

# Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is type of depression that happens during certain seasons of the year—most often fall or winter. It is thought that shorter days and less daylight may trigger a chemical change in the brain leading to symptoms of depression.



## What are the symptoms ?

- Increased sleep and daytime drowsiness
- Loss of interest and pleasure in activities formerly enjoyed
- Social withdrawal and increased sensitivity to rejection
- Irritability and anxiety
- Feelings of guilt and hopelessness
- Fatigue, or low energy level
- Decreased sex drive
- Decreased ability to focus or concentrate
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Increased appetite
- Weight gain
- Headaches



## What can be done to help relieve symptoms?

- Get help. If you think you may be depressed, see a healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- Set realistic goals, don't take on too much. Break large tasks into small ones, set priorities, and do what you can as you can.
- Do things that make you feel better. Going to a movie, gardening, or taking part in social activities may help.
- Get regular exercise.
- Expect your mood to get better slowly, not right away. Feeling better takes time.
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Stay away from alcohol and drugs.
- Delay big decisions until the depression has lifted. Before deciding to make a significant transition—change jobs, get married or divorced—discuss it with others who know you well.
- Try to be patient and focus on the positives.
- Let your family and friends help you.

*For more information on Seasonal Affective Disorder, visit:*

[https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/seasonal-affective-disorder.](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/seasonal-affective-disorder)



TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM  
BOARD OF HEALTH  
2 West Main Street, Brookside, NJ, 07926  
Telephone: (973) 631-5484  
Fax: (973) 631-5490  
[www.mendhamtownship.org](http://www.mendhamtownship.org)



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