

Seasonal Affective Disorder

As most of us Upstate New Yorkers know, we've entered what we call second winter, but is more commonly known as March. With the irregular temperatures and more snowfall, it is important to keep seasonal affective disorder in mind if you are feeling more depressed lately. Community Care Physicians strongly encourages you to speak with your doctor about your mental health.

What is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as SAD, is a mental health condition that is affected by changing seasons. It is more common for people to be affected by SAD during the fall and winter months, but some do have depression episodes during the spring and summer months. Those mostly effected by SAD are women, young people, those who live far from the equator, and those with a family history of depression. SAD is considered a subtype of major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder.

Symptoms

Symptoms of those suffering from SAD include sadness, gloomy outlook, feeling hopeless, worthless, and irritable, loss of interest or pleasure in activities one used to enjoy, low energy, difficulty sleeping or oversleeping, carbohydrate cravings and weight gain, and thoughts of death or suicide. Other symptoms include feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day, having difficulty concentrating, and feeling agitated. If you are experiencing these symptoms, please speak to your doctor. They can help diagnose you and come to a helpful solution.

What You Can Do if You Have SAD

The reasons behind why some suffer from SAD are still relatively unknown, but research has found that people who experience SAD may have an imbalance of serotonin, the chemical which affects your mood and regulates it. Research has also suggested those who experience SAD may have too much melatonin production, which is the hormone that regulates sleep, and people with SAD are not getting enough vitamin D.

Speak with your doctor before supplementing vitamins. They may suggest taking vitamin D, but they may have other suggestions too. Often, those with SAD are treated with light therapy, which is a lamp you sit under. The idea is the light mimics the sun that we lack in the winter months.

Community Care Physicians

Here at Community Care Physicians, we strongly believe taking care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health. Your doctor is there to help you with any health concerns, including mental health. Often, they can refer you on if you need additional support.

If you are in need of a primary care physician, our Concierge Care Coordinator would be more than happy to direct you to the best one for your needs. CCP also has a Behavioral Health practice and the Concierge Care Coordinator would also be able to answer any questions you have about the practice. Call (518) 782-3800.

Sources:

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

<https://medlineplus.gov/seasonalaffectedisorder.html>

<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/seasonal-affective-disorder>