

EAP Newsletter MAY 24

This month, we look at the effects of “The Winter Blues” otherwise known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and the impact it can have on our physical and mental health.

“I got that summertime, summertime sadness, summertime, summertime sadness. Got that summertime, summertime sadness”

The words of Lana Del Rey have some relevancy for this time of the year. Summertime sadness and winter blues are recognised psychological disorders. It’s called Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that typically occurs during the fall and winter months, when daylight hours are shorter, although it can also occur in spring and summer months. [SimplyPsychology.org](https://www.simplypsychology.org)

What causes seasonal affective disorder (SAD)?

Researchers don’t know exactly what causes seasonal depression. Lack of sunlight may trigger the condition if you’re prone to getting it. Some theories include:



Biological clock change

When there’s less sunlight, your biological clock shifts. This internal clock regulates your mood, sleep and hormones. When it shifts, you’re out of step with the daily schedule you’ve been used to, and can’t adjust to changes in daylight length.



Brain chemical imbalance

Brain chemicals called neurotransmitters send communications between nerves. These chemicals include serotonin, which contributes to feelings of happiness. If you’re at risk of SAD, you may already have less serotonin activity.

Since sunlight helps regulate serotonin, a lack of sunlight in the winter can make the situation worse. Serotonin levels can fall further, leading to depression. Deep breathing can reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms in the general population and people with these clinical conditions.



Vitamin D deficiency

Your serotonin level also gets a boost from Vitamin D. Since sunlight helps produce Vitamin D, less sun in the winter can lead to a Vitamin D deficiency. That change can affect your serotonin level and your mood.



Melatonin boost

Melatonin is a chemical that affects your sleep patterns and mood. A lack of sunlight may stimulate an overproduction of melatonin in some people. You may feel sluggish and sleepy during the winter.



Negative thoughts

People with SAD often have stress, anxiety and negative thoughts about the winter. Researchers aren’t sure if these negative thoughts are a cause or effect of seasonal depression.



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Our new app contains health journeys that can help you manage your physical and mental health all from your phone. The 'Mindset' digital journey in habithealth+ is designed to help cultivate a positive outlook on life, topics include:

Recognising positive emotions: becoming more aware of our emotional states.

Savouring positive experiences: encouraging people to fully experience and appreciate joyful events.

Mindfulness practice: techniques and exercises to incorporate mindfulness into daily life.

Positive reappraisal: adopting a more positive outlook by reappraising challenges and setbacks.

Self-compassion: focusing on the importance of self-compassion, offering strategies to be gentler and kinder to ourselves.

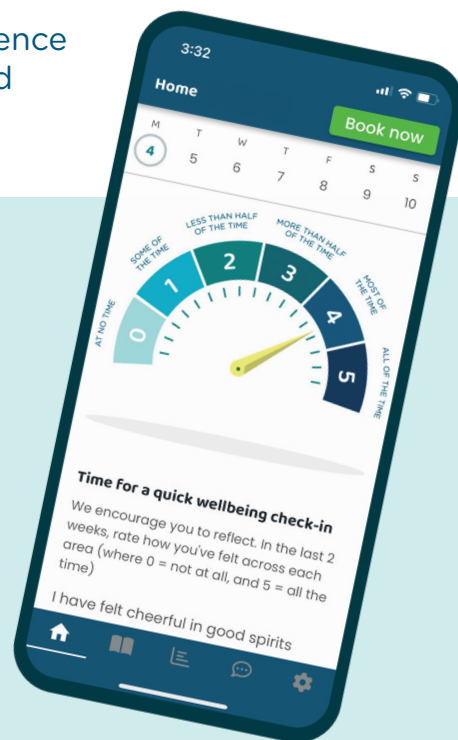
Setting attainable goals: encouraging people to experience success and progress, reinforcing a positive mindset and helping them to stay motivated.

With habithealth+ you can:

- Manage your health on the move
- Customise notifications to boost motivation
- Manage regular check-ins
- Book a session with a counsellor
- Access support and advice
- Integrate your device to access insights
- Support your physical wellbeing

Help develop and maintain a healthy, helpful and positive mindset during the winter months ahead.

Download from the App Store or Google Play today.



Our team are here to help

To make an appointment, **Book online** or call **0800 327 669**



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