

RISK FACTORS FOR THE WINTER BLUES



Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), commonly known as winter blues, is a type of depression that occurs at a specific time of year, usually during the cold months. Several risk factors can contribute to the development of SAD, including:

- **Reduced Sunlight:** One of the primary factors is reduced exposure to sunlight during shorter winter days. This decrease can disrupt the body's internal clock or circadian rhythm, leading to feelings of depression.
- **Serotonin Levels:** Sunlight also plays a role in the production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that affects mood. Reduced sunlight can lead to lower serotonin levels, which can trigger depression.
- **Melatonin Production:** The change in season can disrupt the balance of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep patterns and mood. Increased melatonin production in the winter can lead to feelings of sleepiness and depression.
- **Family History:** A family history of SAD or other types of depression can increase the risk. Genetics play a significant role in the likelihood of developing the disorder.
- **Living Far from the Equator:** People who live far from the equator, where winter days are shorter, are more likely to experience SAD.
- **Existing Mental Health Conditions:** Individuals with preexisting mental health conditions such as depression or bipolar disorder may be more susceptible to SAD.

Understanding these risk factors can help in recognizing the symptoms early and seeking appropriate treatment to manage and alleviate the effects of SAD.

If you feel like you are at risk for SAD, it's important to speak to a healthcare provider or reach out to a member of our team for support.

WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

Call us today at