# Seasonal Affective Disorder

* The term "seasonal affective disorder" (SAD) refers to a type of depression that can also be referred to as "winter depression" or "seasonal depression." Those who suffer from SAD go through emotional ups and downs and display symptoms that are comparable to those of depression. During the months of fall and winter, when there is less sunlight, the symptoms tend to flare up, and they tend to subside once spring arrives. January and February are typically the most challenging months for Americans with SAD. Some people even experience seasonal affective disorder throughout the summer, although it is far less prevalent.
* The Seasonal Affective Disorder is recognized as a pattern of mood disorder by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS). This pattern is associated to seasonal changes in the amount of sunlight that is available. According to estimations compiled at the national level, thousands of people living in the state of Tennessee battle feelings of persistent melancholy as they make their way through the bleak winter season. Seasonal affective disorder is characterized by periods of lethargy and, in some people, worry. This condition affects around 4 to 6 percent of the population in Tennessee. Seasonal affective disorder goes beyond the seasonal lows. The symptoms can be unpleasant and make it hard to go about normal life; however, it is treatable. Around 5% of adults in the United States suffer with SAD, and those affected are often affected for 40% or more of the year. Women are also more likely to experience this than men!
* There are a number of effective treatments available for seasonal affective disorder such as light therapy, antidepressant medication, talk therapy, or a combination of these treatments. Even though the symptoms will, in most cases, become better on their own as the seasons change, it is possible to have more rapid improvement with medication. Some individuals with SAD report feeling better after spending more time outdoors or positioning themselves near a window at work. Taking care of one's health in general can also aid in recovery; this includes things like going to the gym regularly, eating right, getting plenty of sleep, and engaging in meaningful activities and social interactions such as volunteering, joining clubs, and spending time with loved ones. Seek professional medical care if you suspect you may be suffering from seasonal affective disorder. It is crucial to rule out any other medical conditions that could be generating symptoms, as is the case with other types of depression. Proper evaluation is essential because SAD might be misinterpreted as hypothyroidism, hypoglycemia, infectious mononucleosis, or another viral infection. A mental health expert can provide a diagnosis and recommendations for treatment. SAD can be treated effectively, making it a relatively mild illness.

## Sources:

* <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/seasonal-affective-disorder>
* <https://www.tn.gov/news/2014/12/17/help-for-tennesseeans-coping-with-seasonal-affective-disorder-or-sad.html>