winter on-set SAD is characterized by feel-

ings of depression, which include lethargy, feeling of hopelessness, anxiety, and a change in appetite. Also, the farther north you live, the more susceptible you are.

Coping with this could be as easy as taking a walk outside. The exposure to the sun can boost your mood, and the walking portion (besides being general exercise) is good for helping to clear your mind of stressful thoughts. If you don't have the time for a walk, abandon the fluorescent lights and open up the blinds, since there isn't much daylight left it



would be smart to take advantage of all of it. General anti-depressants will also help the dreary days, but to get those, you must visit a doctor. For more information, visit www.nlm.nih.gov

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You Are What You Eat



Depression can lead to many unhealthy eating habits. Many people overeat or satisfy their cravings with foods high in sugar that eventually lead to gains in weight. These high-sugar foods temporarily increase liveliness, but ultimately decreases energy.

The best way to maintain high energy without gaining the extra weight is to eat a healthy diet. Foods such as pasta, rice, and fruits are naturally full of carbohydrates and give a boost in energy. Eating foods high in Vitamin D, such as milk, soy drinks, margarine, and fortified foods, increase serotonin levels. Taking supplements high in B-complex vitamins daily can improve energy levels,

as well as reduce the anxiety to eat. Whole grain breads, crackers, and starchy vegetables like corn or potatoes should also improve energy levels. Cacao is another good resource to improve mood because it releases endorphins in the brain. Watch out for milk chocolate or other chocolate candies that are high in sugar. Newstarget.com names fish oils, brown rice, brewer's yeast, whole grain oats, and cabbage as the top five foods for beating depression.

Caffeine, smoking, alcohol, foods high in fat and sugar, high protein foods, and heavily processed foods with additives and preservatives should all be avoided to decrease depressive symptoms. ❖

(www.doityourself.com)

Fight SAD with Exercise

Exercise benefits our lives in many aspects. Exercise improves our physical health, by improving our wellness. It also benefits our mental health by acting as a stress reliever. Most importantly, exercise aids in the popular battle of winter blues. Researchers have now noticed the benefits associated with exercise and depression.

Exercising fights depressive feelings by releasing serotonin, a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in regulating anger, aggression, body temperature, mood and sleep. Studies have shown that only one hour of exercising can substitute for 2.5 hours of light treatment indoors and provide the same benefits. By walking, biking, relaxation techniques, and simple stretching, stress and depression can be managed considerably. This will also improve the immune system and leave individuals less susceptible to the flu and other common winter illnesses.

One simple exercise is practicing deep breathing, and this also helps one relax. Relaxation is a key component in managing stress and depression. Relaxation helps clear the mind and move away from the stressful and negative things in life. Other physicians also consider a 30-minute walk to be a beneficial exercise. Walking increases blood flow throughout the body. Other aerobically inclined activities, such as biking and running, are beneficial physically and mentally as well. ❖

For more information visit <http://www.harbus.org/>



Coping Skills

Although there may be no known way to prevent the development of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), there are ways that you can cope with this condition. After first seeing your doctor, here are some tips for managing SAD.

- **Follow your treatment plan-** Be sure you are taking the medications provided by your doctor as directed and attending therapy appointments as scheduled
- **Light therapy-** You can make your home brighter by opening blinds and trimming branches around windows to add sunlight. Another addition could be skylights in your home.
- **Go outside-** Another way to get sunlight is going outdoors on sunny days, even in the winter. Try a long walk, or eating lunch at a park nearby. The more time you can fit into your schedule to be outside the better.
- **Exercise regularly-** Being physically active can help relieve stress and anxiety, which can both increase symptoms of SAD.
- **Take care of your body-** Be sure to get your rest and eat a balanced diet, as well as finding time to relax. Don't turn to alcohol or un-prescribed drugs for relief.
- **Manage your stress-** Keeping your stress bottled up can lead to depression, overeating, or other unhealthy thoughts and behaviors.

- **Find support-** Be around people that you like being around. Whether it's being there to joke around, or being there to hold your head when you are crying, find someone that will support you.
- **Take a vacation-** If possible find a sunny, warm location to take a winter vacation. It could be all you need to recharge yourself. ❖

(MayoClinic.com)




Treat Yourself!

Vegetable Lover's Chicken Soup



Yield: 2 servings

Calories: 261
 Total Fat: 8 g
 Cholesterol: 72 mg
 Sodium: 355 mg
 Carbohydrate: 12 g
 Dietary Fiber: 2 g
 Potassium: 483 g
 Protein: 31 g



Ingredients Shopping List

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 ounces chicken tenders, cut into bite-size chunks
- 1 small zucchini, finely diced
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning blend
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 14-ounce can reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 tablespoons orzo or other tiny pasta, such as farfelline
- 1 1/2 cups packed baby spinach

Directions

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Add zucchini, shallot, Italian seasoning and salt and cook, stirring often, until the vegetables are slightly softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, broth, wine and orzo (or other tiny pasta); increase heat to high and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.

Reduce heat to a simmer and cook until the pasta is tender, about 8 minutes, or according to package directions. Stir in spinach, cooked chicken and, any accumulated juices from the chicken; cook, stirring, until the chicken is heated through, about 2 minutes.

www.eatingwell.com/recipes

Did You Know

Seasonal Affective Disorder is more likely to affect women, especially women between the ages of 15 and 55. Around 60% and 90% of people who develop SAD are women.

The majority of women who are affected by SAD are over the age of 30. Women with children are most likely to stay indoors during the winter months compared to men who are usually have jobs and are outdoors.



(www.1stholistic.com)

Women also have higher rates for depression. To prevent seasonal affective disorder, women should increase their self-care during the winter months. They should also increase their exposure to sunlight as well as get enough exercise. ❖

"We are biological-social-emotional-beings. Anything we do to increase our internal resources helps the balance of our lives."

**- Dr. Carol Kaufmann,
 Harvard Medical School**

Quick Fact:

In about 1/10th of cases, annual relapse occurs in the summer rather than winter, possibly in response to high heat and humidity. Patients with such "reverse SAD" often find relief with summer trips to cooler climates in the north.