

LET HEALTH HAPPEN



Dr. Geoff Walburn, D.C.

As the swimsuits are being packed away and the days are becoming colder and shorter, now is a good time to discuss a problem that is prevalent in this region of the country – seasonal affective disorder or S.A.D. This condition is more commonly referred to as the “winter blues” and it is characterized by a sense of depression that starts in the fall and ends in the spring and is accompanied by decreased energy and initiative. While this condition is commonly treated with prescription drugs and antidepressants, often its ‘cure’ is intimately related to its cause.

The reason many people get S.A.D. in this part of the country at this time of the year is because the weather forces us into hibernation with a deficit of sunlight exposure. Regular exposure to sunlight stimulates our skin to release vitamin D. In truth, vitamin D is less of a vitamin than it is a hormone precursor. Optimal levels of vitamin D simulate and balance our hormones to help regulate our normal physiology. When we are lacking adequate sun exposure causing a deficiency of vitamin D, our hormones become imbalanced resulting in depression, fatigue and numerous other problems. If you worry that you suffer from these winter blues and weekend trips to the Bahamas are not an option you can try a couple options. First, you can supplement with vitamin D. While this often works, you need to take much more vitamin D than is in your multivitamin as it does not get into the system easily. When supplementing, you do need to practice caution because it is possible to get too much vitamin D and the only way to truly know your level is a blood test. The second option is the use of light therapy using a light box that runs about \$60 and is intended to provide synthetic sunlight. Look for more on this subject next week!

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