**Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D)**

What is seasonal affective disorder?

Seasonal affective disorder (often called "SAD") is a form of depression that comes and goes depending on the time of year.

**Fall-onset SAD** – This type of SAD starts in late fall and goes away in the spring and summer. Some people call it "winter depression." It is the most common form of SAD. Spring-onset SAD is much less common than fall-onset SAD.

What are the symptoms of SAD?

Feeling unmotivated and depressed for no apparent reason
Irritable
Lack of or excess of sleep
Lapses in concentration
Weight gain

What are the risk factors?

SAD is more common among women
Onset of SAD is usually between age 20 and 30 years
SAD is a subtype of the following mood disorders:
- Unipolar major depression (major depressive disorder)
- Bipolar I disorder
- Bipolar II disorder
Here are a few techniques to help you fight off symptoms or at least ease the intensity of SAD:

Go Outside
Get as much natural light as you can if you are fighting seasonal depression or wintertime seasonal affective disorder. If you get home after dark, change your schedule and bundle up for a walk during lunch — the sunlight will reset your circadian clock and you will also replenish your Vitamin D.

Bright Light therapy
Clinical studies have proven that exposure to an hour of artificial bright white light in the morning is effective in about 60% of patients with SAD. Therapy should be coordinated with a clinician knowledgeable in this area.

Exercise
Exercise is a common prescription to ease depression. Moderate exercise like walking, running and yoga release endorphins and neurotransmitters to the brain. These chemicals can increase your mood and keep your immune system healthy.

Speak with Your Doctor
SAD is a form of depression. The therapeutic ways to combat SAD don’t always work. If you can’t shake feelings of anxiety and sadness, find a mental health professional to guide you to treatment that is best for you.
Dawn Simulators
Get a “Dawn Stimulator” and wake up peacefully with clocks that mimic the changing light of the sun. Dawn simulators gradually wake you up with light that increases in intensity to simulate morning sunshine. The most effective ones use full-spectrum light, which is as close to natural light as possible.

Spend time with your friends and family
Spending time with your friends and family is a great way to lift your spirits and avoid social isolation. Snuggle with your kids or pets; visit with your friends while drinking a hot cup of tea or play board games with your family. Friends and family can be good to talk to about how the season is affecting you. Take the time to educate them about SAD so they can better understand your situation.

For more information, check out the following links:-


Please contact OMC Health Promotion for any questions at #3670