

SAD Holiday?

Now is the time that Seasonal Affective Disorder kicks in for many. It's estimated that four to six percent of Americans fall victim to this disorder every year.

Symptoms include difficulty concentrating, low energy and fatigue, a decreased interest in daily activities, moodiness, irritability, and increased sleep. The exact cause of SAD is still unknown, but researchers suspect that an increased level of melatonin in the blood could be a factor. Melatonin increases the need and desire to sleep, and because SAD affects people during the colder, darker months, the body produces more of it.



To combat SAD:

- Increase the amount of light in your home by keeping blinds or drapes open.
- Get outside; walk outdoors on sunny days, even during winter months.
- Exercise regularly; physical exercise helps relieve stress and anxiety.
- Take a trip! If possible, take winter vacations to sunny, warm destinations.

Cure for the "Brrr"

Did you know that when you drink very cold beverages, you are basically forcing your digestive system to slow down or even stop? Alternative medicine practitioners suggest drinking hot water upon awakening in the morning, and continuing to do so throughout

the day. This is thought to strengthen metabolism and enhance digestion. Adding lemon, honey, or lime can help hot water go down easier. This is a good habit to get into year-round, but will be especially pleasant in the dead of winter.

Timely Tips for Holiday Feasts

Parties, family dinners, and other gatherings where food is served are all part of the holiday cheer. But the merriment can change to misery if food makes you or others ill. There are four main rules to keep in mind:

- 1) Be Clean** – The first and perhaps most important thing to keep in mind is that everything needs to be cleaned before food comes in contact with it – your hands, countertops, utensils. Rinse raw fruits and vegetables before slicing and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
- 2) Keep Separate** – Place raw meat, poultry, seafood and their juices away from other foods that won't be cooked. Also, remember to use different plates for raw meat and cooked meat.
- 3) Cook Thoroughly** – Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness. Use a food thermometer to accurately check temperature. A turkey is done when it reaches 180°F and its stuffing must be at 165°F. Something else to keep in mind is that raw cookie dough and cake batter are NOT safe to eat, because they contain raw eggs, which can carry Salmonella bacteria and make you very ill.

