



How to Help Children with Seasonal Affective Disorder

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How can you help with seasonal affective disorder in kids?

As the seasons change, so too can people's moods. Sunshine is a source of vitamin D, which helps healthy cell and bone growth. It also boosts our energy levels and can help us become more resilient to illnesses. Here, we look at seasonal affective disorder in children.

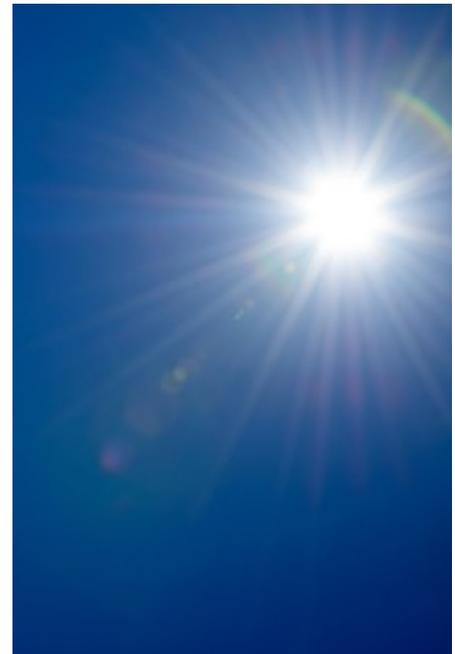
What is seasonal affective disorder?

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is described as: "depression associated with late autumn and winter and thought to be caused by lack of light". It's said to occur when your body's internal clock and your brain and body's chemicals all change. The NHS states that one in 15 of us could be affected by SAD between September and April, with 18 to 30-year-old females most susceptible. Of course, it can begin at any age and to any gender, however.

What are the symptoms of SAD?

Symptoms to be aware of include:

- Being lethargic
- Sleep issues
- Depression
- Overeating
- Social issues
- Loss of motivation
- A persistent low mood
- Increased anxiety
- Lack of interest in activities
- Weakened immune system



SAD in children

Kids with SAD often seem more irritable and less playful. Their school work may also drop. Remember, your child may not be able to realise they have this condition or tell you how they are feeling. If you think your child has SAD, contact your doctor. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that the condition should receive the same treatment as other types of depression. You must note that this isn't a behavioural problem but is an issue regarding brain chemistry. If your child is put on antidepressants, make sure you are vigilant for any changes in behaviour and keep in regular contact with your doctor.

It's important you are supportive and non-judgmental to aid recovery. Taking a little more time with them so they feel loved as well as being patient with them is also important to the treatment, as is eating healthily and maintaining a regular sleep pattern. By looking after their lifestyle habits, you will cut their stress levels which will help to ease the pressure faced from SAD.

Where possible, ensure that your children are out in natural light.

For further support, you may want to consider [vitamin D3 supplements](#). Research in the area of vitamin D and depression is rapidly growing, with some studies highlighting a potential link between the two. It's important to make sure we take extra care of our kids in the winter months and be aware of any changes in their temperament. Remember, as is the case for many issues, with SAD in kids, if in doubt check it out.

