

Seasonal Affective Disorder



Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD): Summer vs. Winter

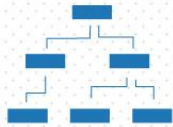
Most people are familiar with seasonal affective disorder (SAD) as a type of depression that occurs during the winter months. But SAD can occur during any of the seasons, including the summer. Symptoms, incidence, and treatment vary depending on the type of SAD.

Risk Factors

For all SAD sufferers



Gender--Women are more likely to be diagnosed with any seasonal SAD than men, but men have more severe symptoms.



Family History--Having relatives with depression increases your likelihood of having SAD.



Personal History--Around **20%** of sad sufferers also have bipolar disorder. A personal history of clinical depression also increases your risk.

Symptoms

SAD symptoms vary depending on the time of year you are diagnosed.

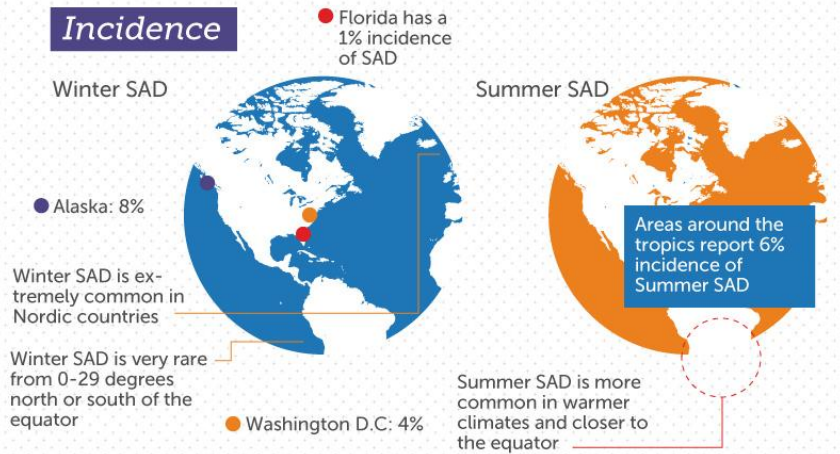


- Fall and Winter SAD**
- Depression
 - Hopelessness
 - Anxiety
 - Loss of energy
 - Heavy, "leaden" feeling in arms or legs
 - Social withdrawal
 - Oversleeping
 - Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
 - Appetite changes, especially a craving for foods high in carbohydrates
 - Weight gain
 - Difficulty concentrating



- Spring and Summer SAD**
- Anxiety
 - Insomnia
 - Irritability
 - Agitation
 - Weight loss
 - Poor appetite
 - Increased sex drive
 - Loss of interest and/or enjoyment in activities
 - Suicidal thoughts and feelings

Incidence



Suspected Causes

Exact causes of SAD remain unknown, but researchers have some theories.



Lack of light, which may:
 Upset the sleep-wake cycle and other circadian rhythms
 Cause problems with serotonin, a neurotransmitter that affects mood
 Prolonged overcast skies in any geographic location can increase Winter SAD



Temperature increases, barometric pressure and rainfall fluctuation may:
 Decrease melatonin
 Exacerbate mood changes

Treatment



Summer SAD

- Antidepressants: the only proven treatment for Summer SAD
- Light therapy is ineffective for Summer SAD sufferers

Lifestyle Changes

Winter SAD

- Exercise regularly—physical exercise helps to reduce stress and anxiety, both of which can increase SAD symptoms
- Spend time outside—outside light can relieve SAD symptoms, especially within two hours of waking up
- Add more natural light to your environment--the more light, the better for Winter SAD sufferers



Summer SAD

- Stay indoors and keep cool--summer heat may aggravate symptoms; some sufferers find relief in air-conditioned environments or cold showers
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet--getting the right nutrients contributes to your overall health, including your mood
- Form a sleep schedule--waking and rising at the same times may promote more restful sleep



Sources:
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If you think you are having some challenges with Seasonal Affective Disorder, please contact the Glenn Crombie Centre and seek support. They are here to help!

Glenn Crombie Centre: 705-566-8101 ext .7311