



Student Wellness Centre

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wellness.usask.ca

306-966-5768



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

What is Seasonal Affective Disorder?

Fact: About 2-4% of Canadians suffer from SAD and about 15% deal with milder cases

Also known as SAD or “Winter Blues”, this disorder affects more people than you may think in many different cultures.

Usually occurs in the seasons of fall/winter and symptoms will remain present until spring in most cases

Fact: People that suffer from SAD make up 10% of all depression cases

What are the Symptoms of S.A.D.?

- Feeling depressed throughout the day, almost everyday
- Losing interest in regular activities
- Low energy
- Difficulty sleeping
- Larger appetite and weight gain
- Increased desire to be alone/isolated

<https://www.psycom.net/depression.central.seasonal.html>

What Causes S.A.D.?

- Your biological clock (**CIRCADIAN RHYTHM**) - due to reduced sunlight, your internal clock is disrupted
- **Serotonin Levels** – the neurotransmitter that helps with happiness in wellbeing can be unbalanced and can alter mood
- **Melatonin Levels** – this helps regulate your sleep patterns and helps you fight insomnia and fatigue
- **Vitamin D deficiency** – those low in vitamin D can affect ones serotonin level and cause mood disturbances.

What are the Risk Factors for S.A.D.?

- **Family History** – any history of SAD or other depressive disorders in you or your family can predispose you to the illness
- **Equator Location** – being 5, 798.33km away from the equator creates significantly lower sun exposure

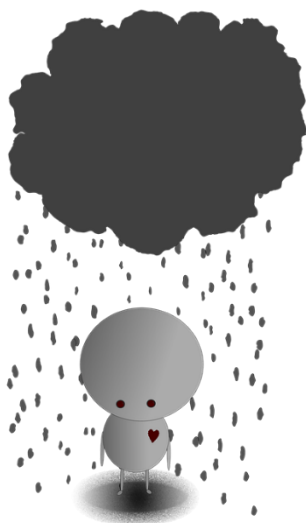
What are the Complications of S.A.D.?

When experiencing S.A.D. one can feel a sense of disconnection and motivation with their academic, personal and social life. This can include...

- Social withdrawal
- School and work difficulties
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior
- Irritability and aggression

You're not alone. It is extremely important to seek help and support when experiencing such symptoms.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20364651>



GETTING HELP FOR SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER...

There are various different therapies for managing and treating one's symptoms and these therapies may include Light Therapy (Phototherapy), medications/vitamins, as well as various methods of psychotherapy

Winter Affects us in Many Ways

- Winter in Saskatchewan can be quite frigid and this makes wanting to go outside and get physical activity in very difficult
- Because we aren't going outside and don't have the motivation to do anything because of the cold we are miserable and thus making us feel worse due to lack of good endorphins and energy
- **BUNDLE UP!!** Keeping yourself warm and cozy whether you're inside or out will greatly improve your well-being throughout the season because it will decrease your chances of getting sick, and keep you physically well also reducing the risk of hypothermia and frostbite.

- <https://students.usask.ca/articles/surviving-winter-weather.php>
- Practice self-care: make sure that you are taking care of every aspect of your wellness during winter. Whether it be a walk, reading, a bubble bath or watching Netflix it is important to take care of yourself.

Getting Help for S.A.D.

Light therapy

- These lamps stimulates the brain into producing Melatonin which is going to help regulate your sleep and wake cycles.
- 15 minutes of use every day significantly improves mood by creating simulated sun exposure.
- Lamps can be purchased at the Campus Medicine Shoppe or other stores like Costco and Amazon The price is about \$60 and up.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin, obtained through food, sunlight, a vitamin D supplement, or a multivitamin. The main function of vitamin D is to maintain levels of calcium and phosphorus in the blood and increase the absorption of calcium. These functions are important for bone health.

Vitamin D deficiency is also associated with low mood and Taking Vitamin D supplements may reduce the impact of low mood. Vitamin D supplementation during the winter may reduce the incidence of influenza A

Vitamin D requirements

- People aged 9-50 years old should get 600-1000 IU/day.

If you want to know requirements for other age groups, please go to Health Canada website and search for “dietary reference intakes table.”

Good sources of vitamin D

- Salmon,
- Fortified milk, margarine and yogurt
- Egg
- Fortified soy and almond milk

Vitamin D is known as the sunshine vitamin because it can be produced in the skin by exposure to UV light. You cannot get too much vitamin D from sun exposure. Exposure to the Sun and Vitamin D is reduced between October and March. Sunscreen also blocks UV rays that produce vitamin D.

Meditation, yoga, exercise and other activities to get you moving, motivated and outdoors can improve mood and functioning

Counselling

Seek Counseling Help – if you believe your symptoms are making it hard for daily functioning see a professional who will better understand the circumstances and give recommendations

Student Wellness Centre

Physical and mental health care for all USask registered students. Call to make an appointment.

310 & 4th floor, Place Riel Student Centre

Monday- Friday 8:30am- 4:30pm

306-966-5768

student.wellness@usask.ca

Peer Health Drop-In Support

Peer Health student volunteers can offer confidential support and help point you in the right direction for improved emotional wellness.

Available from September-April in Marquis 104

email: peer.health@usask.ca to set up a visit.

Additional Resources

wellness.usask.ca

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