

GETTING THROUGH THE DARK MONTHS

COMBATting SAD WITH DIET AND EXERCISE



Minimize Carbohydrate-Rich Food

We tend to crave carbohydrate-rich food during the winter, but it may be wise to minimize carbs in your diet. Our bodies like the feeling of high-sugar and high-carb food because they boost serotonin levels in the brain. Unfortunately, this can result in a crash later on after the spike in your blood glucose levels have dropped.

What Should I Eat?

Keep your energy levels stable by eating meals at regular times with snacks in between. Choose complex carbohydrates (whole grain pasta, rice and bread), along with fruits and vegetables. Incorporate proteins rich in omega-3 like salmon, legumes, nuts, and seeds as well.



Staying Active During the Winter Months

As the days become shorter, it can become difficult to stick to our routines - including exercise. Of course, we know that staying active continues to be important even during the cold, winter months, but it can be a challenge to stay motivated. So how can we encourage ourselves to move?

Go for walks during lunch or before work while there's still daylight.



Go straight from work to the gym, or join a walking or running group.



Try a winter sport like cross-country skiing, snowboarding, or skating.



Have an at-home activity for when the weather isn't great. Try a workout DVD or an online yoga class.



Exercise Boosts Endorphins!

Endorphins are the feel-good chemicals (like serotonin) that the body produces naturally. Your body often craves this chemical in the form of sugar, but you get it through exercise! Regular exercise has significant benefits for people with mental health concerns such as depression. It's a good idea to start slow and build minutes and intensity. Contact a healthcare professional before any exercise regime.

Sources: MayoClinic. 2017. SAD Diagnosis, Treatment
National Health Service Choices. 2013. Seasonal affective disorder – treatment.
Images by freepik