

Stop Singing The Winter Blues

Lighten Your Mood With These Simple Tips

(NAPSA)—As the days grow shorter and the skies grayer, many find that winter weather brings sunken moods, apathy and other sad feelings—especially around the holidays. Even celebrities experience this phenomenon, which is sometimes called the “winter blues” or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

“I find the best way to keep the winter blues at bay is to get proactive,” says actress Camryn Manheim and star of the hit television series, “The Practice.” “I have dinner parties, go out to the theater, plan scrapbooking days, organize my home and catch up on all my reading. But the best way to kick the blues is to hang out with my 2½ year-old son and all his friends. If that doesn’t make you laugh, nothing will.”

About 20 percent of the population is affected by SAD, which usually begins in late fall or early winter. Women are four times more likely than men to experience SAD, and the condition occurs more often in northern parts of the country. According to American Family Physician magazine, SAD is seven times more common in Washington state than in Florida.

Doctors believe SAD hits in the winter because of the limited sunlight exposure that accompanies the shorter winter days.



“People who have reduced exposure to sunlight often have low levels of melatonin, serotonin and other compounds that support the body’s feelings of stability, emotional balance and well-being,” said Richard Brown, M.D., associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University, practicing psychopharmacologist and co-author of *Stop Depression Now*.

Dr. Brown adds that during winter, people stay indoors more, eat more and become less active, particularly in the cold regions. “These lifestyle changes can impact your mood, but there are ways to combat the problem,” he said.

To jump start your mood, Dr. Brown recommends the following tips:

- **Monitor your diet.** Take vitamins and make sure to get enough fresh fruits and vegetables with a well-balanced diet. Consume fish and other high-quality proteins. Avoid refined sugars, which can negatively alter your mood.

- **Exercise and breathe.** Exercise is an important part of feeling good. A 10-minute walk, three times a day is enough to help you to fight the winter blues. Exercise may release hormones and neurochemicals that restore your body’s mood.

- **Try yoga.** The breathing and meditative practices of yoga may help relieve anxiety and tension.

- **Consider a natural remedy.** SAM-e (pronounced “sammy” and short for S-adenosylmethionine), is a naturally occurring compound found in all living organisms. It’s clinically proven to help enhance mood and emotional well-being.

“Taking SAM-e regularly is one of the best ways to enhance mood,” adds Dr. Brown. “Studies have shown that it often works in half the time of prescriptive medications, and SAM-e has very few, if any, side effects.”

For more information on SAD and to receive a free SAM-e kit, please contact the SAM-e News Bureau at 1-877-866-2539 or e-mail SAM-e@carryonpr.com.